

Third Anniversary: HR's Mandate from 27 May 2002 to Today

This week marks three years since Paddy Ashdown took on the mandate of the High Representative. On his first day as High Representative Paddy Ashdown identified his primary aim as “putting BiH irreversibly on the path to statehood and on the road to Europe .”

That has been the focus of the last three years. BiH has now moved decisively away from the era of Dayton to the era of Brussels .

EU integration is now the defining context of political debate in BiH – a far cry from the arid nationalism that still prevailed three years ago.

The High Representative has said that his overriding aim for the rest of the year is for BiH to adopt the reforms that are necessary to start negotiations for an SAA agreement, and to secure a position for BiH in NATO's PfP program. That will require a political agreement on police reform, as well as significant progress on defense reform. It will also mean continued cooperation with the ICTY, including the transfer of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic to The Hague .

Another goal will be to begin to transfer some competencies currently performed by the OHR to the BiH authorities.

But progress towards EU and NATO accession progress will depend upon the readiness of politicians in BiH to adopt necessary reforms. Only by assuming responsibility for driving through strategic reforms such as police and defense reform will they succeed in taking BiH into the Euro Atlantic

institutions.

Over the past three years, an institutional framework for a functioning sovereign state has been extended. Key areas of reform are:

- Reform of the judiciary. The HJPC, Court of BiH, Commercial Chambers are all operational. The War Crimes Chamber will also soon be operational
- State level intelligence, border service and information and protection agencies have been established and are operational.
- A state level tax collecting authority has been set up.
- Mostar's city administration has been unified.
- CoM expanded from six Ministries in 2002 to ten Ministeries today.

Defense Reform is also well advanced; Police Reform is likewise advanced, pending resolution of political issues.

Clearly, none of the broad legislative agenda that has been enacted will have any impact if the laws are not implemented.

Implementation lags well behind, which is why reforms have not yet translated into tangible improvements in the standard of living.

But a huge amount of the groundwork has been done. The framework for comprehensive and effective implementation is now in place.

Furthermore, the speed and the ability of BiH's institutions to adopt and implement reforms will also help determine the future shape and size of international presence in the country. The sooner reforms are undertaken, the sooner the international presence in the country will shift from being lead by the HR to being lead by the EU.

The OHR will provide a detailed [chronology of the development](#)

[in peace implementation between 2002 and 2005](#) on its website.