

Interview: Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative for BiH: "Sarajevo Agreement is not at an impasse and it will be fully implemented"

Sarajevo agreement must be implemented in full and nothing less will be accepted – The conduct of the nationalist parties irresponsible

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– The Agreement on implementation of the Decision on the constituent status of peoples in accordance with the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court is not at an impasse. It is not threatened and there is no risk that it will fail or be abandoned. It contains very explicit instructions for those who should implement it as to what they should do and how they should go about it. Parliamentary representatives are elected and paid to do just this – said the High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, at the beginning of an interview for "Dnevni Avaz".

Homework

– The easiest way would be to impose a solution. Yet, it is crucial in this case that those politicians, who have made efforts and sought to establish a partnership with the International Community, take ownership – Petritsch says.

DA: In the spirit of partnership to which you refer, wouldn't it be fair to do the following: The Agreement was reached as a

result of negotiations by the domestic politicians and you should impose it. This would be partnership, wouldn't it?

WP: This process has yet to be brought to an end and you will understand that in keeping with the tradition of this office, I do not intend to announce in advance any steps that I am going to take in the future. I assure you, however, that I will do everything within my power to have this Agreement fully implemented. This is what I have been doing over the last two months. I have never before devoted so much time to any other task, so many days and nights...

The conduct of the nationalist parties is utterly irresponsible. The SDA is hypocritical. They signed the Dayton Agreement and they have withdrawn from this process somewhere at dead center, they are not ready to support this, which constitutes a considerable improvement on the said Agreement. The HDZ took part in the negotiations with only one objective, not to sign what has been agreed. This is very irresponsible.

DA: Let us use metaphors: the agreement is a house. The Party for BiH announced that it would revoke its signature and the Serb parties adopted a different version to the one agreed upon. Has the house, which was constructed only recently, collapsed?

WP: The Agreement is a basis on which the constitutional home of two Entities is constructed. This home is called BiH. The deadline to complete the house has not expired yet and the parties have several days to do so.

DA: When does it expire?

WP: This is well known – on 18 April, when the Parliaments should adopt amendments that will be subsequently incorporated in the Election Law.

DA: This has been done in RS, yet the amendments that they adopted do not conform to the Agreement. Will the National

Assembly have to meet again so as to adopt necessary changes?

WP: Let me put it this way, these amendments are not active, pending the adoption of amendments in the Federation.

DA: Let us look at the position of Sulejman Tihic, Vice President of RSNA. He has never chaired a single session?

WP: Are we talking about the past or future?

DA: We are talking about the previous practice in RS.

WP: And we are also talking here about a revolutionary Agreement. It will change considerably the political structure of the RS, as well as the Federation, where Serbs will become political partners, entirely integrated in the system. The same will happen with Bosniacs and Croats in RS.

I can guarantee you that this will happen and the High Representative is a guarantee that the solutions will lead to a situation where all three constituent peoples will be political factors in both Entities.

Equal Rights

DA: Could you say that the RS President would not be able to take any major steps without the consent of his Vice Presidents?

WP: Such guarantees must be defined in terms of the constitution. This concerns a vital interest that must be guaranteed in the Constitution for all three constituent peoples. The same applies to the Federation where the Serb member of the Presidency shall have all rights as other members of this body.

The peoples in this country will have the guarantee that they will be represented in the authorities and that they will participate in the decision making process throughout BiH. This is the core of all the current discussions. In the end

the result will be the full implementation of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.

Anti-corruption Team Works on The Case of “AM Sped”

WP: I expect Prime Minister Behmen to take necessary steps so as to clarify the situation concerning payment to the firm “AM Sped”. We have full confidence that he will resolve the issue in the correct manner. I would not go into details, I cannot say whether the case involves corruption.

It is up to the Government and responsible authorities to do their job. My Anti-Corruption Team is studying documents in this case, however, I say again that I am fully confident that Prime Minister Behmen will resolve the issue and that he will do so in the most expedient way and in accordance with the law.

The Future of the HDZ

WP: The HDZ must finally face reality. By avoiding this, it has only extended the duration of its current situation. Ante Jelavic and the others whom I dismissed do not present the future of this party.

Obviously, the HDZ is slowly acknowledging this and I do hope that it will finally find a constructive solution for the sake of its own future and that of the Croat people. In doing this, it will succeed in leaving the past behind.