

HDZ again rejects Offer for Dialogue

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, is concerned that yet another offer he has made to the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union) to represent the interests of the Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina and address all matters of concerns within legal structures, has not yet been answered.

Last week, he sent a letter to the HDZ, asking the party once again to nominate candidates for two vacant Croat seats in the Constitutional Commission of the Federation House of Representatives.

The Constitutional Commissions in the two Entities were set up in January to, among other tasks, draft proposals for the implementation of the Decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the constituent status of all three BiH peoples in both Entities. The two Commissions comprise 16 members each, four from each constituent people and four representing Others. This ground-breaking ruling will ensure that the rights of Croats and Bosniaks in Republika Srpska, and the rights of Serbs in the Federation are respected.

Over the past four months the High Representative repeatedly called on the HDZ to nominate candidates for the Federation Commission. He even extended a first deadline in February in an exceptional attempt to accommodate the HDZ.

As the High Representative has stated many times, he is mandated to, and takes a personal interest in discussing all issues of concern with BiH Croats, including HDZ officials who abide by the law and the constitutions of this country. He refuses, however, to enter into any dialogue with representatives of extra-legal, unconstitutional structures.

While the HDZ tries to make the public believe that it is ready for dialogue, it thus far has used every opportunity to prevent any meaningful discussion. In the same manner, it claims that its elected representatives have been prevented from

taking up their seats in the legal institutions, while the HDZ itself has decided to boycott the legal institutions of the Federation and the State of BiH.

The essence of every democracy is the resolution of problems through discussions and negotiations within the legal and constitutional institutions. The implementation of the Constitutional Court's ruling will entail changes to the internal structures of the two Entities. The HDZ has consistently claimed this to be its goal. However, in practice the party has refused to participate in the ongoing legal process. As its activities show, it is ready to sacrifice the economic and social future of its constituency because a few within its ranks find the lack of law and order to be more profitable than rule of law.

The High Representative calls on all HDZ officials to start sincerely representing the interests of their constituency.