

# High Representatives Warns Against Undermining the BiH Presidency

In a letter to the BiH Joint Presidency sent today, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, warned that changes proposed at the first session of the new BiH Presidency would undo the progress made under the Presidency's last mandate towards creating an effective and united Presidency. The proposals, which suggest a willingness to return to separate secretariats, do not represent the focus on reform highlighted at the BiH Presidency's inaugural ceremony held only two weeks ago.

In his letter the High Representative highlights that any attempt to undermine the coherence and clear lines of responsibility in the organisational structure of the joint Secretariat would seriously undermine its efficiency and would hinder co-ordination. It would also violate the spirit of reform that the citizens of BiH expect from the new authorities. The Secretariat of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed into an effective, professional and policy-delivering administrative organisation, which is seen as a role model by many other governmental institutions.

At a time when BiH needs less bureaucracy, not more, the High Representative notes that it would be hard to justify the additional expenditure that this direction, if pursued, would lead to. Reforms in the priority areas of justice and jobs must come ahead of increases to the Presidency's own budget at a time when BiH there is so much work to be done. In his letter the High Representative also reminds the Presidency that the creation of a permanent Secretariat of the Presidency is a requirement of the EU Road Map.