

High Representative Issues Decision Bringing Composition of Federation and Cantonal Governments into Line with Constitutional Court's Decision on Constituency of Peoples

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, yesterday issued a Decision that will make possible the prompt establishment of cantonal governments that comply with the April amendments to the Federation Constitution, ensuring fair representation for all constituent peoples. This Decision will dispense with the administrative duplication and expense that would have arisen if cantonal governments were formed, then disbanded and reformed soon afterwards in order to reflect constitutional amendments required at the cantonal level under the reforms agreed by the political parties in Sarajevo in March. The Federation Parliament and cantonal assemblies have tried to find a solution but unfortunately were unable to come to an agreement.

One of the main objectives of this Decision is to get governments formed at the cantonal level as quickly as possible, allowing the politicians elected on Saturday to get to work without delay on the urgent reform tasks that they have set themselves.

The Decision clarifies the mechanisms that will ensure fair representation of constituent peoples in cantonal administrations. It defines the vital national interest

protection mechanism at the cantonal level, streamlines the number and responsibilities of offices in the cantonal executive, and requires that in any canton where two constituent peoples accounted for 30 percent or more of the population at the last census, the government must be elected by at least a two-thirds majority of the cantonal assembly.

This Decision therefore reduces the cost of government, allowing more money to go to the citizens – to pay teachers, doctors and fund vital public services. It builds in protections so that the rights of all the constituent people's are properly protected. And it makes it easier for the political parties to form governments quickly and focus on the people's priorities: justice and jobs.