

High Representative Establishes BiH Intelligence Reform Commission

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Thursday issued a Decision establishing an Expert Commission on Intelligence Reform, charged with producing a proposal for setting up a single intelligence structure in BiH. The Commission, which will begin work in June, will draw up the necessary legislative changes and other legal instruments, in line with democratic principles and practice elsewhere in Europe, and recommend these to Parliament by 1 August 2003.

The Commission will prepare its recommendations on the basis that the new State-level legislation will replace existing Entity legislation.

"Assuming Parliament adopts these legislative recommendations promptly, there is no reason why BiH should not have a single, operational, civilian intelligence service by 1 January 2004," the High Representative told reporters.

The High Representative also announced the appointment of Kalman Kocsis, a former Hungarian Ambassador to BiH and former head of the Hungarian intelligence service, as chairman of the Commission.

The High Representative pointed out that Mr Kocsis' experience in reforming the Hungarian intelligence service as Hungary went through its successful transition from communism to democracy would be invaluable in ensuring the success of the BiH Commission on Intelligence Reform.

"I don't need to tell you that this country has a problem with its intelligence services," the High Representative said. "In

the old Yugoslavia, they developed a fearsome reputation as an instrument of internal political control. During the war, they fragmented, were further politicized, and in some cases were implicated in ethnic cleansing. And ever since the war, they have remained effectively outside proper parliamentary and state control. The time has come to put an end to this mess."

The High Representative emphasised that "BiH needs a modern and professional state security service that helps law enforcement agencies in this country and in the region fight organized crime, terrorism and other threats to the state." Such a service does *not* spy on citizens for political purposes or carry out police work, he added.

A further six professional members of the Commission, three from each Entity intelligence service, will be appointed shortly by the Heads of the intelligence services.