

Dayton Precludes Referendum

Today, the Acting High Representative, Larry Butler, discussed recent statements regarding the possibility of a referendum on secession from BiH.

Following his meeting with Steering Board Ambassadors, the Acting High Representative recalled the position taken by the Political Directors on 23 June. The Political Directors then underlined that the International Community would not tolerate any attempts to undermine the Dayton Peace Agreement – before or after 30 June 2007 . On the same occasion, they reaffirmed that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a recognised sovereign state whose territorial integrity is guaranteed by the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Against this background, the Acting High Representative emphasised that there can be no question of unilateral referenda on secession from BiH by any subdivision of the State of BiH and that both Entities are integral parts of BiH and are recognised in the Constitution. No part of the Peace Agreement can be changed unilaterally. Amendments to the Constitution can only be achieved through the procedures prescribed therein.

BiH must continue to follow the route of reforms. Otherwise it will stagnate and it will be unable to offer its citizens the future they deserve. Statements on referenda divert attention from the real challenge facing BiH – the necessity for root and branch reform.