

OHR hosts Human Rights Information Meeting

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the State Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Kresimir Zubak, on Tuesday reviewed progress made this year in the human-rights field in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr Petritsch and Mr Zubak introduced the Mid-Year Review of Human Rights Priorities for 2001 as set by the Human Rights Task Force, to a meeting of diplomats from countries which have been actively providing assistance for human-rights activities in BiH.

The priorities set for 2001 by the interagency Human Rights Task Force and endorsed by the principals of international organisations active in the field are:

1. return of refugees and displaced persons,
2. reform of police and the judiciary,
3. capacity building of domestic human-rights institutions,
4. fostering of personal integrity among public officials, and
5. respect by BiH for international treaty obligations, particularly in regard to timely and complete reports by BiH authorities to human-rights treaty bodies.

In light of these priorities, the High Representative noted increased implementation of property law legislation this year. He drew attention to the need for continuing reform of the police and judiciary as well as the need for improved training in both areas. The High Representative also emphasised the necessity of placing BiH human-rights institutions on a sound financial footing; and called for the speedy arrest and transfer to the Hague of all PIFWCs, especially of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

Mr Zubak expressed his support for the human-rights activities currently being undertaken in BiH by international and national organisations. He also welcomed IC support and cooperation with representatives of domestic agencies, carried out in the spirit of partnership.

The meeting was organised by the Human Rights Co-ordination Centre, a cooperative endeavour of OHR, OSCE, OHCHR, UNMiBH, UNHCR, the Council of Europe, and the Independent Judicial Commission, within the Office of the High Representative.