

# More regular CoM meetings needed to tackle reform agenda

In commenting on the PIC conclusions about the Council of Ministers session, Prime Minister Terzic seems to want to shoot the messenger, rather than get the message. The message is clear. The EU's Feasibility Study, states that among the 16 Feasibility Study conditions it states CoM meetings must be convened "with sufficient regularity to tackle government business expeditiously".

The Political Directors of the PIC Steering Board last week supported this, stating that "among the core causes of the government's inability to carry through the full range of its legislative commitments on time is the irregularity of meetings of the BiH Council of Ministers."

The facts speak for themselves. All too often, planned CoM sessions are cancelled due to the absence of Ministers – which makes a quorum impossible. In the six-month period between 3 June and 2 December 2004 the CoM met only 14 times. The irregularity of government sessions is also a problem; for example – it took almost two weeks after the last PIC in September for the first Council of Ministers session to convene.

In other, now successful, accession states such as Slovakia, over 50 Government sessions were held in 2003 with as many as six sessions per month. Other Governments such as that of Slovenia, Estonia or the Czech Republic record similarly organised Government sessions.

Many reforms are on track and the PIC paid tribute to Prime Minister Terzic's personal engagement. However, the efficacy of BiH's Government is hampered by the lack of regular

government sessions; certain reforms remain behind schedule and deadlines foreseen in the 'Joint Action plan' signed by the BiH Government have not been met. The government must hold regular sessions if its ambitious are to be met to start SAA negotiations as soon as possible. If the present rate of holding COM's is not improved then that is bound to impact on BiH's ability to meet the Feasibility Study conditions.