

First meeting of the Cabinet

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, yesterday chaired the first meeting of the Cabinet, which is composed of the heads of international organisations and missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Cabinet as well as four new inter-agency task forces – dealing with economic reform, return and reconstruction, institution building and rule of law – are the core elements of the restructured and refined international engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This streamlined set up was endorsed by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in Brussels on 28 February this year.

This first meeting of the Cabinet was attended by COMSFOR, Lt. General John Sylvester, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General, Jacques-Paul Klein, IPTF Commissioner, Vincent Coeurderoy, Head of the OSCE Mission in BiH, Robert Beecroft, Deputy Chief of the UNHCR Mission, Udo Janz, the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Henrik Kolstrup, World Bank Director, Joseph Ingram, and the European Commission's Charge d'Affaires, Renzo Daviddi.

They discussed the details of the new operating structure and examined ways in which its work can be made more open to the public as well as means of working more closely with the BiH Authorities.

The High Representative then informed the Cabinet members of his discussions with the leaders of the eight main political parties in BiH on amendments to the Entity Constitutions, and his report to the UN Security Council last week. The World Bank reported on Entity budgetary issues and the OSCE reported on the development of a BiH youth project aimed at establishing a cadre of young leaders in BiH in fields such as business, education, media, non-governmental organisations, and politics. These young leaders would then take the initiative in developing a locally sustainable leadership programme.

This meeting represents a new phase in the International Community's engagement with BiH and a leaner, more effective international presence. This approach is designed to partner the domestic authorities in the process toward full ownership.