High Representative Meets Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Loverdos

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Monday met visiting Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Loverdos at the OHR. Minister Loverdos briefed the High Representative on the Greek government's overall assistance package for the Balkans and for BiH. He is in Sarajevo to sign a cooperation and assistance agreement with the BiH authorities. The agreement, worth 19.5 million Euros, will focus on infrastructure development and will encompass, among other things, the reconstruction of the Joint Institutions Building in Sarajevo.

"We welcome the Greek Government's initiative particularly since it sends a significant signal regarding the importance of building and strengthening State institutions and making BiH work better," the High Representative told Minister Loverdos.

The High Representative noted that the Greek assumption of the EU Presidency on 1 January 2003 offers an important opportunity to address challenges facing Southeast Europe, and to highlight the economic potential of BiH and the whole region. "Greece can contribute to placing a special emphasis on regional cooperation," the High Representative said. "Greece can use its forthcoming presidency to give the EU a region-based focus. Greece has a special understanding among EU countries of the potential of Southeast Europe."