

# High Representative furthers Integrity of Positions of Public Trust

In a move aimed at increasing the integrity of positions of public trust and furthering the political independence of public companies and public institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has barred former public officials who were dismissed under the High Representative's powers, from holding any position of public trust.

Positions of public trust include any directly or indirectly elected, or appointed political and non-political public office, as well as any position of any nature in companies in which more than 25 percent of the capital is government-owned and/or if more than 25 percent of the business activities are financed from government budgets.

The High Representative strongly believes that it would undermine the integrity of public companies and any public office if dismissed former officials held positions there. As public officials, these individuals betrayed public trust. They worked against the interests of the citizens, seriously and persistently obstructed the Dayton Peace Agreement and violated domestic legislation. They must not be rewarded with positions of public trust in which they could continue to betray that trust.

The High Representative took this step after learning that some of the 22 individuals that he dismissed from public office last November, were being considered for appointment to public companies or positions of public trust, such as judgeships. Others continue to hold such positions, for example as members of steering boards of public companies.

The Office of the High Representative will request that the appropriate authorities remove the individuals in question from positions of public trust. Should such a specific request be ignored, any act taken by the company or the board the individual in question sits on, shall be null and void. The High Representative also reserves his right to further action if his decision is violated.

This measure of the High Representative is part a wider effort of the International Community to free public institutions – such as public companies, the judiciary and civil service – from political influence and prevent conflict of interest.