

High Representative discusses constitutional amendments with the Steering Board

Following the adoption of constitutional amendments by the RS National Assembly on 4 April 2002, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today met with the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council at ambassadorial level in Sarajevo.

The Steering Board expressed its full support for the High Representative's exhaustive efforts aimed at ensuring that the constitutional amendments due to be passed in both Entities meet the requirement of being fully in line with the Agreement on the Implementation of the Constituent Peoples' Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina reached by BiH's political leaders on 27 March 2002 in Sarajevo. It also noted with concern that the deadline of the first week of April, by which the Entity Parliaments should have adopted the amendments in full, has passed.

The High Representative expressed serious concerns about the constitutional amendments adopted by the RS National Assembly. The amendments fall short of, and do not in full reflect, the 27 March Agreement.

The High Representative again stresses the requests of the Steering Board in its Communique following its meeting on 27 March 2002 after the conclusion of the Agreement. The Steering Board stated that it *"expects that all parties actively ensure that the content of this Agreement is fully implemented in the constitutional amendments to be adopted by the parliaments of both Entities. The amendments to the Entity constitutions must be adopted fully in line with the Agreement reached by the political parties on 27 March 2002."*

In order to facilitate a solution in line with the Steering Board's requests, the High Representative this morning met Alliance party leaders Zlatko Lagumdžija, Safet Halilović and Kresimir Zubak in the company of Clifford Bond, the US Ambassador, and Rafael Valle Garagorri, the Ambassador of Spain, which currently holds the EU Presidency. The High Representative reminded the Federation politicians that it is their obligation to move ahead with the amendments to the Federation Constitution without any delay.

Tomorrow, the High Representative will meet with the four party leaders and representatives from the RS who participated in the negotiations leading to the 27 March Agreement.

The High Representatives takes this opportunity to remind all parties concerned that the negotiation process was completed on 27 March 2002. There can be no further negotiations. The 27 March Agreement must be adopted in full as soon as possible so that the Election Law can be completed in time.