

Meeting of the Inter-Entity Commission on Public Corporations (CPC)

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, this week presided over the first meeting of the new year of the Commission on Public Corporations. Both Entity Prime Ministers, Messrs Bicakcic and Dodik, and the Deputy Prime Minister of the Federation, Mr Covic, attended the meeting, as did Paul Monnory, the Deputy High Representative for Economic Affairs and Chairman of the Commission, Karl Knechtel, the Secretary General of the Commission, as well as representatives of the World Bank.

The purpose of the meeting was to examine the advisability and, where practical, agree upon the establishment of new BiH-wide public corporations for the mutual benefit of the two Entities in four utility sectors.

There was agreement on the need to create a BiH Road Infrastructure Public Corporation (BRIC), whose main focus would be the development and maintenance of the major European road corridors traversing BiH. Commission members supported in principle a proposed draft agreement and instructed officials to finalise the document.

Commission members unanimously expressed their support for pursuing a joint public corporation for postal services in BiH, and instructed the postal working group to continue to develop a plan for a BiH-wide, joint postal public corporation.

It was also recognised that significant economic benefits could be derived from a dedicated public corporation for broadcasting infrastructure in BiH. However, Commission members were not yet in a position to agree on a suitable

model. The Working Group was asked to continue with discussions and analysis, which includes site evaluations, and to return with conclusions regarding possible institutional solutions in a BiH-wide context.

Finally, the Commission discussed the situation in the gas utility sector, and agreed to establish a Working Group that would elaborate and evaluate various BiH-wide institutional options to achieve a greater degree of co-ordination, co-operation and transparency in the transportation and distribution of gas. A recently completed World Bank study on Restructuring the BiH Gas Sector will be used as a base reference.

Significant progress was made at this meeting towards achieving greater institutional co-operation in the utility fields which, as the High Representative underlined, is highly necessary at this stage of economic development and reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina.