

CoM Must Send Narcotics Legislation to Parliament without further delay

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, met yesterday in Sarajevo with Professor Hamid Ghodse, the President of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). Discussion focused on concerns that current legislation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is at the Entity-level only, together with outdated drug control mechanisms, means that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not complying with international narcotics controls to which it has subscribed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has so far failed to introduce adequate controls over acetic anhydride, a substance used to manufacture heroin. Seizure reports have highlighted the fact that weaknesses in Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions have turned the country into a safe haven for illicit drug and chemical trafficking. Outdated and fragmented legislation that is not applicable in the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and outdated lists of internationally controlled substances have been among the factors preventing effective action by the authorities.

The High Representative told Prof. Ghodse that Bosnia and Herzegovina has, however, started to address this problem. The Entity Ministries of Health and Brcko District have, as a temporary measure – until the adoption of a new comprehensive list – updated their lists of narcotic and psychotropic substances and the plants that form the basis for drug production.

The European Commission's Feasibility Study states that Bosnia and Herzegovina must take action to prevent the illegal use of chemical precursors and to reinforce its anti-narcotics

trafficking structures.

The High Representative and the INCB President welcomed the fact that draft State-level legislation banning controlled substances has been prepared. This draft Law on the Prevention and Suppression of Narcotic Drugs will modernise Bosnia and Herzegovina 's legislation and close gaps between Entity laws. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers must now ensure that this draft legislation moves to Parliament when it reconvenes in early September.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities must take this issue seriously. Most of the narcotics produced in or trafficked from Bosnia and Herzegovina make their way into Western Europe – but drug abuse is becoming a serious problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself. The High Representative and INCB President called on the BiH Parliament to approve the law as a matter of urgency when it reconvenes in September.