

Statement: Reception for BiH Civil Society Representatives

Last night, Senior Deputy High Representative Martin Ney held a reception for representatives of civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Successful peace implementation requires the development of a resilient and sustainable civil society, which in BiH today consists of domestic and international non-governmental organizations, civic associations, intellectual, cultural and social movements.

Although the domestic infrastructure to support civil society remains largely underdeveloped there is a critical mass of professional NGOs, and public awareness of the role and importance of civil society is growing,

Among the subjects discussed at last night's reception were the ways in which civil society can play a more prominent and effective role in BiH's economic, social and political development, and the role of NGOs in monitoring government progress in promoting and implementing reforms.

"The participation of citizens is one of the keys ingredients of successful and sustainable reform," Ambassador Ney said during the discussion. "One can explain the current level of apathy towards politics and social activism among BiH citizens, yet it must be overcome and it can only be overcome through the joint effort of NGOs, the media, eminent persons of academic institutions and other organizations whose core aim is to promote the well-being of this country and its citizens as a whole."