

High Representative's Visit to Slovenia

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, today visited Slovenia. In his talks with Slovenia's President Milan Kucan; Prime Minister, Janez Drnovsek; Foreign Minister, Dimitrij Rupel, and the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Slovenian Parliament, the High Representative stressed Slovenia's important role with regard to the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Already now, Slovenia is one of the most important investors in the country. The High Representative underlined the importance of economic reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina, stating that the country "has no time to lose". "I want 2001 to be a year of deep-rooted economic reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina", the High Representative said.

With regard to the economic future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative paid respect to Slovenian businesspeople who were among the first to invest in Bosnia and Herzegovina and have thus created valuable employment in a job-starved country. Emphasising the role of Slovenia as a bridge for Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EU, the High Representative agreed with the Slovenian leadership that Slovenia has a special responsibility to support regional development.

Concerning the recent debate in international newspapers about a partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative and his Slovenian interlocutors agreed that this is not an option and would destabilise the whole region.

The High Representative especially appreciated the warm reception and friendly atmosphere during his visit.