

BiH House of Representatives Session Unacceptable

The High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, would like to express his dissatisfaction with Thursday's joint session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The initiative to discuss European integration and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe is a welcome sign that delegates are beginning to approach the level of engagement in the peace implementation process which is expected of them. However, the failure of the House of Representatives to secure a quorum at the end of a six-hour debate is completely unacceptable. It seriously undermines the credibility of this House in the eyes of both the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the International Community at a time when international attention is upon them. The High Representative should hardly need to remind delegates of Bosnia Herzegovina's application to join the Council of Europe, nor of the imminence of the Stability Pact conference.

The duty of all elected delegates is to fulfill their obligations. Specifically, they are obliged to attend all plenary sessions and all meetings of working committees, and to engage actively in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly in general. Duties stemming from other positions or functions are of secondary importance and not a valid excuse for delegates failing to meet their obligations. If delegates of either house are unable to attend, as they should, then they should resign, so that a candidate who is able to work on a full time basis as a delegate can take their seat. Furthermore, any delegate who obstructs the functioning of the Parliamentary Assembly, particularly the legislative process, will force me to consider resorting to use of the powers invested in me at Bonn.