

Rejection Of Urgent Procedure a Negative Signal Regarding ICTY Co-operation

The BiH Parliament's decision this week not to deal with legislative amendments on future War Crimes trials in BiH under urgent procedure will delay the start of war crimes trials in BiH. The OHR is concerned that this sends a very negative signal with regard to BiH's determination to co-operate fully with The Hague.

The proposed amendments to BiH's Courts, Prosecutors Office, Criminal Code and Witness Protection laws – if dealt with under urgent procedure – would enable the transfer of cases from the ICTY to the BiH Court 's Special War Crimes Chamber early next year.

Both Houses of the BiH Parliament have refused to deal under urgent procedure with the set of laws regulating the future of War Crimes trials in BiH. If these amendments are not adopted by the end of September the Special War Crimes Chamber will not be fully operational by this deadline.

BiH needs to make very significant improvements in its cooperation with the ICTY, which has been described by the High Representative as "completely inadequate". Refusing to deal with these amendments under urgent procedure endangers BiH's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. "This development sends an extremely negative signal – this is an urgent question which BiH needs to resolve without delay," the High Representative said today.

The OHR urges BiH's Parliamentarians to do everything possible to ensure that they meet the deadline and adopt this package of amendments before the end of September – it would be intolerable if the future of this country and its citizens

were jeopardised by politicians putting short term electoral gain ahead of reforms that will have a long term benefit.