

Press Conference: High Representative To Give Police Restructuring Commission Its Mandate

The goal of this Commission is clear: to help BiH put in place a police structure that will be effective, efficient, and enforce the rule of law

Let me be blunt. At the moment, organised crime has the upper hand in this country. BiH's police forces are divided, over-staffed, under-resourced, and can't even operate across the IEBC; however, BiH's criminals are united, well-resourced, and operate across borders with impunity.

BiH is not a dangerous country. The streets of Sarajevo are safer than the streets of London . But it is a country in the grip of corruption and organised crime. The taxpayers' money is being stolen, indicted war criminals roam free, smuggling goes unchecked

The Prime Minister knows this. You, as journalists who cover the criminality that so often makes the news know this. Above all, the citizens of this country know this, because they see it every day. Opinion polls, show that the Rule of Law and the Fight against Crime and Corruption are the primary concern for BiH's citizens.

This problem is a consequence of the war and transition. It is not specific to BiH, but BiH's divided structures make it worse. And it is a problem BiH must tackle if the progress we have made is to become irreversible as a part of the process of peace stabilisation.

Above all, this is a structural problem. Much progress has been made by IPTF and now EUPM to raise individual standards. But now we need to address the weaknesses in the structure of the police itself

Membership one day of the EU and NATO is this country's best chance of long-term peace and prosperity. Yet both depend on BiH restructuring its police forces so that they act as an effective shield against the organised crime that uses the Balkans as a highway into Europe. NATO made that explicitly clear in its communiqué at Istanbul . The European Commission has made it explicitly clear in its Feasibility Study

If BiH is to get in to Europe, it will have to restructure its police. It's as simple as that. But it is even more immediate than that. For many people in BiH Europe is a distant destination they want to get to. But having to apply for visas to travel abroad is a daily reality – and a constant affront to their rights as free citizens. What they want now is visa free travel. And I agree. But we will never get visa free travel unless we have the effective rule of law. And we can't have the effective rule of law with 19 police forces. So this Commission is essential for any hope we may have for visa free travel, soon

For this reason today, and with agreement from Prime Minister Terzic, I have issued a decision setting up the Police Restructuring Commission

In short, the Commission's mandate will be to recommend a single and effective police structure for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina . To this end, it will identify the operational, financial, constitutional and legislative issues that may at present stand in the way of creating such a single structure and will propose solutions to them

The Commission will also examine how the Police fit in to the wider justice system as a whole

The Commission will have 12 members appointed on the basis of their positions in the following Law enforcement and Government structures – the details will be available after the press conference

The Prime Minister and I have given the Commission until the end of this calendar year to report on its findings.

It is my pleasure now to introduce to you the Chairman of this Police Restructuring Commission, the former Prime Minister of Belgium, Wilfried Martens. I think we are extraordinarily fortunate that a man of such distinction and experience has agreed to take up this Post. I'm not sure if there is a person more qualified, both from the perspective of leadership, knowledge of European Institutions and experience of bringing reform to complex constitutional and policing arrangements, for such a task in a country with three peoples, 3 languages and many layers of government. The experience Prime Minister Martens has should instil everyone with confidence.

POLICE RESTRUCTURING COMMISSION

The Commission shall be composed of twelve members and seven associate members.

The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Commission will be appointed by the High Representative.

The other Commission will be as follows;

- The Minister of Security of BiH;
- The Minister of Interior of the FBiH and the Minister of Interior of the RS (who shall both serve as representatives of their respective Entity Prime Ministers)
- Two Ministers of Interior of the FBiH Cantons (nominated by the FBiH House of Peoples within fifteen (15) days to

represent all cantonal Ministries of Interior)

- A Mayor from the FBiH and a Mayor from the RS (nominated by the respective Associations of municipalities and cities of each Entity within fifteen days) and the Mayor of the Brcko District.
- A representative of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The EUPM Commissioner.

In addition to the members of the Commission referred to in this Article, the Commission shall be composed of the following associate members:

- The Chief Prosecutor of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Director of the State Investigation and Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Director of the State Border Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Director of the Office for Co-operation with Interpol;
- The Director of the Federation Administration of Police;
- The Director of Police of the Republika Srpska;
- A Cantonal Police Commissioner (nominated by the FBiH Cantonal Police Commissioners within fifteen days)

Wilfried Martens – CV

Wilfred Martens was appointed the International Chairman of the BiH Police Restructuring Commission today. Martens was the Prime Minister of Belgium for more than a decade when between 1979 and 1992, he led eight governments.

Martens co-founded the European Peoples Party (EPP) in 1976, and has been President of the European Peoples Party (EPP) since 1990. Between October 2000 and November 2001 he was President of the Centrist Democrat International. He was President of the European Union of Christian Democrats from

1993 until its merger with the EPP in 1996.

Martens joined the Flemish Christian Democratic party in 1962, becoming its chairman in 1972 and entering parliament in 1974. He sat as a Deputy in the Belgian Chamber of Representatives (*federal parliament*) between 1974 and 1991, and served as a Senator between 1991 and 1994. 1994 he became a Member of the European Parliament, Chairing the EPP Group.

President Martens holds a doctorate in law, and Degrees in Law and Philosophy from LouvainUniversity, he also studied international political science at Harvard University, USA. He has practiced law at the Ghent Court of Appeal since 1960.

Among the numerous national and international distinctions, in 1998 he was honoured with the Charles V Prize for his contribution to the European Union.

Born on April 19, 1936 in Sleidinge, eastern Flanders, Belgium , Wilfred Martens is married and has five children.