

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka and Mostar

High Representative Welcomes BiH HoR Adoption of Single HJPC Law

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, welcomed the adoption of the single HJPC in the BiH House of Representatives today.

"I want to congratulate the BiH Parliament for taking a major decision yesterday to strengthen the rule of law in BiH, and give the citizens of this country the professional and impartial judiciary they deserve. Strengthening the judiciary by adopting legislation establishing a single HJPC is one of the 16 conditions that BiH must fulfil before the European Commission will enter into negotiations with BiH for a Stability and Association Agreement," the High Representative said today. "BiH's House of Representatives has taken the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to Europe and to the Rule of Law in BiH. This will contribute to renewing confidence among the citizens of the country, that the BiH authorities genuinely support the fundamental principle of an independent judiciary, free of political and other undue influence."

Under the new Law the single HJPC will be responsible for hearing disciplinary procedures against Judges and Prosecutors, and for making appointments as judicial vacancies arise. International financial assistance for BiH's judicial system is also dependent on the Council working according to its mandate.

The BiH House of Peoples is to consider the single HJPC Law 21 May. The High Representative expects its representatives to show the same commitment to Europe and the Rule of Law as their colleagues in the BiH House of Representatives.