

## **Bulldozer Committee gave tasks to entity governments and Council of Ministers for revitalization of BiH economy**

### **Front Page Headline**

# **39 Days for 50 Economic Measures**

**[P.6]** Today, a 39-day deadline to local authorities for removal of 50 barriers for normal business in BiH, established by the Bulldozer Committee started to expire. The Committee was formed on November 12 last year, after the HR, Paddy Ashdown's initiative. After a symbolical photographing by a bulldozer near OHR, Ashdown yesterday submitted a list of reforms that local authorities should undertake within the next 39 days to Adnan Terzic, Chairman of BiH Council of Ministers.

### **THREE OBJECTIVES**

Yesterday, at the press conference also attended by Bulldozer Committee representatives, Ashdown reminded that he advocated three objectives at the beginning of his mandate – to create legal space in BiH with the highest level of trust in the Balkans, and to create the best political and business environment in the region. However, as he said, these are long-term objectives, and removing of problems established by the Bulldozer Committee is a priority and urgent.

Although journalists did not receive the list of roadblocks to be removed, Ashdown and Bulldozer representatives illustrated in several concrete examples what governments and parliaments will have to do the following days. Talking about necessary changes in law regulations for forestry and environment i.e. protection of fruit resources in BiH, Ashdown said:

“Unless something changes in law regulations, in two years there will not be enough nuts for baklava in BiH,” Ashdown said.

Tomislav Grizelj, president, Committee member and president of the FBiH Employers' Association also pointed out some problems.

“An employer who wants to build something and expand their activity must pay atomic shelter fees. This is a regulation from the old Law on defense and the Committee requested its abolishment.

Besides, we asked for simplification of paperwork for foundation of companies and to reduce obligatory capital for business start-ups, whose base is different in the RS and the Federation”, Grizelj

said. Bulldozer Committee secretary, Alija Remzo Baksic also pointed out concrete problems in forestry and wood industry.

“There are too many illegal sawmills in BiH, more than 80% and they create illegal competition. In this area, inspection bodies don't work very well. Besides, forestry and wood processing are not connected, even their ministries are divided in both entities,” Baksic said, emphasizing that a single economic space is needed, as well as equal conditions for everyone.

### **TO REMOVE ROADBLOCKS**

We asked him whether he thinks that BiH authorities would manage to fulfill all Bulldozer requests within the anticipated deadline.

He answered that these were not measures that require lengthy adoption procedure, but only changes and amendments to some laws.

“These are not issues that change the complete system. These are programs that the international community in BiH implements through the World Bank, such as the project i.e. study FIAS, removal of administrative barriers, which includes reforms of legal system and company registration system, everything that creates an obstacle for foreign and local investors in the system,” Baksic says.

By the way, the Bulldozer Committee, which is coordinated by the OHR, consists of USAID, the World Bank, EC, IMF and more than 20 local associations. This committee did consultations with hundreds of businessmen around BiH. They worked with business associations, regional development agencies, chambers of commerce, associations of foreign investors, employers' association etc. on identification of problems that need to be removed within the “50 reforms in 150 days” action.

### **Entities complicate things**

The Bulldozer Committee member, director of Raiffeisen Bank, Edin Muftic warns that it is not easy to be a foreign investor in BiH.

“There are two basic steps when a foreign investor comes to a country. One is to open a representative office with the objective to monitor the market, and this is a very important step. However, our laws that regulate opening such offices are very complicated and require that they must be opened in both entities, and the foreign investor gets the impression that there are two markets, and not a single economic space,” Muftic said, adding that this is one of the obstacles that need to be removed, according to the committee proposal.

### **We shall request resignations**

When we asked why they had not started removing these problems sooner although they were well known, Tomislav Grizelj answered that there was no cooperativeness between the government and the employers. “This is why we had to take this path i.e. include OHR to resolve problems that bother economy and environment in BiH. The Committee shall support and supervise realization of all these legal documents that were submitted to the government. If they are not implemented, we shall request resignations and all consequences for the government, which fails to do what is required to do”, Grizelj said, adding that if 80% of tasks are implemented, Bulldozer Committee shall consider it a great success.

### **Focused on problems**

Chairman of BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic said that BiH authorities must try to implement Bulldozer requests.

“I am glad that OHR and others who worked in the Committee let legal institutions of BiH remove these barriers. In the mid of this month, we shall establish a coordination body that will analyze this document and give clear tasks to both BiH Council of Ministers and entity governments how and in what way they should quickly resolve these issues,” Terzic said.

When asked whether 39 days is enough to implement all requirements of the Bulldozer Committee, Terzic said that this was a sufficient deadline to initiate some things.

“I do not know precisely with what dynamics BiH Parliament plans to organize sessions in the following period. As for the BiH Council of Ministers and entity governments, I hope, I can say that we shall do our best to meet our deadlines. By the way, I think that the Bulldozer Committee did a perfect thing, because they precisely focused on problems in BiH that need to be removed in order to have a better business environment,” Terzic said, adding that he is satisfied with existence of the Bulldozer Committee and with the fact that local

authorities took over obligation to resolve these issues.

### **We discussed for a long time, it is time for action**

We asked the HR, Paddy Ashdown whether he hoped that local authorities would manage to do everything that was required from them in 39 days and, in case they fail, whether he expects justification from BiH Council of Ministers and entity governments within a short time period, as the Committee needed 110 days to identify problems, and authorities have only 39 days to remove them.

Ashdown answered:

“During these 110 days, meetings all around the country took place. It took a lot of time to collect all this. However, it takes only one hour for RSNA or Federation Parliament session. I am sure that everyone understands the importance of this for each citizen of BiH.

I am convinced that this shall be adopted.”

### **And what if it is not?**

“I am convinced it shall be,” Ashdown said. HR then emphasized that the Bulldozer Committee gathered opinions of hundreds of businessmen in BiH about ways to create good business environment.

“In all meetings around BiH, there was a joint standpoint that many current laws create business roadblocks. In some cases, people who do not understand laws of modern market economy made the laws. This is why the laws have defects and the final result is that some laws make business difficult, instead of facilitating it, and they draw foreign investments away from BiH,” Ashdown said.



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