

# Inaugural Ceremony of High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils Held

The inaugural ceremony of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils (HJPCs) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of BiH and Republika Srpska was held today in Sarajevo. The Councils are charged with the appointment of all judges and prosecutors in BiH, with some exceptions such as the Constitutional and Minor Offence Courts. They will also conduct proceedings against judges and prosecutors alleged to have committed disciplinary offences

Opening the ceremony the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, emphasised the importance of an independent judiciary for the rule of law, the priority he outlined on taking up the post of High Representative. He said “this is a milestone for Bosnia and Herzegovina...for the first time in the history of the region we are witnessing the division of the Judiciary – those that implement the laws – from those that create the laws. The Judiciary is effectively becoming self-regulating. This separation of power fosters what we call the rule of law.”

All Councils will be chaired by Judge Jan Erik Oja of Sweden. The FBiH and RS Entity Councils will each have sixteen members – both will include the same eight international members, together with six national members from that Entity and two national members from the Council of the other Entity. The BiH Council will have all eight international and the twelve national members of the Entity Councils, plus five more national members, giving a total of twenty-five.

“The international members of the three HJPCs will be members only for a transitional period and during this period we and the national members together will lay good foundation for the

future of the councils and their work for a modern, efficient judicial system, which will meet the highest international standards, a judicial system for modern democratic state, governed by law.” – stated Judge Jan Erik Oja, President of HJPCs.

In addition to appointing and disciplining judges and prosecutors, the Councils will in the future carry out a range of other activities, such as supervising advanced professional training for judges and prosecutors. The Councils will also make Court budget recommendations to Parliaments to ensure that Courts are properly and independently funded and supported.

Amongst the first tasks for the State level HJPC will be the selection of Judges and Prosecutors for appointment to the Criminal and Administrative divisions of the Court of BiH.

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