

High Representative appoints members of the CRA Council

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued a Decision appointing members to the Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency. The Council consists of four BiH members and three international members. Its role is to give guidance to the CRA on strategic issues of broadcasting and telecommunications policy and to serve as an appellate body for CRA decisions. It will play a crucial part in the future development of the communications industry in BiH.

The new council members are Vlatko Dolecek, Professor of Technical Sciences at Sarajevo University, Mahir Hadziahmetovic, President of the BiH Chamber of Commerce, Mehmed Husic, journalist, Branko Peric, journalist, Brian Fontes, US telecommunications expert, Clare Mulholland, UK broadcasting expert, and Robert Taylor, telecommunications and public policy consultant. Mr Fontes has been appointed Chairperson of the Council, with Mr Peric as his new Vice-Chair, together with Ms Mulholland, who continues in this capacity from the previous Council.

All appointees to the new Council, which will begin to operate on December 8, are outstanding experts in their fields and several have served on the Council of the Independent Media Commission, one of the CRA's predecessor organisations.

With the new Council now appointed, the High Representative calls on the BiH authorities to finalize the legal framework for broadcasting and telecommunications, so that better quality and less costly services can be delivered to the citizens of BiH. In particular, he urges the Council of Ministers to give its speedy consent to the Telecommunications Action Plan which was presented to the CoM by the CRA in September, following extensive consultation with all the relevant agencies and companies in the telecommunications field. The Action Plan lists the decisive steps that must be taken in order to lower prices and improve services, and enjoys broad support. The High Representative also calls on the Council of Ministers to present the Communications Law to the Parliament as soon as possible. The Communications Law provides for the protection of consumer interests through an effective State-level regulator, a prerequisite for a fair and efficient broadcasting and telecommunications sector in BiH.