

High Representative meets U.N. Secretary General

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met the United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan, yesterday afternoon in New York in a very positive and friendly atmosphere, briefing him on developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the two last met in March.

The Secretary General expressed his support for the High Representative's initiative in launching the Partnership and Civic Fora and the High Representative's efforts to transfer full responsibility for the political process in BiH back to the people of the country. The Secretary General emphasized the need to focus now on capacity-building, empowering and professionalising domestic structures, for which the Civil Service Law is an important step.

In this context, the Secretary General underlined the urgent need for adoption of the Election Law by the Parliamentary Assembly and expressed his strong hope that this law would be passed before the end of August. With regard to the Constitutional Court's decision on constituent peoples, the Secretary General noted that it is crucial that the competent BiH political authorities assume responsibility for the speedy and effective implementation of this decision.

Further, the two officials discussed the results of the work of the new reform-oriented governments at State and Entity levels, the positive trends in refugee return and the issue of police reform in BiH. The Secretary General expressed concern about the efficiency of revenue collection at Entity and State level and stressed the need to improve this.

The Secretary General also welcomed and agreed to the High Representative's report on his approach to streamlining the

work of the main international agencies working in BiH.