

High Representative appoints national members of the BiH Election Commission

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued a Decision appointing the four national members of the seven-member Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The appointees are Hilmo Pasic as the Bosniac member, Lidija Korac as the Croat member, Branko Peric as the Serb member, and Vehid Sehic as the representative of "Others".

The High Representative took this step to ensure that the general elections in BiH takes place as planned by October 2002.

The role of the BiH Election Commission is crucially important as the Commission is tasked with organising the elections. Given the amount of administrative and legislative work that needs to be completed before the general elections, there is no time to lose before the Commission becomes operational.

At their meeting in Brussels on 30 October, the political directors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council called on the BiH authorities to increase urgently the pace of preparation for the general elections, and demanded the immediate launch of the BiH Election Commission, as well as the rapid and consistent implementation of the remaining provisions related to the administration of the elections by the BiH authorities.

On 27 September 2001, the High Representative had appointed the three international members of the Election Commission (the Head and Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH or their designates, and the Senior Deputy High Representative or his or her designate). With today's appointments, the Election Commission line-up is complete and the Commission can start work.

The Election Law of BiH was adopted by the BiH Parliament on 23 August, the text was published in the Official Gazette on 19 September, and the Law entered into force eight days later. Under the Law, the four national members of the Election Commission are appointed by the Provisional Commission for Nomination and the BiH House of Representatives. However, the Law also states that, should the national members of the Election Commission not have been appointed by 15 September 2001, the High Representative shall appoint them.

The High Representative has repeatedly urged the responsible authorities to ensure the establishment of the Election Commission and begin preparing for the elections. Due to procedural delays, the Provisional Commission for Nomination was only able to put forward a list of seven candidates on 12 November. As there is now not enough time left to wait for the BiH House of Representative to convene and appoint the national members of the Election Commission, the High Representative decided to carry out the appointments himself.

The High Representative now expects the responsible authorities to secure financing for election preparations and an office for the Election Commission.

The appointments of the national members of the Election Commission take immediate effect and are for a period of five years or until otherwise decided by the High Representative.