



Statements by HR/EUSR Valentin Inzko at the Press Conference in Mostar

Good afternoon to you all and thank you for coming.

Today I'm in Mostar to inform you all that I have taken a decision to close the OHR office in Mostar as of 30 June. My decision today is first and foremost driven by what has been achieved in Mostar.

For some of you, who do not follow OHR and PIC work more closely, this may come as a surprise, however, I am sure that for most of you who are deeply involved in Mostar and Herzegovina issues it was clear that this decision was not far away.

If we are to be honest, we must admit that there are no tangible reasons for the continued presence of an entire OHR office in Mostar.

There is a long history of International Community engagement in this city. And thanks to the courage and tenacity, primarily of the people of Mostar, with help from the International Community, there has been a huge change in Mostar between 1994 when Hans Koschnik entered a devastated, war-torn and divided city to today, 16 years later, when the city is almost unrecognisable.

So with a new Mayor in place, and with the administrative unification of Mostar largely complete, OHR South has come to the end of its important and challenging mission.

Yes, I am aware that the political picture in Mostar is much more complicated, but the fact is that Mostar's politicians have all the tools they need to make the city work. What has been missing is the political will.

But, the International Community is never going to be in a position to create a City that lives up to the expectations of its citizens – only the citizens of Mostar can do that.

So, now, it is more important than ever that the City's elected officials take on full ownership for the City's

development. They are the ones that are responsible for the city.

Let me be clear, my decision to close the Office in Mostar is not a precursor to OHR's closure; the PIC was very explicit in February when it reiterated that transition to an EU led presence remains the goal, but that this will happen only as soon as the five objectives and two conditions necessary for OHR closure have been met.

The decision to close the OHR office in Mostar comes in the light of a broader review of the functions and priorities of the OHR in accordance with those outlined by the PIC and the realistic challenges that the country faces.

The International Community will continue to monitor what happens in the City and while the Mostar Office is closing I will maintain a small and dedicated 3 man team, which will follow issues in Mostar and across Herzegovina.

Let me conclude by taking this opportunity to publically express my immense gratitude to the professional and dedicated staff of the OHR in Mostar, and to Anatoly Viktorov. Their hard work over many years has helped Mostar move from war and destruction to peace, reconstruction, and re-integration.

I am due to meet with the City's officials shortly to set out my decision but I believe we have time for a couple of questions...