

Politicians Must Take Over Responsibility for Mostar Unification

Politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina must take over responsibility for implementing the reforms that are necessary to complete the unification of Mostar, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said today speaking at a ceremony to mark the closure of the Mostar Implementation Unit.

The Mostar Implementation Unit was set up by a High Representative Decision nearly two years ago in order to coordinate efforts related to the unification of the City of Mostar.

The High Representative said that the situation in Mostar reflects a countrywide trend, marked by the opening of Stabilisation and Association talks with the EU, whereby BiH institutions are systematically taking over responsibility for key reforms. "The OHR cannot get BiH into Europe . Only BiH's politicians can do that. Likewise the OHR cannot rebuild the spirit of Mostar; only Mostar's people and their elected representatives can do that. The International Community can no longer do the job for BiH's politicians," he said.

The outstanding reforms affecting the unification of Mostar "must be resolved through compromise by Mostar's politicians, who must bear, as of today, full responsibility for the unification and recovery process," he added. He said that the OHR will continue to support the unification process through the presence of the OHR's regional office in Mostar.

The High Representative noted that a great deal has been achieved. For example, there is a unified city budget, a

single democratically elected City council, the old city municipalities and councils have been replaced by a single City Authority, the Gymnasium has been renovated.

“No one should underestimate how much has been done. With Mostar’s difficult history, and the scale of change required no one imagined that the process would be quick or easy, and indeed it has been long haul. We all know there is still outstanding business to resolve. But we should not underestimate how much has been done.’’