

## **High Representative Welcomes House of Peoples' Adoption of Election Law**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomes today's adoption of the Election Law by the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples and extends his appreciation to all those who have worked productively to place this law on the statute book.

The High Representative views the passage of the Election Law as a signal achievement of the elected representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a very positive example of pragmatism and political maturity. The drafting and advisory role of the OSCE has also been crucial to the successful passage of this legislation.

Without an election law the fundamental mechanism of all working democracies – free and fair elections – cannot operate. The importance of today's vote by the House of Peoples therefore cannot be overstated. Bosnia and Herzegovina now has the legal framework through which to sustain democratic governance. Passage of the Election Law brings Bosnia and Herzegovina a significant step closer to accession to the Council of Europe. More than that, it guarantees the basic democratic rights of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The High Representative urges all those concerned to begin work immediately on the legislative and administrative preparations, which must be made so that elections can take place by October 2002. The hard and detailed work required to organize the next elections begins now.