

Bosnia and Herzegovina has lost a passionate advocate and a true friend



Bosnia and Herzegovina has lost a passionate advocate and a true friend. During his nearly four-year mandate as the High Representative, from May 2002 until January 2006, Lord Ashdown worked tirelessly with BiH partners and the international community, and made consequential decisions, always with a vision for the present and the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people. Lord Ashdown understood the mandate entrusted to him under the Dayton Peace Agreement: to support the reforms that built the institutions provided for in the Peace Agreement, to advance reconciliation, to reintegrate the country and its peoples, and in doing so to create a lasting peace.

Lord Ashdown played a crucial role in the creation of several institutions provided for under the Dayton Peace Agreement. In addition to state building, a crucial goal of his was to implement the Dayton's promise to reverse the consequences of the war. To this end he worked with partners in BiH and the international community to rebuild a multi-ethnic and multicultural BiH, removing obstacles to the return of refugees and displaced persons and facilitating efforts to break networks of support for war criminals. During his time as the High Representative, over 200 laws were adopted, and many institutions were created in the Parliament, a figure which speaks for itself.

“He developed a deep connection with this country and its people. He literally met thousands of them, from every corner, even the smallest hamlet, always keeping them in mind as he worked to set the country on a path towards irreversible stability. He always said his job was to help create a modern structure on the Dayton blueprint, able to start on the path to joining the EU. This will be part of his enduring legacy,” High Representative Valentin Inzko said last night, after receiving the news that former High Representative, Lord Paddy Ashdown, had passed away.

“Those of us who knew Paddy and worked with him will always remember him as energetic, enthusiastic and tireless in the pursuit of delivering meaningful change to improve the lives of citizens throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even in the last days of his life, he addressed a letter to EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini, together with Carl Bildt and Christian Schwarz-Schilling, expressing his strongest support for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s sovereignty.”

Paddy Ashdown was born in New Delhi on 27 February 1941. Between 1959 and 1972 he served as a Royal Marines Officer and saw active service as a Commando Officer in Borneo and the Persian Gulf. In 1972, Paddy left the Royal Marines and joined the Foreign Office. He was posted to the British Mission to the UN in Geneva. After leaving the Foreign Office, Paddy worked in local industry in the Yeovil area in South-West England between 1976 and 1981. He stood as the Liberal Parliamentary candidate for the Yeovil constituency in 1979 and raised the Liberal vote there to its highest recorded level. He was elected Leader of the Liberal Democrats in July 1988 and was appointed as a Privy Councillor on 1 January 1989. He was knighted in 2000 and was made a peer in 2001. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lord Ashdown was one of the leading advocates for a decisive action by the international community to end the conflict.