OHR’s Statement at the International Agencies’ Joint Press Conference in Mostar

The view ahead is clearer than it has been for a decade

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, is travelling to Geneva today. Tomorrow and Friday he will take part in a conference – the first in a series marking the tenth anniversary of Dayton – that will look at what has been achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last decade and what still has to be done.

The High Representative will draw attention to the opportunities that have been opened up now that a police reform agreement in line with the EC’s three principles has been reached. The view ahead is clearer than it has been for a decade.

The High Representative will emphasise that the governing structures that have now been set in place to create “a light-level state governing a highly decentralized country” must be made to work. These structures – the Council of Ministers, the State Court, the ITA and other agencies – must be given the staff and resources that they need in order to take BiH beyond peace implementation and into full economic and political transition.

The High Representative will note that few observers “surveying the condition of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the eve of Dayton ten years ago would have imagined that the country would be preparing in 2005 (albeit at the very start of the process) for EU membership. No one doubts that there is still a long way to go. But the road behind BiH is more difficult than the road ahead. The worst of this journey is over.”

The High Representative’s speech to the conference is on Friday morning.