

**Representatives of the strongest companies from BiH
against current work of chambers of commerce**

Only Voluntarily in the Chamber

[P.5] SARAJEVO – A large number of economically strongest companies in BiH will not sponsor functioning of canton, entity and state chambers of commerce through membership fees in the future. Thinking that the existing organizational structure and functioning of chambers of commerce is ineffective and very bad, through the program of 50 economic reforms in 150 days, initiated by the OHR, businessmen from BiH shall revise their membership in institutions that are in charge of improvement of their activities.

At the last meeting in the OHR building with the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, representatives of the strongest production companies from BiH Federation and the RS requested reform of their membership in chambers of commerce. They asked that membership fees in chambers are no longer compulsory, but to be regulated on a voluntary basis. The existing rules are simply unviable, considering the limited influence of chambers of commerce on general economic events, businessmen warned, reminding that companies that have had huge financial losses for years are not exempt from paying compulsory membership fees.

“Chamber members have a limited influence on activities of chambers, due to nontransparent management structures. With providing of funds based on compulsory fees, chambers are not really focused on presentation of business sector in an adequate way, their members receive small or no help,” businessmen jointly concluded in the program of economic reforms that need to be implemented as soon as possible. Apart from objections to work of chambers that are divided on three separate institutional levels, businessmen think of their work so far as another one in a row of unnecessary administrative machines. OHR requested amendments and supplements to the Law on chambers through which voluntary membership would be enabled. Due to announced reforms, there were several consultative meetings in the chamber of commerce, but there were no official reports on them. At the last week’s meeting of BiH chamber of commerce, there was a sharp discussion on functioning of this institution. Most members criticized it, and the chamber functioning was characterized as a political more than economic activity.

