

Interview: Martin Ney, Senior Deputy High Representative: "I Will Lobby for BiH in the European Union"

*I hope that the PBS Law will be passed before the summer recess * The problem of two schools under one roof needs to be resolved as soon as possible*

The activities of the new SDHR to Paddy Ashdown, Ambassador Martin Ney of Germany, will be focused on removing the obstacles on Bosnia-Herzegovina's road to the European Union.

This diplomat plans to use his experience in relations with the Union and help BiH both here in this country and in its relations with Brussels and the European capitals.

"I will lobby and help BiH come closer to the EU as much as possible," Ney said.

Strong Motive

Dnevni Avaz: In which way do you intend to achieve that?

NEY: The idea of accession to the EU is a very strong motive here. The recent visit of Prime Minister Adnan Terzic to Brussels has shown that Europe keeps its word. At the same time, there is an express ambition here for BiH to start negotiations on stabilisation and association at the time we mark the tenth anniversary of Dayton.

The OHR and the authorities in BiH have a common task that the necessary reforms, as the preconditions for that, be

implemented, namely police reform and PBS.

Dnevni Avaz: Both those reforms have come to a dead end. How do you intend to find a way out when it comes to the broadcasting system?

NEY: I have had intensive talks with BiH Presidency member Ivo Miro Jovic and Minister of Security Barisa Colak about that. It was disappointing to see that the parliamentary commission had no quorum to forward the proposed law to the next stage of procedure. I hope that by 29 June, i.e. by the session of the House of Peoples, this issue will be resolved and the law passed before the summer recess.

Dnevni Avaz: The HDZ of BiH believes that the proposed model is unacceptable for them. What can you do about that?

NEY: I would appeal to them to think about it once more. The rights of the Croat people are fully recognised in this draft law, however not by providing a channel in the Croat language, but by participation in the management and the work of the public broadcasting system.

We do not want three national channels that will only be viewed within one ethnic group. We want an integrated system that will be in line with the spirit of the Dayton Agreement.

Implementation of Laws

Dnevni Avaz: The idea that Herzegovina Radio-Television be a part of the public broadcasting system is not acceptable?

NEY: Financially that is not feasible. One would need a huge amount of money for that.

Dnevni Avaz: You also deal with the problem of “two schools under one roof”. How can that be resolved?

NEY: We have been working on that in cooperation with the OSCE. This is particularly related to the Central Bosnian Canton. I have spoken to the Minister of Education of that Canton and explained to him that that problem must be resolved. The relevant law has to be implemented. It by no means violates human rights or the rights of a people or an ethnic group. I have told the leaders of the Central Bosnian Canton that they need to come with an action plan for the implementation of the law and offered any help they might need from the OHR and OSCE. Let us wait and see what they will do before saying anything else about it.

Dnevni Avaz: Is there a deadline for producing an action plan?

NEY: Yes. But let us wait for the authorities of the Central Bosnian Canton to do their part of the work.

Dnevni Avaz: In your career you have also played an important role in the relations between Germany and the EU. How can that help BiH?

NEY: I was a representative of Germany in a body that decides on the common foreign and security policy of the EU. From that experience I know how the EU functions and how decisions are made. At the same time, I know well the situation from “the other side of the table” when it comes to the western Balkans. From that experience I can say that the EU eagerly expects that the reforms in BiH be completed in order to move on to the next stage in their relations.

The best solution is to put an end to conscription

“There are many arguments which speak in favour of abolishing conscription so that BiH could have a professional, efficient and well paid army. That would pretty much meet the NATO requirements, and your country is very eager to become a member of that organisation

All the information I have points out that it is a good solution for BiH to give up conscription, both because of its financial situation, and because some things can be resolved more easily in an army that has been made fully professional."