

High Representative: SIPA Internationally Recognised

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today welcomed the decision by the Egmont Group to invite Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a member. The Egmont Group is a worldwide network of law enforcement agencies (comprising, with the addition of BiH, 85 countries) that gather and share financial intelligence on money laundering. Criminal networks, including organised crime, war crime and terrorist networks, launder money to hide the origin of the profits of their criminal activities and to further fund their activities.

“The Egmont group’s invitation to BiH is an indication of its confidence in the abilities of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) and its Financial Intelligence Department,” said the High Representative, adding that it is recognition of “the progress SIPA has made since receiving its expanded mandate less than a year ago.”

The High Representative noted that this invitation reflects the fact that “SIPA is concerned with doing the job of policing, its mandate being to focus on the most serious crimes, rather than on politics.”

BiH’s membership in this exclusive group will open the door to further strengthening of BiH’s efforts to fight criminal networks. It will enable the Financial Intelligence Department to expand and systematise the exchange of financial intelligence, improve the expertise and capabilities of its staff, and foster better communication with its counterparts in other countries.

Crime recognizes no borders and to fight crime effectively the law enforcement agencies must tackle this problem across the State and take part in the wider global struggle. SIPA’s

acceptance in Egmont shows that BiH is taking its place in the international fight against crime.