

High Representative Extends Naturalisation Review Commission Mandate



The High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, today issued a [Decision extending the mandate of the BiH Commission for the Review of Decisions on Naturalisation of Foreign Citizens](#) for one year, to 16 February 2008. The Commission's mandate was due to expire at the end of the week.

The Office of the High Representative had warned that the Commission had not completed its task because of the number of cases that required review. The Commission had some 1,320 cases to review. Of these, decisions have been handed down in 856 cases, with a further 465 still to be completed.

The review process is part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's effort to build confidence in its citizenship and naturalisation practices.

"This work helps build trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the European Union and elsewhere that the country can manage these key functions responsibly which helps the visa facilitation process," the High Representative said today. "I have made it clear that I would act to assure the stability of the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina's ability to fight organised crime and international terrorism must not be brought into question."

Under normal circumstances, the country's Parliamentary Assembly would extend the Commission's mandate. Since the state-level House of Peoples is yet to be established, however, the Commission's mandate could only be extended by a Decision of the High Representative.

“It is clear that the delay in forming the state-level parliament is affecting the ability of the institutions to function. I look to the parties to finalise this process as soon as possible,” the High Representative said.

The Commission was established by the Council of Ministers on 16 February 2006 with a one-year mandate to review naturalisations of foreign citizens that took place between 6 April 1992 and 1 January 2006.