

High Representative voices concerns to US Secretary of State Colin Powell

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, spoke to US Secretary of State Colin Powell this afternoon for ten minutes. The High Representative expressed his concern at the possibility that the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) would not be extended on 3 July. The High Representative said this would lead to UNMIBH's premature departure, and affect the smooth transition from the UN-led International Police Task Force to the European Union's Police Mission, which is due to take place at the end of the year. He said he hoped the US Administration would not do anything that placed at risk the huge progress towards peace and stability that Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved since the war. He concluded the call by praising the pivotal role the US has played and continues to play in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The call follows a number of contacts the High Representative has had with the US embassy and the US Administration in Washington over recent days.