

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

2nd Anniversary of Paddy Ashdown's mandate as High Representative

As you will recall, it is two years today since Paddy Ashdown took on the mandate of the High Representative. In his first speech to a plenary session of BiH Parliament the High Representative underlined that his aim was to put BiH irreversibly on the path to statehood and on the road to Europe. He said that the focus of his work would be on 'Justice and Jobs'; Rule of Law and the economic reforms that will meet EC requirements.

We have provided an updated chronology of the development in peace implementation between 2002 and 2004.

The High Representative in his interview said that much remains to be done. He said he was particularly proud of the work of the Court of BiH, which became operational in January 2003, is currently conducting 202 investigations, has brought 39 indictments against 164 persons, and has issued 46 guilty verdicts.

Looking to the future, the High Representative said, the EC's Feasibility Study and PfP process require the BiH authorities to assume greater responsibility for driving through strategic reforms, which will take this country towards Europe. The High Representative has welcomed Prime Minister Terzic's call for a Police Restructuring Commission.

The High Representative has underlined that this next year must move BiH decisively from the era of Dayton to the era of Brussels. He said yesterday [I quote] "If BiH shows the will to reform we could by the end of the year be in PfP and negotiating a Stabilisation and Association agreement. The objective of BiH's authorities at all levels has to be locking themselves irreversibly into the process of European integration.

The EU has expressed its long-term commitment to BiH's full integration, the European Union Special Representative's role will grow in importance to reflect this change, but the speed at which we move is wholly determined by Bosnia and Herzegovina".