

International Organisations Meeting in Trebinje Highlight Need for Economic Reform and Consolidation of Rule of Law

Today the Principals of international organizations seated in Mostar held a working meeting in Trebinje. The meeting was chaired by Deputy High Representative and Head of OHR South Jean-Pierre Bercot and attended by Commander of MNBSE General Chiarini, Head of Mostar UNHCR Office Mohammed Karimul Huq, Deputy Head of the OSCE Regional Office Dieter Leonhard, Head of the EC Office in Mostar Murray McCullough, and Chief EUPM Co-locator for Trebinje Norbert Wieland.

The Principals discussed the Special Auditor's report on Elektroprivreda RS, which revealed systematic robbery of citizens by those who are supposed to serve them. This has contributed to the dire economic situation in Eastern RS and points up the urgency of economic reform and establishing the rule of law. Economic growth can only be achieved if management of public utilities is transparent and if systematic efforts to combat corruption are undertaken. Without investment and orderly privatization this region will be marginalised economically, despite its strategic position and despite the progress that has been made to date in the transition to a market economy.

The Principals expressed their concern about security incidents and acts of vandalism which have occurred recently in the Trebinje region. Local community leaders have condemned some of these acts. What is now needed is an intensive response by the local police and the judiciary to restore confidence among citizens and ensure that a peaceful and

tolerant environment is secured.

The Principals called on the authorities in the Eastern Herzegovina area to make the fight against organized crime atop priority. In this respect, the Principals emphasized a need for more intra and inter-regional cooperation.

The International Organizations will continue to monitor the situation in Trebinje and Eastern Herzegovina closely and will continue to assist in implementing necessary reforms.