

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

The OHR notes that the BiH institutions seem to be getting more serious about the impending deadlines for the passage of key reforms relating to the 16 pre-requirements set by the European Commission for the start of negotiations on a Stability and Association Agreement.

This week the BiH House of Peoples, at the request of the BiH Council of Ministers, decided to discuss the SIPA legislation, legislation on the BiH High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and the Law on University Education in shortened procedures.

If this indicates a refocused attitude on reform then it is welcome.

At the same time there are areas in which BiH's political leadership is clearly failing and has been doing so for months. For example, the appointment of the Director of the BiH Statistics Agency – appointment of a suitable candidate has been pending since December last year.

It is not that there is a lack of suitable qualified candidates – this is rarely a problem in BiH. In December last year the BiH Civil Service Agency, in line with applicable domestic legislation, identified candidates with qualifications that meet the professional requirements of this post.

Despite this, no appointment has yet been made, even though a functioning Statistics Agency is a requirement for negotiations with the European Commission for a Stabilisation and Association agreement and even though such an agency will

play a key role in attracting investment and will enable BiH's Governments accurately to plan future activities based on the real needs of BiH.

BiH's ruling coalition has many times committed itself to reform. Now they need to explain to their voters why, if a suitable and qualified candidate has been found through BiH's legally defined process, this appointment has not been made in four months and why there is still no formal date set for discussion of this appointment.