

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

High Representative visits Mostar

On the occasion of the Civil Servants Oath of Allegiance for the City Administration of Mostar, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown will visit Mostar on Thursday 27 October.

The City Administration of Mostar is the first major body to be formed under the new Law on Civil Servants as professional civil servants appointed without political interference. This event represents a key step forward in building permanent foundations for the future of Mostar, and this is a major achievement for the whole country.

The High Representative is invited to open proceedings and witness over 130 of civil servants taking their oath of allegiance as Civil Servants of Mostar at

***16:00 hours on Thursday 27 October 2005
at the Federation Government's Building, Mostar***

Before participating in the Oath of Allegiance Ceremony, the High Representative will use this opportunity to visit Los Rosales, Centre for children with special needs. The visit to Los Rosales will be open to press. The High Representative is expected to arrive

***at 15:15 on Thursday, October 27 2005
Los Rosales premises at Južni logor bb***

After the meetings with the Mayor of Mostar, Ljubo Beslic, and President of the City Assembly, Murat Coric, the High Representative will address members of press at

***16:50 hours on Thursday 27 October 2005
at the Federation Government's Building, Mostar***

BiH's Competitive Advantage Should Be No Secret to Investors

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, is speaking this morning at a conference on regional investment being organized in Dubrovnik by Euromoney Magazine.

Ambassador Butler will emphasise the fact that

- the difficult and ambitious reforms undertaken by BiH in order to move forward with Euro Atlantic integration are first and foremost designed to bring real benefits to citizens;
- by bringing BiH closer to NATO and the EU, they make it a much more attractive investment destination – which means they improve the chances of getting more investment and creating more jobs; and
- they also boost investment prospects and job creation by tangibly improving the business environment.

Now, with the impending launch of SAA negotiations, that BiH has joined the rest of the region on the path to Europe , investors must look for competitive advantage when considering which Southeast European country they choose to invest in.

“BiH is a promising emerging market whose strategic sectors – including hydropower, forestry and tourism – are already attracting international investment interest,” Ambassador Butler notes. “This is the tip of the iceberg. The tourism authorities are marketing the country as ‘ Southeast Europe’s best-kept secret’ – its huge business potential ought to be no secret among canny investors.”

Transition Works: That's Its Best Defence

Also this morning, the OHR is publishing its Economic Newsletter for the third quarter of 2005. It will be available

on our web site during the day.

A central issue tackled in the latest Newsletter is popular weariness with reform.

As Ambassador Butler notes in his introduction, this weariness is entirely understandable. "Incompetence and corruption in the field of economic management have delayed the implementation of some key reforms in BiH and thus delayed the benefits that these reforms can bring – so the public has been left with much pain but little gain. Yet the only honest response to this is to highlight incremental improvements and ensure that these are spread as broadly as possible. Transition works. That is it's best defence. The answer to this is not to slow down, but to speed up the implementation of reforms so that we can get through the agenda and so that citizens, more and more, have something to show for their effort and their forbearance."

Three key tasks for the authorities highlighted in the Newsletter, each of which should be implemented by the end of the year are

- To enact the BiH Salary Law, requiring government salaries to be kept in line with resources;
- To enact the BiH Law on Obligations, which will modernize the business environment and encourage investment and job creation; and
- To implement the recommendations made by the RS Supreme Auditor in order to halt the theft and corruption at RS Sume and RS Elektroprivreda