
WHY BOSNIA STILL NEEDS A HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

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The rule of thumb should be to do the opposite of what the leading ethnic separatists are advocating – which is closure of the OHR.

The Office of the High Representative in Bosnia is a sui generis institution. It originated more than three decades ago, at the Dayton peace negotiations in 1995, as a body to oversee the civilian implementation of the peace agreement. The military part of the agreement was overseen by the US-led Implementation Force, IFOR, and then its continued mission known as Stabilisation Force, SFOR.

Americans took the lead on military and security issues, and this is the primary reason why this aspect of the Dayton peace accords was implemented successfully. After the talks at Dayton were concluded, a Peace Implementation Council, PIC, comprising 55 states and agencies was established to implement the civilian part of the agreement. The PIC names the High Representative, a position always – to date – held by a European. But, in the PIC, the voice of the US is the key.

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