

Progress On Rule Of Law, State Property Remains Blocked



The High Representative and EU Special Representative Miroslav Lajčák, the Head of the European Commission Delegation, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, as well as the French Ambassador Maryse Berniau in capacity of the incoming EU Presidency were attending a thematic session of the BiH Council of Ministers today on Jahorina devoted to obligations stemming from the European integration process. The High Representative and EU Special Representative set out progress and problems on the five objectives and two conditions defined by the Peace Implementation Council as requirements for OHR transition to an EUSR.

With respect to the current stall on state property apportionment, the HR/EUSR pointed out to the need to respect the agreement reached in October 2007 by the State Property Commission according to which each level of government will own assets they need to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities.

The HR/EUSR welcomed progress in three of the five objectives:

- Agreement on movable defence property has been reached.
- The fiscal sustainability of the State is being strengthened; legislation on the National Fiscal Council is close to coming into force, the different versions of

the law passed now need to be harmonized,

- The Rule of Law is being entrenched; a Steering Board composed of State, Entity, Brcko District and Canton representatives has agreed the Justice Sector Reform Strategy, and the Law on the Stay of Aliens and Asylum was adopted in April and by-laws are now being drafted.

Lajčák noted that if an agreement on the formula for allocating revenue from indirect taxation is to be adopted by the ITA Governing Board by the end of June, State and Entity Finance Ministers will need to play an active role. The Law on the Brcko District and additions to the BiH Constitution are still under discussion.

The PIC also set two conditions; the first, signing the SAA, will be met next Monday. The second, a positive assessment of the situation in BiH based on full compliance with the Peace Agreement, “is not merely a formality,” said Lajčák. He called upon ministers and their political leaders to refrain from nationalist and anti-State rhetoric and function during the election campaign as an effective government, in service of the citizens,

“The latest polls show that public support across BiH for EU membership is up to 85%. “It is your job to give this to them,” Lajčák told Ministers today, stressing the need of the CoM to focus on issues such as unemployment, corruption and education, which are identified by vast majority of the citizens of BiH.

In February the Peace Implementation Council defined five objectives and two conditions that must be met for the PIC Steering Board to be able to take a decision to close the OHR. “It is the authorities in BiH, and not the OHR, that is responsible for delivering,” said Lajčák.

He welcomed the initiative of the CoM to continue with monthly thematic sessions to assess progress on EU integrations.