

Mostar political parties recognise only their interests



The Office of the High Representative expresses deep dissatisfaction with yet another failure by the Mostar City Council to elect a mayor in yesterday's voting.

Once again, the political parties seek to blame everyone but themselves for the current situation. However, the OHR notes that the parties, who were elected to serve the needs of the citizens of Mostar, have only pursued political negotiations based on their own selfish desires for power, position and material gain. In failing to prioritize the needs of ordinary citizens ahead of their own ambitions, they have brought shame upon themselves and the City of Mostar.

The OHR is further dismayed by the clear manipulation and scheming through public voting in the City Council, in which it appears the aim is to *not* elect a mayor rather than to elect one. In yesterday's final round of voting, nine councilors abstained from voting; nine votes towards either candidate would have elected a mayor. Prior to yesterday's City Council session, the OHR recommended to the parties to undertake secret balloting in the mayoral election, as provided for in the Statute, in order to free the process from such manipulation. The councilors chose not to heed the recommendation, and today there is no mayor.

Calls by certain parties for new local elections or changes to the Mostar Statute are neither realistic nor helpful. The OHR expects the Mostar City Council session to resume as soon as possible, and to repeat the mayoral election procedure as many times and as often as necessary until the mayor is elected. Further delay to elect the mayor is unacceptable.