

First Meeting of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Group

On Friday, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, addressed the first meeting of the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Group (ACT Group) at the OHR offices in Sarajevo.

Stressing the importance of the ACT Group, the High Representative said that the Group was set up to demonstrate publicly and forcefully the International Community's commitment to fight fraud and corruption, foster transparency at all levels of government, and ensure that the International Community's Comprehensive Anti-Corruption Strategy, which was endorsed by the Steering Board in March, was fully coordinated and implemented.

The ACT Group, chaired by Principal Deputy High Representative Ralph Johnson, includes representatives from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the European Commission (EC), the Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office (CAFAO), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Management Group (IMG), the Council of Europe (CoE), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the UN Judicial System Assessment Program (UN JSAP), the International Police Task Force (IPTF), the Stabilization Forces (SFOR), and the US Anti-Corruption Team (FACT).

During the meeting, the participants actively discussed key issues to ensure the effectiveness of the fight against corruption, such as the de-politicization of public administration, transparency in budgetary matters and the funding of political parties, reform of the criminal procedure and other legal codes. They also stressed the importance of

working with civil society to energize them to participate in their government and to take responsibility for its actions.

Ambassador Johnson summarized the discussions by saying that participants agreed that all available resources needed to be maximized in the fight against fraud and corruption. The ACT Group also agreed, he said, that the rate at which responsibility for governance and effective and transparent operation of public institutions by political leaders of this country must be accelerated.

Senior Deputy High Representative Mattei Hoffmann concluded that it is only when civil servants serve all the people who elected them, and not party officials or ethnic groups, that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to rebuild their lives and their country.