

BiH Election Commission Fully Nationalised

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown today issued a Decision withdrawing the three international members from the BiH Election Commission, effective from the end of June 2005. The international members of the Commission, Senior Deputy High Representative Werner Wnendt, OSCE BiH Head of Mission Douglas Davidson and Deputy Head of Mission Victor Tkachenko, have worked closely with the four national members before and since the 2004 elections and have expressed full confidence in the work of their BiH counterparts. They have accordingly recommended to the High Representative that the time has come to nationalise this State institution fully.

“This is a further step in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s effort to improve its credibility as a functional state,” the High Representative said today. “The trend of greater ownership and responsibility of domestic officials for the future of this country continues,” he added. “The withdrawal of the three international members, whom I thank for their superb work, is an important landmark in the systematic transfer of competencies to the domestic authorities.” In this respect he noted that, just in the last month, supervisory regimes have been ended in the municipalities of Zepce and Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje.

“Transferring the elections process back to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a historic step,” said OSCE Head of Mission Douglas Davidson. “The October 2004 elections proved BiH’s capability to take ownership of a process fundamental to any democratic society. The ability to conduct independent and free elections sends a clear a message about BiH’s progress.”

OHR and OSCE expect the Election Commission of BiH to maintain its impartiality and professionalism. Both organisations will continue to offer the Election Commission whatever support it may require.