Maglaj Authorities Raise Tensions Over Zepce Review Panel Unnecessarily

The Office of the High Representative, as chair of the International Review Panel (IRP) for implementation of the High Representative's decision of October 6th, 2000 on Zepce, finds the accusations of the Maglaj Municipal Authorities regarding a reduction of Maglaj's territory, unnecessary and unconstructive.

The IRP, consisting of representatives of OHR, OSCE and UNMiBH, with the Zepce Decision Supervisor, Richard Williams last Friday heard evidence from all sides of the progress made in implementing the decision to integrate Zepce municipality. Paragraph 11 of the High Representative's decision clearly states that the municipal boundary changes, foreseen in the decision, will only take effect if there has been sufficient progress, in accordance with the decision, in integrating Zepce municipality into the legal structures of the Zencia-Doboj Canton.

The IRP, having heard all three sides, stated clearly on Friday that they would retire to consider their findings before making a public report, and the High Representative makes the final decision on municipal boundary re-alignment.

Amongst the reports heard by the IRP was a delegation from Ne IRP was a delegation from Novi Seher, Maglaj Municipality, which asked to be included in possible boundary changes, so becoming part of Zepce municipality. As this change goes beyond that foreseen by the High Representatives decision of October 6th, this would clearly need the support of the three municipal administrations concerned Maglaj, Zepce and Zavidovici, before being considered by the High

Representative. Currently it appears that no such agreement is in place.

The High Representatives decision integrating Zepce municipality and dismantling parallel institutions has significant results and moved this municipality forward from 1995. The return rate in this municipality is amongst the most impressive in BiH and international investment in this multi-ethnic municipality is growing. The Maglaj municipal authorities should address the concerns of the residents of Novi Seher, rather than try to derail progress in the neighbouring municipality.