

Activities of Federation Ombudsmen Not Affected by Organic Law During Transition Period

Sarajevo, September 14, 2000 - The OSCE and OHR would like to take this opportunity to recall the transitional provisions of the Organic Law on the Federation Ombudsmen, which went into effect on September 7, 2000.

The current Ombudsmen will continue to perform their duties for a period of at least one year after the entry into force of the law. During this period, the provisions of the Organic Law are not fully applicable. In particular, the current Ombudsmen cannot be removed except by the OSCE, which appointed them. In no way can the Organic Law be interpreted as limiting the rights and responsibilities of the Ombudsmen as provided for by the Federation Constitution. After the initial one-year period, they shall continue to perform their duties until the appointment of Ombudsmen pursuant to the provisions of the present law.

During this transitional period the Office of the Federation Ombudsmen is expected to take final steps towards becoming a sustainable and independent institution. The OSCE and OHR will continue to monitor this process closely to ensure respect and support of the Ombudsmen's independence and powers, full and prompt implementation of their recommendations and increased financial responsibility for the institution.

The OSCE and the OHR fully support the institution of the Federation Ombudsmen and is grateful for all the valuable work they have done. As a local institution it is an important step towards the creation of civil society in BiH. However, the authorities have yet to take their recommendations seriously and act upon them. BiH has no future if basic human rights are not respected.

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