

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Mario Brkic

OSCE, Aida Besic

EUPM, Zinaida Ilaria

EUFOR, Jem Thomas

OHR

OHR and NATO on BOSS Amendments to Defence Reform Laws

The FBiH House of Peoples will tomorrow discuss proposed amendments to the already adopted and enacted Defence Reform Laws.

These amendments, proposed by BOSS, would roll back what has now been achieved by the successful defence reform process and would revive the FBiH Ministry of Defence. The closure of this Ministry, together with the RS MoD, was central to creating a single, NATO-compatible military structure in BiH

If the FBiH Parliament were to pass these amendments, they would create institutional and legal confusion.

The proposed amendments, if adopted, would send a negative signal about BiH's readiness to be a credible candidate for NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and the requirement for effective state level command and control.

OHR and NATO view these amendments as a threat to the defence reforms which have put BiH at the threshold of PfP, and which are currently being implemented by the BiH Ministry of Defence.

OSCE statement

Sixteen history textbook authors from BiH at training workshop in Germany

The Georg-Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Germany, in collaboration with the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Council of Europe, is organising a training seminar for 16 history textbook authors from BiH in Braunschweig, Germany from 13 to 17 February 2006.

The purpose of the seminar is to provide training in basic methodology and skills of history textbook writing.

The seminar is a result of the recently signed Guidelines for Writing and Evaluation of History Textbooks for Primary and Secondary Schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina and represents a practical implementation of the Council of Europe's Recommendation on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe, which has been adopted by its member States, including Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUPM

No statement.

EUFOR

No statement

RTQs

Antonio Prlenda, Oslobođenje:

Mario, you mentioned that «legal confusion» would be created. Could you please comment on this, since at this moment legal confusion really does exist, for example – when a former member of the armed forces requests a certificate confirming that he had been a member of the army he does not know whether to turn to, that is address his request to the State Ministry or Federal Ministry. That would be one thing. My second question relates to the issue of seals in the Federal Ministry – how can you certify any documents if the seals are no longer valid? My colleague is actually already writing about this issue. Many other similar problems also exist, so a real legal confusion currently exists.

Mario Brkić, OHR:

All of that is currently undergoing a process of transition, all those things are being transferred from the Entity Ministries to the State level. That is why we believe that these amendments would only create further confusion.

Antonio Prlenda, Oslobođenje:

Considering the fact that a transition process is underway, do you expect that any deadlines will be set so that the administrative problems that now exist may be solved as soon as possible?

Mario Brkić, OHR:

I am sure that certain deadlines for the completion of the transition process from the entity ministries have been set. I do not know the exact deadlines. However, if these amendments are passed it is certain that this process will be even more prolonged.

Antonio Prlenda, Oslobođenje:

Could you tell me one more thing, the people who have filed a lawsuit against the Federal Ministry of Defense claiming

unpaid wages – who is representing the former Federal Ministry of Defense in the court proceedings? So, when you talked about «legal confusion» it is clear that the legal confusion already exists.

Mario Brkić, OHR:

Yes, and these amendments would only worsen the situation.