



PRESS RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMBER ON THE END OF ITS MANDATE AND CHANGES TO ITS PROCEDURE DURING THE LAST THREE MONTHS OF ITS OPERATION

I. End of the mandate of the Human Rights Chamber

The three Parties to the Human Rights Agreement in Annex 6, which established the Human Rights Chamber, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, have signed an "Agreement pursuant to Article XIV of Annex 6 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina". Bosnia and Herzegovina signed it on 22 September 2003, the Federation and the Republika Srpska on 25 September 2003. The Agreement entered into force on 25 September 2003.

According to this Agreement:

- the mandate of the Human Rights Chamber ends on 31 December 2003.
- on 1 January 2004 a Human Rights Commission within the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina will start to operate; it will be composed of 5 judges (3 citizens of BiH and 2 foreigners) of the Chamber.
- cases received by the Chamber between 1 October and 31 December 2003 will be registered under provisional numbers and shall be decided by the Human Rights Commission; exceptionally, requests for provisional measures received in this period will be registered and decided by the Chamber.
- the Human Rights Commission will work from 1 January to 31 December 2004; it has competence to decide the cases registered before the Human Rights Chamber before 1 October 2003, and those provisionally registered between 1 October and 31 December 2003.
- For those who have filed an application with the Chamber before 1 October 2003, it is provided that their application will be decided either by the Chamber before 31 December 2003 or by the Human Rights Commission during 2004.
- Regarding applications filed between 1 October and 31 December 2003, it is provided that they will be decided by the Human Rights Commission during 2004.

- After 31 December 2003, the Constitutional Court will, in accordance with its jurisdiction as provided in Annex 4, decide on new cases concerning the protection of human rights.

II. Addendum to the Rules of Procedure

The “Agreement pursuant to Article XIV of Annex 6 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina” also provides – in its Article (3) –that, starting on 1 October 2003, the Chamber shall have two small panels composed of national judges who will decide, by unanimity, on admissibility of applications and on strike out of applications.

In order to implement this part of the “Agreement pursuant to Article XIV”, the Chamber has on 6 October 2003 adopted an “Addendum to its Rules of Procedure”, which sets up the two “Small Panels” of the Chamber. This addendum enters into force on 7 October 2003.

III. Amended Rule governing requests for review against Chamber decisions

Moreover, the Chamber has adopted amendments to its Rules of Procedure, as a result of which it is no longer possible to request review of decisions on admissibility and to strike out. The deadline for submitting requests for review has been shortened to 15 days. These amendments enter into force on 7 October as well.