

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

Workers Rights Will Be Protected By More Investment

The amendments made last month to the Federation Bankruptcy Law ensure that the Law allows companies to restructure and stay in business rather than going into liquidation.

Before these amendments were passed, companies in the Federation had only two options – to go into liquidation, which means sacking all their workers, or to remain in business “on paper”, producing little or nothing, employing a skeleton staff and keeping hundreds of workers on the waiting list-without salaries or benefits.

The amended Bankruptcy Law gives companies a third option – they can stay in business, secure a capital injection through investment, restructure and then expand. Restructuring can involve job losses, but in the long run it is more likely to lead to job creation.

Some trades union have come out in support of this approach, recognising that it is likely to benefit workers. Others argue that the social safety net to handle job losses is inadequate. This issue was addressed in a statement issued yesterday by the World Bank, noting that last week Entity officials and World Bank experts finalized preparations for a project that will make US\$12 million in WB funds available for employment-support services. Over the next four years the project will provide assistance to workers in both Entities who suffer redundancy.

The OHR calls on the trades union to work with the Entity

governments to use the Bankruptcy Law as an effective way of protecting jobs and create new jobs, by encouraging restructuring and investment.

PBS in the Council of Ministers

OHR understands that PBS legislation will be discussed in the CoM tomorrow. OHR again calls upon the CoM to adopt PBS legislation that is fully in line with EU Feasibility study, the Prime Minister's agreement and the Dayton Peace Agreement.

I need not remind you this is a condition for European integration and if BiH is serious about joining Europe, then it should show that by meeting these conditions

OHR's congratulations

OHR would like to congratulate to the City Administration and its leadership on creation of functional CA Departments with all Heads now appointed. This is significant step in terms of creating a key leverage that enables City Administration in further efforts for creating necessary conditions for the proper functioning of the City Administration. We are confident that the appointed Heads of the Departments will do their best within their respective departments to work for the benefits of all citizens of Mostar.

Finally, OHR also praises the excellent news on City Fire Fighting Service unification, which we have witnessed earlier this week. Up to now, for ordinary citizens of Mostar the Decision passed by the High Representative on January 28th represented something that functions only in offices and political meetings, and did not influence the position of the ordinary citizens. That image was changed by the firefighters of Mostar. Thanking to their leadership, professionalism and dedicated work Mostar now has unified Fire Fighting Service and one unique phone fire emergency number 123.

We are confident that citizens of Mostar will experience

further benefits, as other institutions will follow the model of the City Fire Fighting Service.