

# **Interview: Gerhard Enver Schroembgens, Senior Deputy High Representative: "Ministry of Police and Security Included in the B-H Government"**

A total of eight ministers plus a non-rotating chair \* Consensus will not be required for all decisions \* We have a solution with which all parties can and want to agree

A non-rotating chair and two deputies who will also be ministers, as well as eight ministries, including the ministry of interior – this is the most concise summary of the results of the Council of Ministers reform talks. The future government of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have ministries for foreign affairs, economic relations and foreign trade, finances and treasury, communications and transport, civil affairs, human rights and refugees, and justice, as well as the ministry for interior and security.

## **The issue of consensus**

This is what the Senior Deputy High Representative, Gerhard Enver Schroembgens, said in his interview to Dnevni avaz.

**Dnevni avaz:** Apart from the non-rotating chair and these ministries, what else has been agreed?

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** A new method of decision-making has also been agreed on. Until now the principle of consensus applied to every issue. This has slowed down the work of the Council of Ministers, and it was agreed that issues to be

discussed by parliament shall require a majority, whereas what remains shall be decided on by consensus. In case consensus is not reached, a deadline shall be set for the chair try to reach it. If this does not happen, the decision will be made by simple majority.

Also, the Ministry of European Integration shall cease to exist. A directorate for European integration within the office of the chair shall be established instead of it.

## **Constituent status decision**

**Dnevni avaz: Was there also talk of ethnic distribution of the ministries?**

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** No. There was no talk of that. The ethnic background of each minister is an issue that the parties will resolve in mutual talks, and the Law on the Council of Ministers will ensure compliance with the constituent status decision, therefore the peoples, as well as the others, will be represented.

**Dnevni avaz: This means that one can expect that someone from the ranks of “the others” will assume a ministerial post?**

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** A rule has been established that “the others” be represented either via one of the ministerial posts or the post of the secretary general of the B-H government.

**Dnevni avaz: Do you have the political consensus of the parties?**

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** I wouldn't like to overemphasize things, or mention consensus either. Some parties could be frightened into thinking that they have given us too much. What I can say is that we have a solution with which all parties can and want to agree.

**Dnevni avaz: When do you expect the establishment of the B-H**

**government?**

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** I don't know, but I expect this to happen soon and also that the agreement we reached yesterday will be fully implemented in the course of establishment of the Council of Ministers.

**Dnevni avaz: What about the ministry of defense?**

**Gerhard Enver Schroembgens:** Whether BiH will have a ministry of defense or not is a thing about which people here have to reach an agreement. We are also open for that possibility. Therefore, the decision is up to the elected politicians chosen by the people of BiH.

For instance, the ministry of interior and security could be used for some tasks. However, the working group that worked on the reform of the Council of Ministers did not resolve this major issue whether the ministry of defense needs to be introduced or not.