Stability Pact: High Representative says BiH must now compete for funds

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomed the outcome of the Regional Funding Conference for South-Eastern Europe held in Brussels March 29-30, 2000. “The generous pledges of the International Community – which exceeded expectations – demonstrate the considerable continuing interest in the Balkans. However, it is equally clear that Bosnia and Herzegovina is now competing in a crowded market for donor funds,” said Ambassador Petritsch. “With most of the money pledged to the Pact not assigned to specific projects, it is now essential that Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrates that it can act regionally as a state.”

The High Representative expanded on the steps necessary to attract the continuing attention of the donor community. “I would put the functioning of the state institutions and economic reform at the top of the list. The Stability Pact is for states – but unless BiH acts as a state, and submits projects agreed by both entities, it is going to be left behind.” Ambassador Petritsch added: “The Statement by the Chairmen of the Regional Funding Conference is unequivocal: achieving success requires a long-term commitment from the countries of the region to reform.”