

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

High Representative Holds High Level Meetings in New York Washington and London

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, arrives in New York today on the first leg of a weeklong tour in which he will be meeting the most senior officials at the UN, and in the US and UK governments.

While in New York the High Representative will meet UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the UN undersecretary for peacekeeping operations, Jean Marie Guehenno, before addressing the UN Security Council on Wednesday together with BiH Prime Minister Adnan Terzic.

On Thursday the High Representative will be in Washington for meetings with US Secretary of State, Colin Powell and Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld.

Before returning to Bosnia and Herzegovina early next week the High Representative will be in London for meetings with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair and the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw.

The High Representative will use these meetings to underline the progress that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made in specific reform areas with a focus on achieving Partnership for Peace membership and meeting the European Commission's requirements for the start of Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations later this year. He will also address the current challenges of building BiH's security institutions and expanding the economy to create new jobs.

The High Representative will underline that the pace of reforms must increase if these targets are to be met. He will make the case for sustained international engagement in BiH, emphasising that the International Community must not lose interest in BiH just as it is about to turn the corner and achieve long-term economic and political stability.

PDHR and Cantonal PMs

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, will hold a meeting tomorrow morning at the OHR with the Cantonal Prime Ministers. Topics will include efforts to remove the roadblocks that have so far held up the privatization process. The prime ministers will also discuss ways of building on synergies that exist in, for example, road and river maintenance, where two or three cantons working together can be more effective, in terms of cost and results, than each canton working alone. There will be a press conference announcing the conclusions of the meetings, at 12.45 tomorrow at the OHR.