

High Representative Assures International Community that Reforms Will Go Ahead in BiH

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Thursday completed a two-day visit to the United States. On Wednesday the High Representative addressed the UN Security Council, along with the UN Secretary General's Special Representative to BiH, Jacques Paul Klein, and on Thursday he met with senior US administration officials from the Pentagon, the State Department and the Treasury

The High Representative's message in both New York and Washington was threefold:

- First, to reassure the Security Council and the US Administration that the 5 October elections did not represent a return to 1990, and that there is no reason why BiH should not continue down the path of reform. The High Representative told the Security Council that he will make sure that the parties live up to the reform promises they made during the campaign.
- Second, to argue that at a time when international attention is increasingly focused on Iraq, the International Community must nevertheless maintain the political will to complete its work in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- And third, to emphasise that, following the successful example of the UN, the OHR will pursue a *transition* strategy in BiH, not a withdrawal strategy.

The High Representative told the UNSC and the US Administration that the OHR's clear objective is to put BiH self-sustainably on the road to statehood and eventual membership of the European Union

When this has been achieved, the OHR will hand over authority to an enhanced EU mission, and to the Bosnian institutions themselves.

Coming out of the UN Security Council discussion, the High Representative said, "The departure of the last UN Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in December marks the end of an era, and a significant success for the UN and UNSRSG Jacques Klein personally. But as I informed the UN Security Council, there is still much work to be done. I was therefore greatly encouraged by the unanimous support that I received from the Council for the Justice and Jobs reform programme, and our strategy for cleaning up government and making BiH work"