

HR Lifts Ban on Participating in Political Life for Two Individuals

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today issued a Decision lifting the prohibition banning two individuals from participation in BiH political life.

The prohibition has been lifted in the case of Nikola Grabovac, who was removed by the High Representative on 14 June 2002 from his position as Federation Minister of Finance because he was under investigation by the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutors Office. It has been concluded that the reasons for Mr Grabovac's removal no longer apply. Mr Grabovac does not pose a threat to peace implementation, or to the integrity of BiH institutions. No legal hindrance now exists to prevent Mr Grabovac from holding official, elective or appointive public office, from running in elections or from holding office within a political party.

The prohibition has also been lifted in the case of Blasko Jevric, who was removed on 7 September 2000 from his position as head of the Doboj OMI. Mr Jevric was removed because of violation of RS property laws and of Annex Seven of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The prohibition has been lifted subject to the following conditions: Mr Jevric will not be a candidate in the next elections, and he will not be allowed to hold any public office in the field of refugee return. Subject to these two restrictions, Mr Jevric will be permitted to hold public office.

Removing recalcitrant officials from public functions was (and is) an extraordinary measure that has been necessary in order to eliminate major political and institutional obstacles to peace implementation. This strategy has been shown to work.

However, peace in BiH has now taken hold to an extent where it is possible to consider the phased repeal of some removal Decisions.

The process announced in early March by the High Representative means that some individuals who, because they themselves have changed or because circumstances have changed (or because of both), no longer represent an obstacle to peace implementation can once again aspire to positions in public life and contribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina 's development.

Reversing a removal Decision does not call into question the validity of the original Decision.

Should it be necessary the High Representative will not hesitate to remove these or any other individuals found to be obstructing the consolidation of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.