

High Representative holds high-level meetings in Brussels

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, held talks with senior international officials in Brussels on Wednesday. The High Representative was visiting Brussels to address the North Atlantic Council, NATO's highest decision-making body, and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, a multilateral forum where NATO's 19 member countries and 27 partner countries meet to discuss political and security-related issues.

At a meeting with NATO Secretary-General George Robertson, the High Representative stressed that the arrest and transfer to The Hague of indicted war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic is essential for the lasting consolidation of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Lord Robertson expressed his support for the High Representative's strategy in BiH, and he endorsed the concept of ownership and called for greater self-reliance on the part of the BiH authorities. On the question of coordinating military and civil aspects of peace implementation Lord Robertson assured the High Representative that "We arrived together, we are succeeding together and we will leave together."

The High Representative also held fruitful discussions, on the prospects for and possibilities of regional cooperation in Southeast Europe, with Dr Erhard Busek, the newly appointed Stability Pact Special Coordinator. Later in the day, he met European Union External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten to discuss police reform in BiH and the streamlining of the International Community's operations. The High Representative gave Commissioner Patten an in-depth briefing on streamlining. Commissioner Patten gave his full support to the High Representative and his work and stressed the importance of institution building in BiH in order to bring the country closer to the European Union.