

Council of Ministers asks OHR Stiglsmayer to apologize for her statement on GSM

Bosnia and Herzegovina

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Press Release

The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina is surprised by yesterday's statement of the representative of the Telecommunications Regulatory Agency (CRA), James Miles, reported by the local broadcasters and the printed press that "the price of a third GSM licence will not be high at this tender either". If the CRA and OHR representatives are committed to a transparent tender process, the details of which are still to be agreed on in co-operation with the BiH Council of Ministers, it is quite astonishing that someone may know in advance that "the price will not be high" or when the relevant talks will be completed.

The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomes the CRA efforts towards resolving the issue of granting a third GSM licence in co-operation with the local authorities. However, it is unacceptable that the CRA representative is informing the Council of Ministers via the press briefing that the negotiations about conditions of a new tender have already begun and that they should be completed in a couple of weeks. Namely, no negotiations have begun nor are they ongoing. Such statements are not in favour of the development of partnership relations and represent an additional confusion to the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina and potential bidders. Also, it additionally mars the credibility of the representatives of the International Community, which, in turn, calls in question

the possibility of achieving a serious agreement with such CRA representatives. The time and conditions under which the third licence is to be granted should be adjusted to the overall plans and activities in the telecommunications sector, rather than considering this issue separately.

Concerning the telecommunications sector policy, which Mr. Miles referred to, some things should be clarified. The Chair of the BiH Council of Ministers has informed the High Representative in BiH that the Council of Ministers will revise the principles of that policy and harmonise them with the nature of partnership relations between the BiH authorities and the International Community. All the more so, since that document was imposed by the High Representative at the time when there was no partnership between the authorities and the International Community.

The Council of Ministers takes this opportunity to express its astonishment at the OHR's Spokeswoman Alexandra Stiglmayer's statement to Oslobodjenje daily (9 August 2001) in which she said that OHR thought that it was disastrous that the tender was cancelled and that the West saw that as the Balkan staff.

The Council of Ministers is expecting that Ms. Stiglmayer will apologise publicly to the citizens and authorities of BiH. It is not acceptable that an OHR officer, who is enjoying BiH's hospitality and all diplomatic privileges and immunities, refers in such a disdainful manner to the attempt of the authorities of this country to take over the responsibility for strategic decisions. "Balkan staff" is a well-known synonym which causes a feeling of contempt toward the mentality of the people in the Balkans. The Council of Ministers believe that Ms. Stiglmayer said something like that unintentionally, without knowing the essence of "the Balkan staff in the Balkan pot house".

Press Service

*The round seal of the Press Service, Council of Ministers of
Bosnia and Herzegovina, duly affixed*

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