

High Representative Issues Second Decision on Restructuring the Public Broadcasting System in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued his Second Decision on Restructuring the Public Broadcasting System in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This follows, and builds upon the first Decision issued in July 1999.

The Decision lays out the framework of a public broadcast system that is in line with modern Western practice. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that the three principle broadcasters, PBS, Federation RTV and RT RS, are economically viable, transparently financed, and professionally run for the benefit of all citizens in BiH.

International media and legal experts, in consultation with local experts representing all the peoples of BiH, have worked in the creation of this complex and essential Decision. The PBS Founding Board, the Board of Governors of RT RS, the Federation RTV Council, the RTV BiH Trade Union and IMC have all contributed to the final document.

The new system takes into account the mutual interests of the three broadcasting companies, which will remain independent, but will work together to improve the public service in both Entities and across the whole of BiH. The production capability of both Entity broadcasters will be significantly enhanced by the implementation of this Decision. The recent example of the joint coverage of the Olympic Games in Sydney by a team from all three broadcasters is a clear demonstration

of the benefit of such collaboration for all viewers in BiH.

The High Representative is aware that there remains a political culture in this country that believes that broadcasting should be under political control. He will insist that the Decision is implemented in full. Those who attempt to obstruct the process will be held accountable. This includes politicians who illegally encourage citizens not to pay their subscription fees, which are the financial basis of the new system.