High Representative meets Presidency of BiH

At the invitation of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the members of the Presidency, Jozo Kri`anovic, Beriz Belki} and @ivko Radi{i}, today in Sarajevo held a fruitful working meeting in a very positive atmosphere.

Among the topics discussed was an affirmation of the Constitutional position of the Presidency with the goal of solving the numerous political, economic and social problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was agreed that there is a need for better co-operation between BiH institutions at all levels and that the BiH Presidency would in future to a higher degree fulfil its Constitutional role of co-ordinating between the Entities and the State institutions, as defined by Article III, paragraph 4 of the BiH Constitution. The High Representative also supported the proposal that the Entity Presidents take a more active role in the work of the Presidency of BiH and contribute to the creation of joint policies.

The High Representative and the Presidency agreed that all levels of government in BiH had to push economic reform urgently, given the alarming signs that BiH’s growth rate remainslow. This relates in particular to the pressing need to rebalance the State budget in order to finance key institutions at the State level, such as the State Border Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The High Representative and the Presidency members agreed that the BiH authorities had to carry out significant saving and rationalisation measures to be able to demonstrate in negotiations with international financial institutions that they are meeting their responsibilities.

With the goal of achieving BiH's full contribution to the international fight against terrorism, the Presidency and the High Representative agreed that the State of BiH had to immediately implement the Citizens Identification Protection System (CIPS) project, for which the Council of Ministers bears particular responsibility.

The participants of the meeting also emphasised the importance of the work of the Constitutional Commissions of the Entities. The High Representative stressed the need for a swift implementation of the Constitutional Court's Decision on the constituent status of BiH's peoples in both Entities and told the Presidency that he would inform the political directors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council at their next meeting at the end of October of the work of the Constitutional Commissions.

The High Representative also stressed, and the Presidency agreed, that the transformation of the Public Broadcasting System in BiH had to be conducted in a transparent fashion, without political interference and in accordance with highest international standards as well as with the financial assistance and expertise of the international community. The participants agreed that a presentation of the broadcasting restructuring project would be organised for the Presidency prior to the launch of Federation TV.

At the end of the meeting, the Presidency members and the High representative concluded that the results and agreements achieved at such meetings were very important and in the spirit of partnership. They agreed to meet regularly in the future.