

Steering Board Ambassadors Warn Against Attempts to Politicise HJPC Process

The Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board in Bosnia and Herzegovina today reminded the political leaders of BiH that a professional and independent judiciary is a key European standard and a key requirement for BiH's integration into Europe and Euroatlantic structures.

The Ambassadors expressed great concern over the recent politicisation of the process of appointing Judges and Prosecutors. This could obstruct the present effort to make the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils (HJPC) a fully-fledged BiH institution later this year, and could also affect the pace of BiH's integration into Europe.

The objective of the HJPC's ongoing reappointment process is to ensure that the BiH judiciary meets European standards of independence and professionalism, and restores the multi-ethnic balance destroyed by the war. The Ambassadors were confident that when this process was complete, BiH's judiciary would again reflect the country's multiethnic nature, and reaffirmed their full support for the ongoing work of the HJPC. However, they underlined in the most serious terms that the media campaign against the HJPC was discouraging Bosnjaks from applying to positions in the RS, and therefore making it harder to restore the multi-ethnic balance.

The Ambassadors advised those who had questions about the constitutionality of this process to address their concerns to the relevant constitutional court. The important thing now was to let the HJPC get on with its job. It was only halfway through, and the Ambassadors were confident that by the time it was complete, the judiciary and prosecutors' offices would

reflect the multiethnic nature of BiH including at the senior level. The main threat to success now was the continued media campaign.