High Representative removes Canton 10 Minister of Interior

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, yesterday issued a decision removing Branko Matic from his position of Minister of Interior of Canton 10 for persistently abusing his power and obstructing the implementation of the GFAP. The decision also bans him from holding any official or appointive public office in the future, unless authorised by the High Representative.

Under Mr. Matic's authority the Canton 10 Ministry of Interior has failed to comply with the High Representatives Decision on the use of neutral common insignia and symbols of July 30th, 1999. The continued use of nationalist insignia and symbols creates a climate of intimidation and discrimination and hampers the return process. Since taking office in July this year, Mr. Matic has persistently refused to comply with this law, simply ignoring three warning letters sent to him on this issue by the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As Minister, Mr. Matic also takes ultimate responsibility for the illegal store of weapons found in Livno Police Station on November 10th this year during a joint IPTF/SFOR weapons inspection.

Finally, the former Minster, failed to make any attempts to create a multiethnic police force in his Canton, in violation of the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entities agreement on multiethnic policing signed in May this year. The deadline for hiring 17 already identified minority police officers passed September 30th and a second deadline, of November 1st was agreed. Up until now Mr. Matic has hired none of these officers.

The High Representative has issued this decision in accordance with his powers under Annex 10 of the GFAP and the conclusions of the PIC conference in Bonn. Mr. Matic will be replaced according to normal procedure, and his successor will be subject to review by the High Representative.