

# **Tihic Must End Inappropriate Interference in Civil Service Appointments**

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, has today written to Member of the BiH Presidency Suleiman Tihic, making clear his concern about recent media statements made by Mr Tihic that appear to be an attempt to exert political influence over appointments of key civil servants in the security structures of BiH.

Mr Tihic's most recent comments concern appointments to SIPA and the State Border Service. Last year he sought to exert inappropriate political influence over appointments of judges and prosecutors.

In his letter, the High Representative reminds Mr Tihic that "appointments to the civil service, and, in these days when the world is concerned about the war on terrorism especially, appointments to security structures have to be conducted free of political interference." He added that interference by politicians in police and security appointments is completely inconsistent with European practice.

"Politicians interfering in appointments in the police and security structures belong to communism and the past, it is completely inconsistent with Europe and the future," said the High Representative.

The Law on this matter makes it clear that civil service posts should be filled principally on the basis of merit, having regard the overall ethnic balance and not based on the grounds of ethnicity, having some regard to merit.

The High Representative said that there is a legitimate role for the BiH Presidency in these matters. He said that while

the Presidency has a right to give advice on these matters, it does not have the right to give instructions. Appointments of the Heads of police bodies are the competency of the Council of Ministers, he said.

The High Representative expressed his strongest hope that the issue of the SBS Director will now be resolved by the domestic intuitions, according to the law. He warned that if “those who have a role to play in this cannot constructively work together to make this appointment, then I will have to”. Such a decision would be based on merit, not ethnicity, he said.

“This position is just too important to the future security of the Country, to BiH’s international reputation in the war on terror and to our ability to be taken seriously by Europe , to become a political football in the political power struggle,” he said.