

BiH Minister of Defence Appointed Co-Chair of DRC

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today appointed BiH Defence Minister Nikola Radovanovic as co-chair of the Defence Reform Commission (DRC). The High Representative made this appointment based on a recommendation from current DRC Chairman James Locher.

The High Representative concurred with this proposal noting that, "ultimate responsibility for implementing the DRC's recommendations lies with the BiH authorities, this appointment reflects that fact, while the DRC and its international representatives remain in place to assist and monitor progress."

Minister Radovanovic has shown a proactive approach to defence reform and has been an important driving force in achieving speedy and tangible results ahead of NATO's Istanbul Summit scheduled for June this year. The appointment of Minister Radovanovic to co-chair the DRC also signals the growing role of the BiH authorities in setting the agenda for future defence reforms, which will bring this country closer to Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The High Representative, on 3 February 2004 extended the mandate of the Defence Reform Commission and its chairman, James Locher. This extension will help BiH make real progress in implementing the defence reforms that will allow it to fulfil the membership conditions for NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP).

The High Representative also approved the proposal from Chairman Locher to appoint the deputies of the Joint Commission on Security and Defence of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, Branko Zrno and Šefik Džaferović to the DRC. The High Representative has also welcomed

Chairman Locher's intention to appoint the Croat Commander of the Operational Command as a statutory military advisor of the DRC.