

PDHR Larry Butler Calls on BiH Authorities To Seize Opportunity for Greater Regional Investment and Trade

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, today called on the members of the BiH Council of Ministers to give their backing to a major trade initiative that will be launched in Bucharest under Stability Pact auspices on Thursday. Prime Ministers from all the countries in the region are expected to make a formal commitment to negotiate simultaneous accession and amendment of the Central European Free Trade Area by the end of this year. This will consolidate and expand the progress that has already been made, also under Stability Pact auspices, in improving the trade regime in the region through a network of bilateral trade agreements.

“This is an opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to climb aboard a regional free-trade bandwagon,” Ambassador Butler said. “The object is to open up the BiH market to trade and investment that will create jobs, and to further open up other markets in Southeast Europe and Central Europe to BiH goods and services. This is consistent with BiH’s overall strategy of securing greater and greater integration in European Structures including integration in the European Union and the multilateral trading system.”

Ambassador Butler noted that although BiH has experienced difficulties implementing some aspects of free trade agreements negotiated with its immediate neighbours, “these disputes must not be turned into obstacles to BiH’s participation in a project that will bring real benefits to citizens. Existing disputes must be solved, but at the same

time, BiH must not miss the opportunity to join its neighbours on Thursday in making an important regional commitment.”