

# **High Representative and PIC Steering Board call on Alliance Government and its partners to responsibly address the challenges of Ownership and to urgently tackle Economic Reform**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board yesterday a constructive meeting with a delegation from the BiH State and Entity Governments, headed by Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, in Brussels.

During the meeting the European Commission gave a presentation on the Stabilisation and Association Process for South Eastern Europe, specifically outlining the concrete criteria to be met by BiH in order to make progress within this process and facilitate integration into EU structures.

The Steering Board welcomed the Council of Ministers' call for an enhanced partnership with the International Community, as a necessary and welcome step towards eventual full ownership requiring not only responsible governance, but also a total, immediate, and professional commitment to drastic, overdue, long-term, institutional, legal and economic reforms and implementation.

Given the overall dire economic situation in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and in the Republika Srpska in particular, about to be highlighted again in an expected Country Assistance Strategy Report by the World Bank, the Steering Board urged the State and Entity Governments to finally take concrete and decisive steps towards full implementation of their Government Program aimed in particular at fostering foreign investment and job creation. In this regard, the Steering Board also stressed the importance of full co-operation with ICTY.

The Steering Board warmly welcomes the adoption of the Election Law and looks forward to its rapid implementation.

The Steering Board again stressed the necessity of establishing a professional, merit-based civil service to provide the non-partisan expertise and professional continuity required to bring about and implement these imperative measures. The Steering Board urged the Council of Ministers to immediately submit the Civil Service Law, in the version as agreed between OHR and the CoM on 24 July, to the BiH Parliament. It also stressed the need to implement the core modules of the Citizens Identification Protection System (CIPS) Project without further delay.