

OHR Statement: RS

Obstructionism Must Stop

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, will be in Banja Luka tomorrow. He will meet RS Prime Minister Bukejlovic in the morning. As you know, the RS Supreme Auditor published reports earlier this year that uncovered huge losses of revenue at RS Elektroprivreda and Srpske Sume. These losses were caused by negligence and fraud. The RS Government was charged with cleaning up the mess and getting rid of the guilty managers. It hasn't done so in most of the cases. Ambassador Butler will be asking Mr Bukejlovic to explain why.

These audits are a public service. Their object is to identify shortcomings in public companies and recommend ways of addressing these shortcomings. However, until now the auditor hasn't uncovered shortcomings but wholesale theft and monumental mismanagement. Citizens are being robbed. The RS government must put an end to this robbery. Otherwise citizens will start to think that members of the government are colluding in it.

Also on the agenda for tomorrow's discussion will be the RS Government's inability to deliver reforms that, by universal consensus, will have a direct and positive impact on living standards. The list includes passage of a BiH Law on Obligations, that will modernise the business environment and help attract investment to create jobs, transfer of banking supervision responsibilities to a state-level institution so as to protect small depositors more effectively, passage of a BiH law on pharmaceuticals that will ensure the safety of medication sold in BiH, and supporting the issuance of state bonds to settle government debts to citizens. This is by no means an exclusive list.

These are all steps that have to be taken in order for BiH to move forward into the Stabilisation and Association process. But just as important they are all actions that have to be adopted in order to serve citizens' interests. Every day of delay is a day in which citizens are being ill served.

There will be a media opportunity at the conclusion of this meeting. We'll issue a media advisory with details later today.