

High Representative imposes Amendments to Law on Travel Documents

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today imposed Amendments to the Law on Travel Documents for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The single passport is a significant step forward, promoting the freedom of movement and ensuring equal treatment for all BiH citizens. The High Representative made the Decision by exercising the powers vested in him by Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace Agreement and by Article XI of the Conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) conference held in Bonn in 1997.

His decision, after consultation with the PIC Steering Board in Brussels on Wednesday, has come after weeks of obstructionist behaviour from the BiH Parliament and the Joint Presidency. The latter made a solemn promise before the United Nations in 1999 to adopt the Law. Yesterday, the House of Representatives failed to adopt the amendments as the deadline agreed in New York was about to elapse. The Serb delegates voted against the Amendments, putting a dismal end to eight weeks of completely unproductive work by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Arguments by the country's various nationalist leaders against the single passport are based on blinkered, self-serving ideals that are out of step with what most BiH citizens want today – integration with Europe, the ability to travel freely and a prosperous future. The popularity of BiH's registration plates proves that.