

Speech by Senior Deputy High Representative Werner Wnendt at a Conference on Institutional Communication

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 2003 the BiH government and the International Community entered into a partnership to reform public administration in BiH. The BiH government pledged at the Peace Implementation Council to make this reform one of its highest priorities.

These reforms are necessary because public administration in BiH is outdated and inefficient.

They are necessary because the administration cannot properly serve the citizens of BiH.

Throughout 2003, local stakeholders and representatives of the International Community developed detailed reform plans. But it became clear that more information would be needed.

The European Commission's Functional Reviews have therefore become a crucial part of this broad reform effort. The Reviews will provide in-depth information on the working of the administration at all levels and will draw up recommendations to remedy the present shortcomings.

We eagerly await the outcome of the reviews and the resulting reform strategy, which will be coordinated and adopted in 2005. The OHR is ready to assist the BiH authorities in defining and implementing these reform items, together with the numerous international organisations also involved in this process, above all the European Commission.

Public administration somehow reflects the degree of a country's development. For all local politicians the level and speed of implementation of this reform will serve as a litmus test of their commitment to BiH's European future. Without an efficient and affordable administration BiH will find it difficult to progress on the road towards European integration.

Today's focus is on a crucial component of the PAR Reform: Institutional Communication. The importance of good communication to the functioning of a modern public administration cannot be stressed too much. The quality of services a government can provide for its citizens depends on the quality of communication – both with the wider public and, internally, with colleagues and other institutions.

This then creates the form of dialogue we see in all Western democracies. The public is being informed and educated about the government's objectives and actions. On the other hand politicians and officials are made aware of the public's reactions and take them into consideration when developing policies.

I am glad to see that the organisers have managed to bring together so many experts here today and – talking about good communications – I hope this event will receive the recognition in the media that it deserves.

I wish you a fruitful debate today. Thank you very much.