

# High Representative Issues Decision on CIPS Project

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today issued a Decision setting in place the price-structure of the BiH ID card. The High Representative's Decision maintains the existing price-structure (basic unit price of each card: 10 KM; plus administrative costs: 3.5 KM; plus banking charge: 1 KM). Thus, the final price paid by citizens for an ID card will remain at 14.5 KM.

The High Representative acted in response to a decision of the BiH Council of Ministers on Thursday which would have threatened the economic viability of the CIPS project and BiH's ability to meet its contractual obligations.

Referring also to the obstructionism in the RS on this project, the High Representative said, "These activities are undermining public confidence in the single BiH ID card, and so undermining the future of all the citizens of this country. The only way to prevent this is to end the uncertainty that now surrounds this project."

The High Representative said the slow progress in issuing the single BiH identity card was a cause for deep concern. "It is not an exaggeration to say that this project, so crucial to BiH's future, is facing a major crisis," he said. "Let me underline what is at stake. The ID card is one of the most important projects in this country since Dayton. This project is essential to the process of strengthening the Rule of Law in this country. It is essential for the fight against crime, for the fight against fraud in our public services, our pensions, our veterans' benefits, for the fight against terrorism. It is essential for tightening up BiH's borders and strengthening the State Border Service. It is essential

for the effective introduction of VAT and tackling customs fraud. And for all these reasons, it is an essential precondition for visa-free travel for the citizens of BiH, and for BiH's eventual membership of the EU."

The High representative called on the BiH authorities to ensure that the CIPS project succeeds.