

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Kevin Sullivan

OSCE, Zinaida Delic

EUPM, Killian Wahl

EUFOR, Ltc Bridget Rose

NATO HQ, Maj Dwight Mood

OHR

EU-hosted Press Conferences

Welcome to the OHR/EUSR's Office. We have with us the OSCE, EUFOR, NATO and EUPM. In future we will also have the EUSR, and other organizations as required, including the EC.

Budget

Tomorrow the BiH State Budget for 2005, which has been approved by the CoM and the Presidency, will be discussed by the HoR.

It is worth noting that this is the first time the BiH authorities have been able to table an agreed draft budget for parliamentary debate this early in the annual business cycle – in other countries, of course, the budget for this year would already have been drafted, debated and agreed last year, but holding the debate in January is nonetheless a considerable improvement on previous years, when it wasn't held until the

late spring or early summer.

Unless the draft budget is adopted temporary funding would have to be allocated on the basis of last year's budget, and that would mean that institutions – in particular the newly established institutions, including SIPA, the Defence Ministry and the ITA – would not have enough money to operate.

As BiH assumes the administrative contours of a normal European state, rationalizing its operational structure, pruning expenses at intermediary levels of government and making the State institutions fully functional, budgetary constraints are likely to loom larger and larger in political debate – and that's as it should be. More has to be done with less. Put another way, citizens have to get better value for money from government. The fact that the budget debate is happening this week and not several months from now is an indication that the authorities are beginning to understand this.

SDHR to visit Mostar

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, is visiting Mostar today, where he will meet newly elected Mostar city officials. Ambassador Wnendt will meet Mayor of Mostar Ljubo Beslic, Heads of Departments of Mostar City Administration, President of Mostar City Council Murat Coric, and councillors of Mostar City Council. During these meetings Ambassador Wnendt will once again reiterate the importance of speedy implementation of the Mostar Decision for the benefit of all citizens of Mostar who are entitled to expect the benefits of a unified, functional and normal European city administration.

During this visit, Ambassador Wnendt will also visit Mostar Airport , where he will meet the Deputy Director of the Airport, Izet Sahovic. He will be briefed on some of the latest Airport infrastructure investments, which can have a

significant knock-on effect on developing the enormous economic potential of the Mostar region, including tourism and business development.

OSCE

Distribution of leaflets on labour relations – Know Your Rights to Protect Your Rights

This month, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina will be distributing leaflets throughout the country to promote fair employments practices and to increase the awareness of citizens of their employment rights.

The leaflets explain the basic rights of labour relations in the Federation BiH and Republika Srpska. They should result in more people understanding what rights they have when they encounter discrimination of other problems at work, and Trade Unions and other relevant actors being more active in promoting fair employment policy and equality of treatment for all.

Polls conducted by the OSCE in BiH have highlighted citizens' dissatisfaction with employment as a major issue of concern. One important element of this dissatisfaction is the existence of discrimination in employment and citizens' inability to find proper protection when discrimination occurs. Therefore, in the latter half of 2004, the OSCE organised a number of round tables and radio shows and found that there was a need to raise awareness about the rights of workers and the role of relevant institutions in protecting workers from discrimination.

The OSCE Mission to BiH will be working closely on the dissemination of the leaflets with a number of partners, namely the Unemployed Associations, Trade Unions, Employer's Associations, Labour Inspections/Ministries of Labour, Ombudsman Offices, Basic Courts, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions' Offices and Vasa prava Offices. As these

stakeholders are involved in the issue of workers' protection and work directly with their clients in this area, people who approach them will have the opportunity to be better informed about their labour rights and the mechanisms for protection.

EUFOR

No formal press statement.

EUPM

No formal press statement.

NATO HQ

Good morning. I have the following statement for you this morning.

As stated in a press release Friday, NATO Headquarters Sarajevo (NHQ Sa) has released Dusan Tesic at approximately 4:00 p.m. Friday, 7 January. In the press release it was stated that Mr. Tesic was released and handed over to RS MUP authorities. One change of note, Mr. Tesic was actually released directly to his wife and family. NHQ Sa has completed its investigation in regards to information that Mr. Tesic allegedly knew about PIFWC Support Networks.

NHQ Sa will continue to support the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the authorities in this country in their efforts to bring PIFWC's to justice.

NHQ Sa encourages anyone who has information to contact their local police, or contact their nearest EUFOR LOT House, or can telephone _____ anonymously _____ at 061-222-305.

Thank
You.

RTQs

Samir Krilic, AFP:

Q: State Defence Ministry conducted an investigation into your allegation that Mladic took shelter at Han Pijesak and find out absolutely no evidence. Are you going to disclose any evidence that he was actually there and what is your next step in regard to this issue?

EUFOR:

A: First of all, we stand by the previous statement that there is credible evidence that Mr Mladic was at Han Pijesak last summer and on previous occasion. We will not divulge the nature of the information sources for operational reasons. You cannot expect us to release that sort of information. Where we can share the information with the BiH MoD and the authorities, we do, and it is relationship that has developed quite a long way and it continues on the daily basis.

Samir Krilic, AFP

Q: Yes, but you have a state defence ministry's investigation team led by Muslim General who says that there is no proof that Mladic was in Han Pijesak. Are you going to disclose any evidence that he was there in fact?

EUFOR

A: I will just repeat my statement that we have credible evidence.

Samir Krilic, AFP

Q: So, you don't trust the MoD BiH and their investigation.

EUFOR:

A: The OHR asked the MoD to investigate the command and control structures of the armed forces to ensure that military facilities could not and would not be used for purposes, which were not for the defence of BiH.

OHR

A: Just to chime in. The evidence that Mladic was in Han Pijesak is compelling and the High Representative has asked the Ministry of Defence to identify, as Bridget said, the failures which allowed this to happen and draw up steps which will ensure that this does not happen again. That will take place in the course of the next few weeks.

Journalist 2:

Q: Ten days ago, Minister Radovanovic stated that the OHR refuses to exchange the information with his ministry, and the HR yesterday confirmed that thesis that the OHR does not want to release certain information related to the ICTY indictees to the BiH authorities. Why is that? Does this mean that OHR do not trust to the BiH authorities? If not, what is the reason?

OHR

A: As you know, on matters of security, particularly the operational matters we don't have any comment.

Journalist 3:

Q: You have said that there are certain evidences about harbouring Mladic in Han Pijesak. To which institutions you have revealed this information and when? Also, Qs for EUFOR, how do you estimate the cooperation regarding the information exchange between your organisation and the BiH authorities?

EUFOR:

A: I will repeat that where we can share information where it

is appropriate to share it, without compromising the sources, the information is shared. And that is the practice which is encouraged and which is developing. Where there is the information that cannot be divulged for operational reasons that that information is not passed.

Journalist 3:

Q: Does this mean that there is no confidence in the BiH authorities in sense of the information exchange?

EUFOR:

A: Not at all.

Journalist 4:

Q: Mr Sullivan, I would like to know the OHR standpoint regarding the current position of the CoM. We have two resignations at this moment.

OHR:

A: The overriding significance of the status of the CoM is that it has a huge agenda of reforms that are necessary to get BiH into PfP and to launch the SAA negotiations with the European Commission. Therefore, our concern is that the political process does not delay that unduly. Beyond that this is the matter that has to be resolved by the BiH authorities and we trust that they will do that with an interest of BiH citizens foremost in their minds.

Journalist 4:

Q: Is there any deadline by which the OHR will be examine this situation with the CoM? Is there a possibility that HR will intervene and perhaps take certain measures?

OHR:

A: Obviously, I am not going to speculate on what HR might or

might not do. The political process is underway and we trust that it will reach satisfactory conclusion.

Fedjad Forto, FENA:

Q: Have these problems with the information exchange are partially caused by the fact that BiH, even though it is the PfP candidate, did not sign the Agreement on the Information Exchange with NATO which is the basic precondition to join the PfP?

A: Thanks for asking. The issue for PfP...The issue is not so much defence reform it is detention of the ICTY PIFWICS. That is the biggest obstacle that this country has to face in Partnership for Peace.