

Parliamentarians Put Personal Interests Above Interests of All BiH Citizens

The failure today by the Joint Harmonization Committee of the BiH Parliament to reach consensus on the final text of the State Ombudsman Law “could hamper BiH’s prospects within the Stabilisation and Association (SAA) process”, Senior Deputy High Representative Martin Ney said today. “Today’s failure has damaged a key BiH institution dedicated to protecting individual human rights. It also sends a negative signal to Brussels regarding BiH’s determination to fulfil promises made in good faith,” said Ney.

“Today, personal interests were put above the interests of all BiH citizens. There was an absolute lack of willingness to save the Law, which could easily have been done. As a result the Law goes back to the Council of Ministers – the start of the Legislative process, which represent a set back of at least four to six months,” Ambassador Ney said.

The State Ombudsman Law, which provides for the merger of the Entity Ombudsman Offices at the State level, is one of a small number of Council of Europe post-accession requirements that BiH still has to fulfil. As such, it is a requirement of BiH’s EU Stabilisation and Association process.

As an SAA requirement this is not legislation that the OHR can or will impose; BiH’s politicians are responsible for negotiating and implementing the requirements of the road to Europe.

“Disregarding Council of Europe requirements in such a way would indicate that BiH is not ready to fulfil its international obligations,” said Ambassador Ney. He said this

was “a worrying signal at a time that BiH is negotiating with the European Commission.”

The Law was adopted in different texts by the two Houses of BiH's Parliament in November last year. This legislation has been on the agenda of the Harmonization Committee since 4 January 2006.