

High Representative answers letter by Vice-President Cavic

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in a letter sent today to RS Vice-President Dragen Cavic, replied to concerns raised by Mr Cavic regarding the constitutional amendments in the Federation and the status of the constituent peoples in the Cantons of the Federation. The High Representative agreed that the letter and spirit of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement of 27 March 2002 must be implemented in full in both the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to ensure the constituency of the Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats throughout the territory of BiH.

The High Representative noted that the agreement provides for the harmonization of the Cantons constitutions with its principles. In his letter, the High Representative clarified the fact that according to the agreement "within nine months of the adoption of the amendments to the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the principles which are contained in the Agreement shall be applied to the Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is further provided that vital interest protection mechanisms shall be established in the Cantons and minimum representation has to be guaranteed with regard to the Cantonal Governments."

The High Representatives stated, that "the principle and the relevant article of the Agreement of 27 March is reflected in the proposed changes to the Federation Constitution as put forward by the Government of the Federation on 4 April 2002."

The High Representative assured Mr Cavic that he and his office will insist on the timely and consistent implementation of these principles in line with the letter and spirit of the

Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement of 27 March 2002 and the ruling of the Constitutional Court.

In this context the High Representative wishes to underline that the Agreement was concluded following a lengthy process of negotiation where the concerns of all negotiation partners had been raised and dealt with.