

High Representative meets FRY President Vojislav Kostunica

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today met the new Yugoslav President, Vojislav Kostunica in Belgrade to discuss Yugoslavia's future contributions to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

During the wide ranging discussions, the High Representative took the opportunity to congratulate President Kostunica on his victory at the polls and emphasised the importance of Yugoslavia's role as a signatory of the DPA. The High Representative expressed his hope that the changes in Yugoslavia would have the same positive effects on the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina as did those in Croatia earlier this year. He briefed President Kostunica on the three strategic priorities pursued in BiH – refugee return, economic reform and state building – and said it was essential that Yugoslavia and BiH develop state-to-state relations.

The High Representative also mentioned the succession issue, and asked President Kostunica to re-start the negotiations which stopped under the former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic. President Kostunica confirmed that this was one of the issues on his agenda.

President Kostunica re-iterated his respect for the DPA and BiH's sovereignty, which the High Representative welcomed, adding that he hopes for early talks between BiH and Yugoslavia. They agreed to keep in touch, working together on issues of significance to BiH.

In Belgrade, the High Representative has also had constructive discussions with senior members of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS): Zoran Djindjic, head of the Democratic Party and chief coordinator of DOS; Zarko Korac, head of the Social Democratic Union; and Vuk Obradovic, head of the Social Democracy party. The High Representative also plans to meet Milan Protic, the new Mayor of Belgrade.