

# **OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar**

The High Representative wrote yesterday to representatives of Mostar authorities and political parties listing issues that they have failed to deal with as agreed at his meeting with them on 4 July.

At the 4 July meeting, they agreed to advertise and fill the undisputed civil servant positions by early October. The High Representative is disappointed that this commitment has not been met, as he considers this a priority when it comes to completing unification of the city administration.

The High Representative noted that the city authorities decided to separate the issue of appointments from that of the urban planning department, thereby clearing the way to proceed with the appointment process. Given this, he cannot understand why the request for vacancies announcements has not been forwarded to the Civil Service Agency.

At the 4 July meeting, the parties also agreed to submit a concrete proposal for the unification of the public utilities companies by 31 July. In their letter of 28 July, Mayor Beslic and President Coric reported instead that an expert group would be formed to look at the issue, and make its recommendations to the City Council by 20 September. While the High Representative understands the legal complexity of the issue, he cannot accept that the establishment of a working group acts as a pretext not to proceed on substance.

The High Representative also expected to receive by 1 August a

progress report on the harmonisation of the statutes of HRT, public kitchens, and the cultural institutions, in accordance with the City Council's budget amendments from 29 May. The High Representative has not received any such report and understands that nothing substantial has been achieved on these issues.

In this way, with the exception of the timeline for the downsizing of surplus workers, extremely few of the concrete results to which the parties committed themselves at the 4 July meeting have been delivered.

Resolving these issues is the joint responsibility of the political parties that hold power in Mostar, and have held power for the past 10 years.

"I have stayed silent until now, but I am beginning to question the sincerity and the competence of the parties to deliver what is required," the High Representative said in his letter to Mostar authorities and political parties. "The political situation in Mostar remains high on the agenda of the Peace Implementation Council."

The High Representative made clear in his letter that he expects immediate action to get all issues back on track, most crucially the external civil service recruitment procedure, and that he will not accept further delays or inertia. The High Representative also specified that he will not accept the merging or linking of unrelated issues, or the threat of political blockades from any party or individual, and he will not hesitate to publicly name and blame individuals and political parties responsible for the situation.

In view of the upcoming elections, the High Representative also stated that he would consider any move to use the political issues facing the City Council for the benefit of one campaign or another as potentially destabilising to the security of Mostar. He stressed that he considers the

stability and security of BiH to be his top priority and that he would not hesitate to use his Bonn Powers if either is threatened.

The High Representative is planning to visit Mostar on 28 August, when he expects to receive reports on progress on all these issues.