Head of OHR Mostar Office Judge Finn Lynghjem departs BiH

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, is most grateful to his Deputy and Head of the Regional Office of the High Representative (South), Judge Finn Lynghjem, for his tireless efforts and achievements over the last year. During this period of time, significant progress has been made in Mostar and the Herzegovina and southern Bosnia regions. This is not least thanks to Judge Lynghjem's determined and fruitful engagement, but also to the co-operation shown by Mostar Mayor Safet Orucevic and his Deputy Neven Tomic.

The judiciary in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton has at last started working, which is a prerequisite for the normal functioning of the Cantonal institutions. Within the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the multi-ethnic panel of judges was set up, and judges were appointed to the municipal courts in the Canton. The Canton has also adopted essential legislation, which ensures its own functioning and the functioning of the judiciary, such as the Cantonal Law on Courts, the Cantonal Law on Self-Government and the Cantonal Law on Distribution of Revenues.

Many agreements negotiated by Judge Lynghjem have furthered the rule of law and the joint work of the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal bodies. The Agreement on the Mostar Central Zone has removed all ambiguities about the status of Mostar's Central Zone, the Agreement on the Joint Seat of the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Government and the Joint Seat of the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office are the basis for the joint work of these bodies, and the "Mostar Document – Agreement with the EU Ambassadors" ensures the EU's continued assistance to Mostar.

Judge Lynghjem has played a key part in breaking the deadlock in Canton 7 and particularly the Mostar municipalities with regard to the implementation of the property laws. At last, the laws are being implemented, albeit at a slow pace.

Judge Lynghjem has been a driving force behind efforts to reform the judiciary and improve the situation of displaced persons and refugees in Canton 10.

The area of responsibility of OHR South also saw an improvement in the field of education: in June, the Mostar School Agreement on the joint use of school buildings in Mostar was reached, and the Prekaja school in Drvar and the Stolac primary school opened their doors to the children of returnees.

The agreement on the merger of the two Mostar water companies with a single management board, brokered by OHR (South) in May 2000, ensured a 12 million US$ loan from the World Bank for the improvement of the water supply system in Mostar.

The High Representative and his entire staff take this opportunity to express their appreciation to Judge Lynghjem of his hard work and dedication to solving the burning issues in his area of responsibility. The results he has achieved since he took up his duties on January 10 of this year, are truly impressive and have improved the lives of many citizens.

Judge Lynghjem’s contribution to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and his energy and devotion are outstanding, and the leadership he has displayed is valued by all those with whom he worked in Mostar and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Judge Lynghjem’s successor will be announced in due course.