

## **High Representative meets Transparency International**

Representatives from Transparency International visited Sarajevo today in order to meet international and local personnel involved in combatting corruption.

The purpose of the visit was to obtain information for the eventual establishment of a Transparency International Chapter in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Transparency International is a non-governmental organization dedicated to increasing governmental accountability and curbing international and local corruption. They do not investigate nor name individual cases, but focus on preventing corruption by building systems to combat it. Transparency International's agenda is that combatting corruption is only possible with the involvement of the state, civil society and the private sector. The aim of the Chapter is to bring together people of integrity in civil society, business and government to work in coalition for systemic reforms. The Chapter will be independent and locally owned.

The visit was highly productive. The local authorities expressed their willingness to undertake anti-corruption initiatives and the International Community expressed its readiness to offer technical support for those efforts. Transparency International finds that the time is ripe for the establishment of an independent, politically non-partisan civil society organisation which will bring credibility to the search for better laws and reforms.

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomes the visit of Transparency International and supports the establishment of a Chapter in BiH in order to create a locally driven, civil "watchdog." This will encourage the government to take action to curb corruption, raise awareness among the citizens about the damage corruption causes to each of them and their country, and to monitor and keep the public informed about the effectiveness of the anti-corruption efforts undertaken by the local institutions. In a meeting with Transparency International the High Representative pointed out that the creation of a Chapter would be a strong expression of the concept of local ownership.