

The HR welcomes decision to strengthen operational policing at the State-level

The High Representative Paddy Ashdown has today welcomed the decision taken yesterday that will help make a reality of BiH's commitment to fight organised crime, trafficking and terrorism by strengthening operational capacity at the state level.

Yesterday, the government of Prime Minister Hadzipasic took a decision to allocate premises to the State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA). The Agency will move to facilities located in the Federation Police Academy temporarily until a permanent location is found.

The State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA) is a key operational division of the BiH Ministry of Security. Over time SIPA will become a major organization involved in operational policing at the state level. SIPA was formed a little over a year ago tasked to fight organized crime, international terrorism and illegal migration, and provide security for VIPs and key facilities.

The High Representative said: "Mr Hadzipasic's decision will give SIPA the headquarters it needs to start working at full strength. Getting SIPA fully operational will demonstrate to all that BiH is serious about reforming the public security sector, and fighting organized crime, trafficking, and terrorism. We must now press ahead and build on this progress."

Recently, the High Representative and the EUPM Commissioner wrote to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Adnan Terzic

recommending formation of a BiH Rule of Law Task Force (to be translated as “Management and Implementation Team” in local language) which will manage the debate on expanding the authority of SIPA and other legislative and policy issues affecting the criminal law enforcement landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the coming months, it is envisaged that this Task Force should guide the effort to rationalize the Entity Laws on Internal Affairs, clarify the legal status of state and Entity police officers in the context of civil service standards, and accelerate the reform agenda for local police forces, specifically in terms of their downsizing.