

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka

SIPA Director Must Be Appointed on the Basis of Merit Alone

As the procedure to appoint the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) Director draws to a close, the OHR wishes to make it clear that it expects this process to be kept free of any political pressure or undue influence. The Law on Ministerial Appointments clearly sets out the process for an impartial and politically free appointment process to ensure the appointment of the most capable and professional candidates .

SIPA is a crucial institution for BiH; it will make BiH's commitment to fight organised crime, trafficking and terrorism a reality, by strengthening operational capacity at the state level. I should also stress that SIPA is expected to play a central role in ensuring full BiH co-operation with the ICTY. It is tasked with making sure that individuals indicted for war crimes are brought to justice. This is the biggest hurdle that stands in the path of BiH's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Given the importance of the agency and the position of director, the OHR wants to make it absolutely clear that this appointment must be made on the basis of merit alone and that politics must be kept firmly out of policing.