

High Representative Highlights Key Reform Role of Civil Service Agency

The BiH Civil Service Agency (CSA) will promote the development of a professional, independent, efficient, apolitical and merit-based civil service through the full implementation of the Civil Service Law, High Representative Paddy Ashdown said today. The High Representative was speaking at a ceremony held at the Joint Institutions Building in Sarajevo to mark the CSA's accession to full operational status, after several months of staffing and development.

Other speakers included CSA Director Jakob Finci, BiH Prime Minister Adnan Terzic and head of the European Commission Delegation in BiH Michael Humphries.

The CSA is responsible for the transparent and professional recruitment of civil servants at state-level, including the appointment of Heads of key agencies and institutions. It is tasked with making sure that civil-service positions are filled on the basis of merit and not on the basis of party-political connections.

The High Representative said that there were a large number of positions in BiH State institutions – including members of the Presidency Secretariat and administrative staff at the Standing Committee on Military Matters -that needed to be filled quickly and in accordance with the Civil Service Law. The Election Commission must also acquire new staff in order to carry out its role as the principal agency supervising implementation of the Conflict of Interest Law “which will move BiH towards being one the cleanest political places in the Balkans,” the High Representative said.

“The Civil Service cannot be a playground for patronage,” he said. “The launch of the CSA marks an important practical milestone towards the introduction of European standards in BiH. Along with the law on conflict of interests and the decision to limit political immunity, BiH at last has a legal framework for cleaning up politics. For giving the citizens of BiH the European standards they deserve.”

The High Representative said that the integrity and efficiency of the civil service is an issue that affects everyone. “Most people’s direct contact with the government comes through day to day interaction with civil servants,” he said. “When citizens get married, when they buy property, when they register family documents they deal with civil servants. This is why Civil Servants should be just that, the servants of the people who pay their salaries, not their masters.”

He concluded by saying: “We cannot pass laws that make the citizens love their state. But we can try to make the state – and crucially, the Civil Service – serve the citizens better. And if we succeed, in time the citizens will come first to trust and then love their state.”