

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

The Basic Constitutional Test: Will It Work?

Proposed constitutional changes should be judged on whether or not they will work, the High Representative said this morning at a conference organized in Sarajevo by the Slovenian Presidency of the OSCE.

“The reforms we have implemented in the last few years have benefited the people of BiH. The degree to which they have done that represents the core criteria on which they should be judged,” he said. “The reforms that we are now implementing in order to take BiH forward on the road to Europe must be judged in the same way. And the reforms that have been discussed at conferences held to mark the tenth anniversary of Dayton – and discussed more widely by the people of BiH among themselves and in the media – must also be subjected to this basic test.”

The High Representative noted that with the launch of SAA negotiations, BiH is moving decisively from peace implementation to the marathon task of establishing good governance and the achievement of European standards in its political and economic life. “The International Community’s

task has been to help create viable institutions and place them in a coherent legislative and practical framework – but it is up to the citizens of BiH to make these institutions work and to expand and strengthen this framework,” he said. “As we move into the next phase, it is the BiH authorities that must take the relevant decisions related to European integration, and they must do this on their own.”

However, the High Representative stressed that this does not mean that the International Community is about to disengage from BiH.

“BiH still needs concerted support, including the support of those non-EU countries that have helped steer it towards recovery over the last 10 years. It still needs EUFOR. BiH presents a unique situation, and in my view requires a unique response from the EU and from the International Community as a whole. We have to craft an approach that takes account of the fact that BiH today is partly engaged in peace stabilization and partly engaged in EU accession.”

I’ve brought along the full text of the High Representative’s speech.

Ownership of Mostar Reunification Process to Rest With City Authorities

The High Representative will visit Mostar tomorrow, where he will speak at a ceremony marking the formal closure of the Mostar Implementation Unit, following the substantial completion of its mandate. The MIU’s remaining functions will be handed over to OHR South

The closure of the MIU reflects a broader development throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina , whereby BiH institutions are systematically taking over responsibility for key reforms. This process has moved into a new and more advanced phase with

the launch of Stabilisation and Association talks with the European Union.

The question now is whether BiH politicians – and in the case of the unification process, Mostar politicians in particular – can meet this new challenge in a satisfactory way. From 30 November 2005 ownership of the Mostar reunification process will rest squarely with the city's authorities. The past two years have seen momentous and constructive changes in the City in terms of governance, institutional reform, infrastructure maintenance and development, commercial development and the general civic atmosphere. This positive trend must be maintained.

The High Representative will also visit the FBiH Trade & Tourism Ministry, where he will meet Minister Maid Ljubovic. The Trade Ministry has set a positive example in respecting the constitutional provision requiring five FBiH ministries to move to Mostar.

We will be issuing a media advisory later today with full details of media opportunities during this visit.

OHR Welcomes Adoption of Modern Narcotics Legislation

The OHR welcomes the adoption yesterday by the BiH House of Peoples of the Law on prevention and suppression of misuse of narcotics. The BiH House of Representative had adopted this legislation 8 November.

The adoption of this Law represents a significant modernisation of the legislation dealing with control of narcotics.

Before yesterday BiH was in the unenviable position of being the only country in Europe not meeting international standards in the control of import, manufacture and export of controlled

substances. BiH had started to become a centre for the manufacture and trafficking of controlled substances. Without effective legislation it was proving impossible for the police and the prosecutors to effectively tackle the illegal production of these substances.

This modernisation means that BiH meets the requirements set by the UN's Conventions on the Control of Narcotics and addresses the requirements of the EC's Feasibility Study on tackling illegal drug activity.

Clearly more than legislation is needed to tackle the problem of drugs in BiH society, but this legislation will make the job of the law enforcement agencies clearer and shows that BiH is a partner in the fight to uphold the rule of law.

OSCE

Three-day conference on “ Dayton – 10 Years After” starts in Sarajevo today

A conference devoted to the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement that opened tomorrow in Sarajevo brought together politicians, government officials, scholars and experts from various disciplines.

The three-day event, ‘Dayton – Ten Years After: Conflict resolution and co-operation perspectives’, is hosted by the Universities of Sarajevo and Primorska and supported by the Slovenian OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The aim of the conference is to make a comprehensive assessment of the historical background leading to the signature of the Dayton Peace Agreement, to provide an analysis of the current situation, to discuss problems concerning integration and disintegration processes, to

enlighten social and spatial, geopolitical and security trends, and indicate future opportunities for co-operation within a broader European and global context.

The press conference with the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, Slovenian Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel, the High Representative and EU Special Representative in BiH, Lord Paddy Ashdown, the Rector of the University of Primorska, Prof. Lucija Cok, James O'Brien, one of the architects of the Dayton Peace Accord, is scheduled to take place today at 13:15 at the Unitic Business Centre, Fra Andjela Zvizdovica 1, Sarajevo.

EUPM

Commissioner Carty expresses condolences to family of deceased policemen

Yesterday saw the tragic death of a police officer who was shot in line of duty in Canton 1 Bihac. Two of his colleagues were seriously wounded in what was an arrest operation.

"On behalf of the European Union Police Mission and on behalf of myself I wish to extend my sincere condolences to the family of the deceased police officer who died while serving his country," Commissioner Kevin Carty stated.

"Our thoughts are also with the two wounded policemen whom we wish a speedy recovery" concluded Commissioner Carty.

Brigadier-General Vincenzo Coppola appointed new Head of the EUPM

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is glad to announce that Brigadier-General Vincenzo Coppola has been appointed new head of this organisation.

Yesterday's decision of his appointment passed by the EU

Political and Security Committee, at the proposal of Secretary General/High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana, follows on the EU Council's announcement on the adoption of the joint action, which provides for continuation of the EU police mission in BiH from 1 January 2006 to the end of 2007.

Among past posts covered, Brigadier-General Coppola was chief police adviser to the EU Council in Brussels (2001-2004) and served in the Balkans during the SFOR mission in BiH (1998) and the KFOR mission in Kosovo (1999-2000).

Brigadier-General Coppola will officially assume his duty on the 1st of January 2006, succeeding from Commissioner Kevin Carty, who has been serving since 1 March 2004.

EUFOR

No statement.

RTQs:

Journalist #1:

A question for EUFOR. We have confirmed information that EUFOR supported the operation of the Ministry of Interior Affairs launched to arrest Mirko Šarović and Milorad Govedarica, who are both former officials of Republica Srpska and who were arrested today upon order of the Court of BiH. we also have information that Milan Bjelica, who was also supposed to be arrested today as ordered by the Court of BiH, is currently at large. Can you confirm this information? Ans a question for the OHR, can you comment on the arrests made today?

EUFOR:

What I can say is that upon request of the State Prosecutor of

BiH EUFOR did support SIPA officers this morning in operations to detain certain individuals. This operation was led and conducted by SIPA with EUFOR tactical support from the integrated police unit, the Carabienieri. EUFOR operated within its mandate to support local BiH authorities. Any judicial actions in this case will be within the domain of the State Prosecutors Office and the BiH authorities, and will not be within the domain of EUFOR and EUFOR will not speculate any further on these. Therefore, any further questions regarding these operations and detentions should be directed to SIPA or the State Prosecutors Office. Thank you.

OHR:

As far as the OHR is concerned it is very simple, as you well know in respect of the independence and competency of the Court and the Prosecutor, the Office of the High Representative never comments such cases.

Journalist #1:

A question for the OHR. Despite the recommendations made by the OHR, on Monday the State Property Commission did not grant an exemption concerning the land intended for building a detention facility, regarding the High Representative's Decision on Enacting the Law on the Temporary Prohibition of Disposal of State Property of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Could you please comment?

OHR:

We have received information that yesterday the progress we expected was not made. We are currently reviewing the situation, but in essence our requirements have not changed at all.

Branka Kusmuk, RTRS:

A question for the Office of the High Representative. I'm

Branka Kusmuk, Radio-Television station of Republica Srpska. We are pleased that the OHR hailed the adoption of the Law on the Prevention and Supression on Narcotic Drugs, which took place yesterday. However we would be even more pleased if you could also tell us something more about yesterdays Decision Limiting the Scope of the Ban from Public Office in the Removal Decisions Issued by the High Representative, as it applies to persons the OHR removed some time ago, about six months or a year ago. Could you at least tell us the number of people affected by yesterday's decision or give us any other details?

OHR:

As we explained yesterday, the Decision applies to specific cases, individuals who in addition to their Removal Decision received notice that they were also barred from holding public office until further notice. The Decision applies to them individually, and I will not discuss specific cases. The Decision is more general in nature. Therefore we will not give out any details about individuals.

Branka Kusmuk, RTRS:

Can you at least tell us how many of them, such individuals, are there?

OHR:

It varies from person to person. It is difficult to say at this moment how many of them will be working in the public office again, as they shall have to undergo verification again, just like any other person. Therefore that is not a decision for the OHR to make and if I gave you a number it would not really mean anything at this time.

Branka Kusmuk, RTRS:

Have you at least notified the persons the Decision applies

to?

OHR:

The Decision is public. They are now in the position to look at their Removal Decision and therefore check exactly what their situation is now, regarding their case specifically.

Journalist #3:

A question from the other point of view. How many persons are entitled to apply for a position in the public office?

OHR:

I think I have already answered that.

Journalist #3:

Well no. You haven't.

Journalist #4:

How many Removal Decisions does this Decision apply to? What is the exact number? How many are there?

OHR:

The number...

Journalist #4:

Well if he removed two hundred, and say he removed a hundred of them not because of criminal activities but because they cooperated with war criminals and did not cooperate with the ICTY. How many such persons can apply for a position in the public office now? Do you know? Have you not counted them?

OHR:

As I already said I will not go into numbers here. This applies to individual cases, and they can...every individual can

check their Removal Decision. These Decisions are public and therefore you too can have a look at them on the Internet. Each Removal Decision contains the specific details concerning that particular removal. This means that it is possible for you to have a look at both the Removal Decisions and yesterday's Decision and to review them if it interests you to do so.

I said I would not go into any specific details.