

Federation Forum on Economic Matters

The OHR deeply regrets the failure of today's Federation Forum on Economic Matters. The agenda of this meeting was designed to find a way forward in the sphere of economic reform. This is vital if Bosnia and Herzegovina is ever to develop a self-sustaining economy capable of attracting private investment.

After several hours of hard work, at the end of which there appeared to be fundamental agreement on virtually all issues, the forum was sabotaged by Deputy Prime Minister Dragan Covic, who chose the very last moment to raise a number of blatantly immaterial objections. He refused to sign up to issues which he had verbally agreed upon just hours before. The forum concluded with everyone except Mr Covic willing to sign.

It appears that, despite Mr Covic's fine words, the old spirit of distrust and refusal to compromise is alive and well among some Bosnian Croat leaders. The behavior of Mr Covic, far from advancing Croat interests, has seriously undermined them.

In the run up to the Donors' Conference, and in a climate of increasing donor fatigue, today's performance once again put donations to Bosnia Herzegovina in jeopardy. Once again, it is the ordinary voters of the Federation who will suffer most by the willful obstructionism of the politicians who claim to represent their interests, but who in fact represent only their own.