

SDHR Welcomes the Official Opening of the BiH State Court

Speaking today to the President and Judges of the BiH State Court, as well as representatives of State and Entity institutions and the International Community, the Senior Deputy High Representative and Head of the Rule of Law Pillar, Bernard Fassier, emphasised that “the people of BiH finally have a flagship judicial institution they can trust – an institution that cannot be captured, with judges who will not be bought, prosecutors who will not be intimidated and witnesses who will not be endangered.” The opening of this Court marks a milestone in the establishment of the Rule of Law in BiH.

Ambassador Fassier recalled the first speech made by High Representative Paddy Ashdown to the BiH Parliament, in May last year, when he said that; “without the rule of law, nothing else we want to achieve will be possible”. The Senior Deputy High Representative today noted that “the job of the court will be to bring the full force of the law to bear on those who have plundered BiH’s resources, bought its institutions, and robbed its people”.

He welcomed the engagement of the BiH Council of Ministers, which enabled the transfer to BiH of the premises occupied by the court. In consequence, the court has the sort of premises that are needed to deal with inter-Entity and international crimes, organised crimes and, in due course, war crimes. Ambassador Fassier also welcomed the financial and technical support provided by the governments of Spain and the US, which have shared the cost of the temporary premises, and the European Commission, whose two-million Euro donation will pay for permanent premises for the court. This donation will fund

the renovation of an additional court building on the same site.

Noting that the Court of BiH will play a crucial role in shaping BiH's future, the Senior Deputy High Representative said that "future generations of BiH Citizens will recognise the role that the Court of BiH will play in drawing a line under the war, and building a better, European, future for this country."