HR Welcomes Progress in Final Stage of Bulldozer Process

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today welcomed the serious approach displayed by BiH politicians in taking the Bulldozer Process forward to completion. The 150-day deadline set by the Bulldozer Committee for the enactment of its 50 reforms expires next week.

“The governments and parliaments, at the State level, in the Entities and in Brcko have all responded to the Bulldozer Process in a constructive and timely way,” the High Representative said. “I believe this will see the process through to its conclusion next week, and sustain a new round of Bulldozer recommendations which we hope can be completed before the end of this year.”

On Tuesday the BiH Council of Ministers adopted five Bulldozer recommendations, bringing the total number of recommendations it has adopted to 12 out of the 13 proposed by the Committee. The BiH Parliamentary Assembly will discuss recommendations sent to it by the CoM at the beginning of next week. The remaining Bulldozer recommendation, discussion of which was delayed for technical reasons at today’s Council of Ministers’ session, does not require parliamentary legislation.

There will be a joint meeting of the Federation and RS governments and the Brcko authorities in Banja Luka this Friday to discuss harmonising the Bulldozer reforms in the field of taxation. Brcko has adopted five out of six Bulldozer proposals and will discuss the sixth, on moving the sales-tax collection point, after Friday’s meeting. The RS Government has adopted all of the 19 reforms suggested by the Bulldozer Committee, while the Federation Government still has to consider two reforms.

Among the recommendations adopted by the CoM today is a decision to eliminate the requirement that representative offices of foreign companies in BiH register in both Entities if they want to do business in the whole country. “This is exactly the kind of pointless expensive regulation that deters foreign companies from investing in BiH and creating new jobs,” the High Representative said. “On the one hand it drives money away from BiH; on the other, it delivers zero benefits to citizens. I congratulate the Council of Ministers on responding to the Bulldozer Committee’s recommendation to do away with this and other job-destroying regulations.”

The High Representative said the Bulldozer Process had “effectively brought businesspeople and politicians together to implement targeted reforms that will help the BiH economy”.