High Representative imposes Decision to integrate Zepce municipality

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today imposed a Decision to integrate the municipality of Zepce, which will put an end to years of lawlessness and illegal parallel structures, the legacy of the Bosniak-Croat war there. After exhaustive consultations with international experts and local officials, the High Representative's Decision will ensure a balanced approach to the legitimate political, social, economic and security interests of all citizens there.

The Decision, based on the powers entrusted in the High Representative by Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace Accords and reaffirmed by the Bonn Peace Implementation Council, is effective immediately. The High Representative made the Decision only after the repeated failure of elected politicians to reach a solution on their own to the unique situation in the Municipality.

The Decision breaks the deadlock in three major areas:

- the two parallel administrations in Zepce Municipality will be integrated
- institutions of the former "Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna" will be dismantled and integrated with all of Zepce Municipality within the legal structures of Zenica-Doboj Canton
- a compromise has been reached on the demands of Croats living in areas bordering Zepce Municipality, to be integrated with the latter

The Decision also urges the Federation Ministry of Defence to reduce the number of troops stationed in Zepce Municipality, either as a part of the planned 15 percent reduction in forces

to be completed by 31 December 2000 or as an overall redeployment of forces.

An Interim Board appointed by the High Representative will replace the municipal assembly, the mayor and the deputy mayor for at least six months from today and will exercise both legislative and executive authority until the next municipal elections in Zepce. The High Representative has appointed Richard Williams as the Supervisor to oversee implementation of the Decision.