

High Representative Acts on Federation Prime Minister's Decision on Financial Police

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, yesterday issued a Decision related to the removals of Zufer Dervisevic and Miroslav Vidovic from their positions as Chief Inspector and Deputy Chief Inspector of the Financial Police. The Federation Government and Prime Minister removed the two from their positions only days before the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The High Representative's Decision suspends the current incumbents, Edin Suljic and Dragan Zelenika, without pay, and bans them from taking any other posts within the Financial Police unless authorised by the High Representative to do so.

The Government and Prime Minister of the FBiH are required to immediately reinstate Dervisevic and Vidovic to the positions they held before November 2nd, 2000. The new government that emerges from these elections is to be allowed to make its own decision as to who should hold these crucial positions.

The High Representative is aware that the mandates of Zufer Dervisevic and Miroslav Vidovic, who were acting in a caretaker capacity, had expired some time ago. The decision to remove them nine days before the elections in BiH suggests that the change was politically motivated, and yet at the same time the Government and all political parties were pledging to tackle corruption effectively. Instead the Government chose to remove these officials for no clear legitimate reason. The High Representative informed the Prime Minister that new appointments would probably disrupt ongoing corruption investigations, but the government failed to respond in any way.

It is not the duty of an outgoing government to change the personnel in any public administration. The High Representative wants to ensure that the new Government is given the opportunity to make an informed decision as to who should lead the Public Administrations during their mandate. The Financial Police is a particular case in point, the sensitivity of their work is such that their independence and transparency should never be in question.