

One Economic Reform Every Four Days

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today congratulated members of the Bulldozer Commission and their partners in the state and entity governments for passing one economic reform every four days on average since the initiative began, a speed which he described as “unparalleled” in this country.

The 49th reform – strengthening environmental protection – was passed at Wednesday’s session of the Federation House of Peoples. The 50th reform – breaking the land-survey monopoly of the RS Geodesy Administration – is currently going through public hearings in the RS and is expected to be enacted by the RSNA before the end of the month.

The High Representative said that the Bulldozer strategy has been fundamentally different from similar reform efforts, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in other countries. For the first time, economic reform in BiH has been led by businesspeople, not politicians or bureaucrats. The people who know most about job-creation and investment have been directly involved in removing the legal and bureaucratic barriers to economic growth. People who have shown they can run companies well have been given the chance to recommend the reforms that will make it easier to create jobs and new businesses in this country. The High Representative said: “The tangle of often contradictory business regulations make it almost illegal to run a profitable business in this country. Thanks to the Bulldozer initiative, many of these job-destroying regulations are being swept aside”

Noting that the Bulldozer Committee set itself the target of having 50 reforms enacted by the parliaments or adopted by the governments within 150 days, the High Representative pointed

out that although the timeline has overshoot by a matter of weeks, “the pace of reforms has been nonetheless astounding.” He pointed out that the initiative has produced an average of one economic reform every four days. “That means that every four days the level of pointless bureaucracy faced by BiH entrepreneurs has decreased; every four days doing business across the IEBL has got a little easier; every four days a little more value has been added to the work that companies do.”

The High Representative noted that since the Bulldozer Reforms were designed by businesspeople themselves and presented to political representatives through a process of open dialogue, they have generated a new type of partnership between political leaders and the private sector. “This dialogue is a major element in creating a vibrant and durable civic society in BiH,” he said. “Through the dialogue that has been developed in the Bulldozer Process, political leaders, the private sector, and – through the next stage in the process, Bulldozer Phase II – the trades union, will be able to create long-term economic development programs that benefit all.”

He said that the business-focus of this approach had been the key to delivering tangible results. “By enacting reforms that remove inter-Entity barriers, by harmonizing legislation, by moving some competencies to the State level, the governments have put the economy first. That means they have put living standards first. They have put jobs first. They have put citizens first.”