

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Oleg Milisic

OSCE, Elmira Bayrasli

EUPM, Zinaida Ilaria

EUFOR, Frank Cockburn

NATO, Derek Chappell

OHR

The OHR welcomes the first meeting of the Expert Commission on Police Areas, which took place yesterday, and which was organised fully under the auspices of the Council of Ministers. The OHR expects that the Commission will be able to produce a number of proposals for the Party leaders to review before adopting one when they meet again on 16 May.

The principle, as laid out by the EU, is clear. The territorial breakdown of police regions must be based on technical and not political requirements. That means that where there is a technical requirement, police regions must cross the inter entity border line and cantonal boundaries.

Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, is today in Brussels meeting a multi-party delegation from the BiH, FBiH and RS Parliamentary assemblies, to talk about police restructuring.

The EU has made it clear that any political agreement on police restructuring has to meet the EU's three requirements. Commissioner Rehn has on several occasions stated what the EC expects of this reform. Namely:

- all legislative and budgetary competencies to be vested at state level
- no political interference in operational policing
- competencies must be applied in functional areas, so as to achieve technically efficient policing

In order for BiH to start negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement as soon as possible, such agreement must also receive the support of Entity parliaments before the EC's Consultative Task Force finalises its report in June this year

The importance of the European Commission requirements cannot be overestimated if BiH is to fulfil its EU accession ambitions.

More details of this visit will be available from the European Commission here in Sarajevo .

The BiH Delegation included: [BiH Parliamentary Assembly] Sefik Dzaferovic, Vinko Zoric, Nikola Spiric; [RSNA] Dragan Stojicic, Borislav Bojic, Milenko Mihaljica; [FBiH Parliamentary Assembly] Ivan Madunic, Semsudin Mehmedovic, Nijaz Skenderagic, Meliha Alic.

OSCE

No statement.

EUPM

No statement.

EUFOR

No statement.

NATO

We are in full agreement that both the Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska defence authorities need to take

decisive action to address the issues raised by the 16th April incidents at Manjaca and Bileca barracks. We will continue to consult with the Office of the High Representative and the Tri Presidency on this matter.

While we support the actions and proposals announced Friday by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Defence Minister, they may be less than required to ensure that such incidents do not re-occur

The RS defence establishment must prepare properly for such ceremonies and ensure that they are executed in accordance with the law.

It also needs to take corrective measures more quickly when problems arise and hold accountable those senior officials responsible for making sure that their subordinates follow the law and the orders that are given to them.

It is vital that responsibility and authority be aligned. This episode highlights the current disjuncture between the responsibilities of the state defence structures with the legal authority of the entities to control and discipline subordinate elements in the defence establishment.