

High Representative's Letter to the Citizens of Mostar

Dear Mostarians,

We are at the opening of a new year, and, I hope, a new moment of opportunity for Mostar and its citizens.

We now have the chance to move decisively beyond the troubles of the past and to build a better future for all the people of your historic city.

Mostar will now have a new government structure. It will get rid of the duplicatory institutions and costs that have hit your pocket and paralysed your basic city services for far too long. Did you know, for example, that the six current municipalities cost 32 million KM a year? That's 310 KM from you and every other Mostarian each year that could be going on better schools, new hospitals, bigger benefits and improved services. That's why we are now moving to a single unified City administration – so more money can be spent on you, Mostar's people, and less on politicians, parallelism and wasteful political structures.

But the new system has been carefully designed to ensure that no single people can dominate the others. Mostar will now have a single Assembly, a single administration and a single budget – but control of these will be distributed among all the representatives of Mostar's citizens, and all its constituent peoples.

I repeat. No single people should be able to dominate Mostar. And under this new system, with its Vital National Interest Mechanisms, its electoral system and its power sharing arrangements, nobody will. That is guaranteed.

In reaching the decisions announced today, one thought has been in my mind. Not the competing interests of any particular ethnic or political group in Mostar, but the interests of the people – all the people – of this city, who deserve a better future. I hope you agree with me that it's time to start building that future.

I send my best wishes to you and your family for the future.

Paddy Ashdown

PS. We can't build a future for Mostar without your help. This is your City; your future; and the future of your children. Please make sure your voice is heard by your politicians.

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