

Interview: Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative in BiH "I will not dismiss parliamentarians"

OHR will not impose the Election Law, because, as Petritsch says, "that has to be done by members of the Parliament and not me"

Thanks to the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, our country did not experience one more political and diplomatic slap in the face. After his appeal, the Council of Europe gave an additional two-month deadline to the delegates in the BiH Parliament to adopt the Election Law, although the process of accession of our country to the oldest European association of states would end disreputably as to have been expected. After Petritsch's return from Strasbourg, we wanted to hear his opinion about the work of the state parliament, because of whom he had to save our reputation before the world.

JN: How do you comment the failure of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to accept the Election Law?

WP: It is very bad for BiH, and her citizens, that the Parliamentary Assembly failed to reach a consensus on the adoption of the Election Law, considering that this is one of the most important laws for the structure of any one state.

JN: How would you comment on the behavior of members of Parliament during discussion and voting on the Election Law?

WP: Their behavior provides reasons for various comments. However, I think that it is more important that an agreement

is reached within the next two months, and the Election Law adopted.

JN: What did you base your optimism on when you asked the Council of Europe to approve an additional deadline for BiH parliamentarians? Why do you believe that they will manage to adopt the mentioned law in those two months although they have failed to do so thus far?

WP: One of the most important things that needs to be taken into consideration while being engaged in this country is that one should never lose hope. That is why I hope that representatives of political parties in the Parliament, in particular the parties gathered around the Alliance for Change, will manage to reach an agreement about the Election Law, and that the law is adopted within the next two months. Aside from that, it is clear that the OSCE will reduce its capacity in BiH, which means that local authorities in BiH will have to take responsibility for all future elections. A precondition for that is the adoption of an Election Law. This means that BiH parliamentarians, like members of parliaments in any other country in the world, must start fulfilling their difficult and responsible roles so that all the requirements for BiH's accession to the Council of Europe are met. One of the first steps in this process is the adoption of the mentioned law.

JN: Are you going to take any steps against members of the Parliament who hampered the adoption of the Election Law?

WP: No, because these people are elected to do the job of members of Parliament and that would be a move against those who elected them to these posts.

JN: Will you impose the Election Law if the Parliament fails to adopt it by September?

WP: This has to be done by the members of the Parliament, not by me. Besides, I never announce my moves in advance.