

High Representative Appoints Defence Reform Commission

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Thursday issued a Decision establishing a Defence Reform Commission (DRC). The Commission is mandated to reach agreement on the legal requirements to reform the defence structures in BiH and propose legislation and other legal instruments in accordance with basic principles in line with modern European practice.

The Honorable James R. Locher III, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense and a former staff member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services who worked on the reorganization of the US military, will chair the Commission.

Speaking to reporters after issuing his Decision, the High Representative said that the DRC will aim to ensure that legislation, amendments and other recommendations will be ready by 30 September 2003, with implementation completed by 1 January 2004.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to establish transparency and proper civilian control of its armed forces, in the interests of BiH and its people,” the High Representative said. “But this process will also help BiH achieve its stated desire of joining Euro Atlantic structures, and in particular, NATO’s PfP Programme.”

The members of the Commission will be the Secretary-General of the SCMM and his two Deputies; four representatives from the Entities (FBiH Defence Minister, and RS Defence Minister as well as an appointee each of the Federation and RS President). The Commission will have a NATO representative (Ambassador Robert Serry), an OSCE representative and an SFOR representative. The EU, the United States, the Russian

Federation and the Republic of Turkey will be invited as permanent observers.