

# High Representative Amends Single National Passport Law

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today issued a Decision enabling the old, Entity-identifiable passports, to be issued until the BiH Single National Passport becomes available.

On September 29th, the High Representative decided that the BiH Single National Passport would be issued from November 30th. Unfortunately, but not entirely unpredictably, the BiH Ministry of Treasury was late in transferring the advance payment to the French printing company engaged to print the passport. OHR attributes this failure to inexcusable bureaucratic inefficiency and the inability of the Federation to fulfil its BiH Constitutional obligation to fund the State budget. As a result the passports themselves have not yet been completed.

The old passports will be issued only until the conditions for issuing the new passport have been met and will serve the immediate travel needs of BiH Citizens. Citizens, who receive the old passport after December 12th, shall be entitled, if they so choose, to exchange the old passport for the new Single National Passport without incurring additional cost. OHR would like to point out to BiH citizens that they should take the old passport only if absolutely necessary, as the new Single National Passport will be valid for 5 years, while the old one for less than 2 years. It is expected that the new Single National Passport will be available in the coming weeks.

The High Representative issued this Decision to ensure that the BiH citizens' ability to travel would not be compromised, again, by the bureaucratic inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the BiH political leadership.