

# **Joint Statement of the BiH Presidency and the High Representative**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, this afternoon met with the members of the BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic, Beriz Belkic and Zivko Radisic to apprise them of his proposal for a Partnership Forum. This Forum will enable the Council of Ministers and the High Representative, together with his experts, to confer on a regular basis. The talks also focussed on the simultaneous inauguration of a Civic Forum in which distinguished public figures in BiH will be invited by the High Representative to contribute ideas and opinions on issues of public concern. The Presidency welcomed and fully supported this initiative.

During the meeting both the High Representative and the three Presidency members expressed their concern over the recent deterioration of the public discourse. All agreed that whilst constructive debate is indispensable for the democratic process and differences of opinion need to be reflected in the media, hate language and baseless accusations can only have a negative effect on the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the interest of much needed investors to put their money into the country's economy.

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The Presidency members and the High Representative agreed that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina must try to make this country as attractive as possible for foreign investment, since the sustained inflow of foreign direct investment is crucial to the revitalisation of the economy. The tone of the current debate on tenders is only detrimental to these efforts. With this in mind the BiH Presidency and the High Representative appealed to the responsible authorities – above all the Council of Ministers and the Entity governments – to conduct a professional discussion on how to further make the economic environment conducive to foreign investment.