

OSCE Chairman in Office supports OHR in promoting domestic solution to BiH constitutional talks

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, held talks today in Sarajevo with the Chairman in Office of the OSCE, Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama. Foreign Minister Gama was accompanied during his visit to the OHR by the Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft.

The High Representative briefed Foreign Minister Gama on the streamlined structure of IC operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, noting OSCE's integral role in the new cabinet and task force configuration. He also discussed the latest developments in reducing the size of the Entity armed forces, and he commended OSCE and Ambassador Beecroft for providing leadership in this area. Discussing the rising number of so-called minority returns recorded in the last two years, the High Representative alluded to the OSCE's positive role in promoting regional return initiatives.

The High Representative described to Foreign Minister Gama the status of the constitutional talks now underway among the main BiH political parties, stressing that OHR has focused on mediating, and encouraging the parties to reach agreement among themselves.

Foreign Minister Gama expressed support for the High Representative's position, noting that "it is very important that constitutional reform can come about through agreement, through dialogue among the political parties." He also

stressed the significance of the October elections, which, he pointed out, will further consolidate political stability in BiH by introducing a four-year election cycle.

On military downsizing, Foreign Minister Gama noted that “it is essential for a modern, advanced, pro-European BiH to settle this issue” as the country moves towards Partnership for Peace membership and a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union.

Both the High Representative and Foreign Minister Gama expressed satisfaction with the close and continuous cooperation which has been established between the OHR and the OSCE mission in BiH.