

SDHR Matthias Sonn meets BiH House of Peoples' Serb Caucus

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, today met four members of the BiH House of Peoples' Serb caucus – Momcilo Novakovic, Nikola Spiric, Dragutin Ilic and Dragutin Rodic – to discuss their work in the House.

Over the last few months, the House of Peoples' Serb caucus has blocked the passage of the Law on Associations and Foundations, the Law on the BiH Foreign Trade Chamber, the Law on Sports, the Law on Holidays and the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministers, using the excuse that these laws were “unconstitutional.”

But at a news briefing last week, members of the Serb caucus blamed the parliament members from the other two constituent peoples for the difficult situation in the House of Peoples claiming they were putting forward “unconstitutional” draft laws.

Ambassador Sonn told the Serb delegates he could not accept the excuse of the “unconstitutionality” of laws as there were built-in mechanisms within parliamentary procedures to assess the constitutionality of laws, such as the Constitutional and Legal Affairs Committee. He also said the delegates were using the argument of unconstitutionality inappropriately. The Serb delegates argued, for example, that the proposed abolishment of the rotation of the Chair of the Council of Minister was unconstitutional. However, the Constitution does not address the issue of rotation within the Council of Ministers.

The SDHR noted that the Law on Consumer Protection, the Law on Industrial Ownership, and the Law on Copyright will soon be on the agenda of the House of Peoples. The adoption of these three laws are requirements of the EU Road Map. Ambassador Sonn noted that it was important to meet the requirements of the EU Road Map as it would lead to closer ties between the EU and BiH, from which the Entities would most benefit economically. The Entities can only survive if the State is strong enough, he said, adding that integration into Europe was the answer to the miserable economic situation the BiH citizens find themselves in.

Ambassador Sonn urged the Serb Caucus to fully cooperate in the adoption of these three as well as the other pending laws, pointing out in particular that the expectations of the PIC had to be met by the legislature in order not to jeopardize international support for BiH and its entities.