

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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Ashdown and Terzic: BiH to launch SAA negotiations by tenth anniversary of Dayton Accords

FENA

June 15, 2005

Both the European Commission and we believe that it is possible for BiH to come into a position to start the negotiations for signing a Stabilization and Association Agreement by the 10th anniversary of the Dayton Accords, but another moment cannot be lost in the activities on removing the two remaining obstacles.

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, made this statement for the press on Wednesday in Sarajevo upon the return from Brussels, where over the past two days he and BiH Council of Ministers Chair Adnan Terzic talked with the EU High Representative, Javier Solana, and EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn, about the activities that need to be taken for BiH to continue its European path.

Upon their arrival at the Sarajevo Airport, Ashdown and Terzic reported the stand of EU and EC that BiH must proceed with activities to meet the remaining two conditions from the Feasibility Study - police reform and the PBS matter.

“If there is no lateness in those processes and if a way is found to overcome the blockade of police reform, in that case BiH would not stay behind its neighbors. All this can be completed by the 10th anniversary of the Dayton Accords. This is a difficult goal, but realistic”, said the High Representative.

BiH Council of Ministers Chair Adnan Terzic told the press that the talks in Brussels were constructive and that they resulted in defining the framework BiH must lead to the negotiations by the 10th anniversary of Dayton Accords.

“In mid November, if we respect this framework and if the BiH authorities make efforts to complete the two remaining commitments from the Feasibility Study, we will have an opportunity to complete the negotiations with the European Commission, but it is up to us to resolve the matters of police reform and PBS now”, said Terzic.

He expressed hope that BiH would resolve the PBS matter by June 29, and that the final political agreement on police reform would be completed by the end of the summer.

“I think that the success of this visit is that it was clearly stated that BiH still has a chance, regardless of the atmosphere in which we left and regardless of the two NOs to the European constitution. We have an opportunity and we must focus on that what is the future of BiH”, he stressed.

Terzic and Ashdown underlined that they are bringing a clear message from Brussels – that Europe has not lost interest for BiH and that BiH has not yet lost the opportunity, and that Solana and Rehn reported the

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preparedness of the EU to keep the promises given to BiH: ensuring a European future for the Western Balkans and that BiH can still be a part of that future.

The statements at the Sarajevo Airport were also joined by the Head of Delegation of the European Commission in BiH, Michael Humphreys, who said that BiH's path to Europe and membership in its institutions is still open, but warned that time is running out and that "nobody will be awaited".

"Now the time is for BiH to take this opportunity", stressed Humphreys, adding that BiH can fulfill its commitments.

"The matters of police reform and PBS should be resolved as soon as possible", he concluded.

Bosnian institutions sign accord to harmonize intelligence, security activities

FENA

June 15, 2005

Fourteen BiH institutions met in Sarajevo today and signed an agreement on the coordination of intelligence, security and police activities.

The objective of the agreement is to improve cooperation between relevant institutions that have within their remit the protection of BiH's security and territorial integrity and combating all forms of serious crime.

The agreement sets up a coordination body which is made up of relevant institutions at the state and entity levels. The body is to hold sessions at least once a month; these sessions will be chaired in three-monthly rotation by the director general of the OSA [BiH Intelligence and Security Agency] and the director of the SIPA [State Investigation and Protection Agency]. In the first three months the sessions will be chaired by the OSA director general.

The following institutions are parties to the agreement: the BiH Ministry of Defence, the BiH Ministry of Security, the State Agency for Investigations and Protection, the BiH State Border Service, the BiH Intelligence and Security Agency, the BiH Administration for Indirect Taxation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of BiH, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Serb Republic, the Brcko District Police, the Financial Police of the Federation of BiH, the Tax Administration of the Federation of BiH, the Tax Administration of the Serb Republic and the Brcko District Tax Administration; the BiH Prosecutor's Office will take part in the work of the coordination body as an advisory body.

BiH Minister of Security Barisa Colak said that the agreement would create a strong community of security-intelligence services and police which would make a contribution to the country's security and from which

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every individual would benefit.

SIPA Director Sredoje Novic said that the creation of such a body would significantly contribute to the process of searching for war criminals, criminals and other suspects, noting that BiH citizens must be aware that synchronisation of work of state institutions had taken place, particularly after the last war.

The coordination body is to hold its first session July 15.

Over 40,000 citizens sign petition for secession of Serb entity from Bosnia

SRNA

June 15, 2005

The citizens' association Together to the Truth [Zajedno do istine] has so far collected more than 40,000 signatures from the [Bosnian] Serb Republic (RS) citizens calling for a referendum on the secession of the RS from Bosnia-Herzegovina, the association's chairman, Dane Cankovic, told SRNA today.

He said that the petition had started today in Novi Grad and that some 250 signatures had been collected since this morning at 0900 [0700 gmt].

Cankovic expressed his satisfaction with such a large response from the citizens and pointed out that the association's objective was to launch the petition in all towns throughout the RS.

"I believe that this action is necessary because there is an overwhelming feeling [in the RS] that Bosnia-Herzegovina has become a tyrant that is stifling the will and wishes of Serbs to live in a free and democratic RS," Cankovic said.

He remarked that the petition calling for a referendum for the secession of the RS from Bosnia-Herzegovina was "the first step towards the Serb unity".

USAID top official visits Bosnia

Associated Press Worldstream

June 15, 2005

USAID top official Andrew S. Natsios arrived Wednesday for a two-day official visit, the agency said in a statement

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He will meet Bosnian political and religious leaders, local business people and the representatives of the international and donor community, the agency said.

"I have not been to Bosnia since the period just after the war. I am looking forward to seeing the progress the country has made and to discussing the continuing problems it faces," Natsios said.

Natsios has been the administrator of USAID, the U.S. government agency that administers economic, democratic and humanitarian assistance worldwide, since 2001.

Since the end of the war in 1995, the U.S. Government has spent more than US\$1 billion to support Bosnia-Herzegovina's post-war recovery.