

Statement: OHR Statement on Pardons

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, has written to the President of the BiH Federation, Niko Lozancic, requiring Mr Lozancic to provide more information, by close of business on Tuesday 23 August, regarding the Presidential Pardon granted to Miroslav Prce, who was sentenced to five years imprisonment in 2004 for misuse of public funds.

Mr Lozancic wrote to the High Representative on 19 August 2005 explaining the grounds on which he had granted this Pardon. This explanation, however, raised additional questions. The High Representative has asked Mr Lozancic to provide a copy of the Pardon, together with additional documentation pertinent to the decision to grant a Pardon, including medical documents.

Currently in BiH, State and Entity Presidents can grant Pardons secretly and without explanation. There are as many as 1,000 applications for Pardon every year yet there is no clear idea of how many may have been granted. Last year, after a Pardon was granted to parliamentarian Munib Jusufovic, the High Representative amended the BiH Law on Pardon suspending the granting of pardons by State officials until a new BiH Law on Pardons is enacted. This law, which will contain an obligation to make all Pardons public and to explain the reasons Pardons have been granted, is now being drafted.