

Statement: High Representative Emphasises Dayton Must Be Respected

In his meeting today with Serbian President Boris Tadic, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, noted that in the tenth year since Dayton, not a single Hague indictee has been arrested by the RS authorities. The High Representative underlined the fact that that this is a fundamental part of the agreement and must be adhered to. Nothing is a substitute for results, and the greatest responsibility for doing this lies with the RS.

The High Representative said that the Dayton Agreement must be upheld in full, adding that the RS is failing to do this as it is failing to co-operate fully with the ICTY. A new mood regarding co-operation with the ICTY is evident in some quarters in the RS, but that is not enough on its own. The High Representative told President Tadic that the International Community in BiH wants the RS to succeed in fulfilling these conditions. The International Community is willing to help them do this and the HR believes the RS Authorities can achieve this goal.

The High Representative explained that the measures he announced on 16 December are designed to remove obstacles that are preventing the RS authorities from cooperating fully with the ICTY. "It is neither my policy nor my goal to abolish the RS," the High Representative said, "but those who wish to enjoy the protections of Dayton must respect all the provisions of Dayton: they cannot pick and choose between those parts of the Dayton Agreement they like and those they don't."

The High Representative was in Belgrade as part of a regular

series of visits to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro, countries which, as signatories of the Dayton Peace Agreement, have a particular obligation to ensure the implementation of the Peace Accords. "Belgrade has a key role to play not just in meeting its own ICTY obligations, but also in working with the BiH authorities, including those in the RS, to deliver those PIFWCs who freely cross the Serbian border," the High Representative said today. Belgrade is obliged under international law to assist the RS authorities to apprehend indicted war criminals, not to frustrate those efforts.

The High Representative repeated that he will not change BiH's Constitution. The reforms required for BiH to continue on the road of Euro-Atlantic integration may require changes but the very fact that they are required for the Stabilisation and Association process means that they can not be imposed by the High Representative. Reforms in BiH have resulted in constitutional change but these changes were brought about by BiH's desire to bring its institutions and legislation into line with Europe and NATO. The High Representative said that if BiH wants to continue along the road to Euro-Atlantic integration, and if it wants to be able to provide benefits such as visa free travel, security guarantees and free access to the biggest trade market in the world to its citizens, then the RS must show a greater willingness to reform.

In his meeting with the High Representative, the Serbian Prime Minister, Vojislav Kostunica, gave a personal undertaking that he will do everything possible to assist the RS to extradite individuals indicted by the ICTY to the Hague