

Internationally-Chaired Commission for Reforming Mostar Established

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and the Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, attended today the formal signing of a commitment by the top representatives of six parties represented in Mostar City Council. This commitment is to the Commission charged with finding a permanent solution for the restructuring of the City of Mostar according to best European practice.

During his visit the High Representative announced the next step for Mostar City restructuring – an Internationally chaired Commission for Reforming the City of Mostar. The Commission will examine the legal measures necessary to reform the institutional structures in Mostar. It will identify constitutional and legislative provisions which prevent Mostar functioning as a modern European city, and it will propose legislative and other legal instruments to resolve this situation.

The High Representative appointed Mr. Norbert Winterstein as chairman of a Commission of BiH experts and political-party representatives tasked with resolving issues related to the unification of the city of Mostar. Mr. Winterstein was the head of the EU Department of City administration in Mostar, between 1994 and 1996. When appointing Mr. Winterstein as the Commission's chair the High Representative noted that "neither the IC nor the Mostar stakeholders can allow this Commission to fail – it must complete the process successfully by the end of the year and deliver a positive result."

The political parties represented in the Mostar City Council will each appoint a negotiator and a legal expert to the Commission. The political parties have already nominated their representatives; SDA: Fatima Leho and Mirsad Ceman/ HDZ: Josip Merdzo and Ilija Filipovic/ SBiH: Safet Omerovic and Sahbaz Dzihanovic/ SDP: Zeljko Komsic and Husein Kapic/ RZB: Adisa

Vucina and Mile Kudic/ SDU: Danijel Puvaca and Jusuf Jelin. The Commission's chairman is authorized to appoint up to five experts as members to the commission.

The Commission will report to the High Representatives, the Council of Ministers, the Government of the Federation of BiH, the Government of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton, and the Mayor and Deputy Mayors of Mostar. This report should be made by the 15 December 2003. The report is to include a new draft of the Statute of the City of Mostar. The principles handed over to the first Mostar Commission will be used as guidelines for the work of the internationally-chaired Commission.

"I take this opportunity to appeal to the citizens of the City of Mostar to be more actively involved in the creation of the new statute of Mostar," the High Representative said. "The Mostar Commission is a unique opportunity for the stakeholders and the citizens of this City to propose changes and to decide their own future."