

Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR	Avis Benes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OHR expects municipalities to adopt instructions on education”• “Promotion of Internet employment service ‘www.posao.ba’
OSCE	Richard Medic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unification of Mostar gymnasias is an administrative procedure
EUPM	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EUPM met with new HNC Minister of Interior• Establishment of Public Complaint Bureau• Explosion in Glamoc
SFOR	Capt. Magistretti	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dynamic Response 2003• Update on latest operations• Reminder of a transfer of authority ceremony

Avis Benes - OHR

Good morning Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the press conference of international organizations seated in Mostar. I am very happy today to wish a warm welcome to the new permanent EUPM Spokesperson Kirsten Haupt.

On behalf of the OHR, two short points for today.

The first one refers to a well-known topic – education. Let me briefly reiterate what has already been said. The OHR is happy with the final version of the instructions from the Canton 6 received on Monday afternoon and look now to their full implementation at the municipal level. As for the decision on sanctions, apart from those already taken there will be no further sanctions against HDZ on this matter. Here in the HN Canton, we expect to see municipalities by Friday confirm instructions issued by the Cantonal Ministry. OHR also expects to see the schools make the necessary administrative changes by the end of the week.

Second point we would like to emphasise today is something that you have probably seen in this morning’s papers. Today the leaflet ‘Find a job through the Internet’ was distributed with the principal newspapers and magazines in BiH and at employment bureaus throughout the country. This is a practical and valuable contribution to the task of tackling BiH’s unsustainable unemployment rate. The BiH authorities have committed themselves to cleaning up the business environment, boosting exports and re-launching the privatisation programme. The object is simple — to get BiH workers back to work. The Action Plan agreed by the three governments at Mrakovica in June lays out the steps that will be taken over the next four or five months to make a real impact on the state of the economy and set in place as quickly as possible the conditions that companies and entrepreneurs need if they are to create jobs successfully. This website Posao.ba should be viewed in this context. It is a practical project that uses internet technology to match people seeking employment with companies seeking new staff. It’s part of a broad offensive on unemployment, and OHR urges employers and job seekers to make full use of this new service. I also hope that you will disseminate this information as wide as possible in order to inform the people that such a possibility exists.

That’s all I have. Thank you. Now, I would like to give the floor to OSCE and Richard.

Richard Medic - OSCE:

Thank you Avis. Just a short statement for today.

OSCE would like to once again clarify what administrative unification of the ‘Fra Dominik Mandic’ and ‘Mostar First’ gymnasias, expected for the start of the school year on 1 September, actually entails. Administrative unification is a straightforward legal procedure whereby the gymnasias will be registered as a single legal body, with one director, one steering board, and a joint budget.

Administrative unification is not the same as physical unification of the two gymnasias, and is not related to the curriculum or work within classrooms. It is a procedure that addresses a fundamental element of the Education Reform Strategy, which was approved by the entity and cantonal ministers for education last year. In the Strategy Paper, the education ministers pledged to 'cut wastage, duplication and inefficiencies in BiH's education system'. Administrative unification of the 'Fra Dominik Mandic' and 'Mostar First' gymnasias is a crucial step towards keeping that promise.

That's all I have for today. Thank you.

Avis Benes - OHR:

Thank you Richard. Now, let's hear EUPM and Kirsten.

Kirsten Haupt - EUPM:

First of all thank you very much for the nice words. It is very nice to be back in Mostar and it is also very nice to still see some familiar faces. I will be based as the EUPM Spokesperson here in Mostar and I will be covering Canton 7, 8 and 10 as well as the Trebinje area. It is a quite large area and I will do my best to give you all available information on this particular area.

For today I have three items for you. The first concerns meetings that the EUPM held with the newly appointed Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Ministry of Interior. Those meetings took place last week and yesterday with the newly appointed Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Minister of Interior, Tomislav Martinovic, who took up office on 29 July 2003. Mr. Martinovic is currently travelling throughout the canton to acquaint himself with the situation in the police administrations and police stations. Mr. Martinovic appears to be very eager and committed to address a number of serious issues presently facing the ministry, first issues including the rationalization of expenses of the Ministry, the timely and adequate payment of salaries to police officers, salary harmonization as well as the current material requirements of the Ministry. EUPM has assured Mr. Martinovic of its continued support for the Ministry's efforts to further improve the functioning of the ministry as a democratic law enforcement institution for the benefit of all citizens of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

Secondly, I would like to give you some more information on the recently established Public Complaints Bureaus in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and in West-Herzegovina Canton. The Public Complaints Bureau provides a civilian instrument to control the adherence of police officers to professional standards in the execution of their duty. It will meet the need for a neutral and independent forum to which the citizens of these cantons can turn with concerns regarding the work of the police or specific complaints about individual police officers. The establishment of this office signifies yet another step in the strengthening of the political independence of the police. The Public Complaints Bureaus have been established based on the respective cantonal Law on Internal Affairs and Book of Rules of the respective cantonal Ministry of Interior and with the assistance of EUPM. The Bureaus consist each of five members, four representatives of civil society and one representative of the cantonal Ministry of Interior. The Bureau members meet regularly to review ongoing cases and that has been going on for the last couple of weeks now in both Canton. Although the Bureau will be located in the respective cantonal Ministry of Interior and work very closely with the Department for Professional Standards of the ministry, it will do so entirely outside the ministry's chain of command in order to guarantee their independent role. The Bureaus will receive and deal with all complaints sent by citizens to the Ministry of Interior or to the Bureaus directly. In addition, it will monitor disciplinary proceedings conducted by the respective Departments for Professional Standards and assess the objectivity and impartiality of these investigations. It can also initiate such proceedings when deemed necessary. The Bureaus will also keep abreast of criminal proceedings against police officers in court. Complaint boxes are placed in every police station in the two cantons as well as in the ministry buildings. So, when lodging a complaint, citizens can use those boxes or write directly to the Public Complaints Bureaus at the address of the cantonal Ministries of Interior.

The last item I want to address today - I wish to clarify some information in relation to the explosion that took place yesterday in Glamoc, in Canton 10. An explosive device went off in the house of a Croat displaced family from Dobo, killing a woman and her son. According to information available at this point, the woman and her two children used to collect scrap metal regularly at a shooting range that was used and is being used by SFOR and the local army. Yesterday, it appears that they had removed an unexploded air-ground-missile from that shooting range and took it home to disassemble it. In the process, the device exploded killing the woman and her son instantly. Currently, the police in Glamoc is investigating this very tragic accident in co-operation with SFOR. EUPM

is closely monitoring the investigation.

Thank you.

Avis Benes - OHR:

Thank you Kirsten. Now I give the floor to SFOR and Capt. Magistretti.

Capt. Magistretti - SFOR:

No electronic transcript provided.

Questions:

Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88/Radio Free Europe): Question for OSCE and OHR.

The President of Southwest Municipal Council, Kresimir Jarak, confirmed that the Council's session will be held on Thursday morning and that a decision on the administrative unification of the Mostar gymnasia will most probably be passed. However, he also stated that decisions on some specific criteria have been agreed with the International Community. What are those specific criteria?

Avis, as far as I know at last week's press conference in Sarajevo Paddy Ashdown announced further measures if the decision is not passed tomorrow by municipality South West. Today you stated that there will be no further sanctions. Does it mean that you have received firm assurances that the decision in question will be taken tomorrow?

A: Richard Medic: Firstly, with regards to tomorrow's Southwest Municipal Council session, which has now officially been scheduled for tomorrow morning, OSCE welcomes the fact that it has been called and that the relevant decisions that have to be issued for the administrative unification of these two schools can finally proceed.

In response to your question about Mr. Jarak's statement yesterday, first of all I would like to say that OSCE's mandate is education reform – that is, to monitor and to facilitate this process, and not to make political deals. The aims of these reforms are clear and they are outlined in the Strategy Paper that was presented last year to the Peace Implementation Council and signed by all entity and cantonal Ministers for Education. The BiH Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education supports those pledges. The Implementation Plan for Common Core Curriculum, also signed by Ministers at entity and cantonal levels, supports these pledges. And these reforms are a part of BiH's commitment to the post-accession agreement with the Council of Europe, and this was signed by BiH's leaders. So I suggest you refer your question to the local authorities. Ask them when their words will be put into actions. I hope that answers your question.

A: Avis Benes: I said that there would be no further sanctions against HDZ on this matter – namely matter relating to fine issued for the failure of Central Bosnia Canton to issue Instructions on unification of schools. My statement was referring only relating to this matter, i.e. that just meant that particular point. At his press conference the HR Paddy Ashdown stated that apart from the 40,000 KM, additional 5% will be deducted – this will not happen and that is what my statement referred to. As I said OHR, of course, expects Municipal Council of Mostar South West to verify Instructions issued by the Cantonal Ministry of Education at the next session.

Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88/Radio Free Europe): As my following question does not refer to MNB SE area of responsibility I'll direct this question to EUPM. How can it be possible that ordinary people can have access to the shooting range and take an unexploded air-ground missile?

A: Kirsten Haupt: Your question is absolutely right. I mean I would ask the same question and I think everybody who hears about that accident would ask the question how could this actually happen. As I understand exactly that question will be one the key issues of the investigation. As I also understand this family was regularly going to that shooting range to collect scrap metal. But you have to understand that you have to wait for the investigation and the information should really come out from the police in Glamoc and from SFOR in the Glamoc area as well.

Q: Zvonimir Jukic (Onasa/FTV '60 Minutes'): I have two questions for the OHR. Firstly, could you comment on media speculations that the HR did not attend Mostar diving competition, even though he was in Mostar, to

demonstrate his disagreement with the work of Mayor of Mostar.

My second question refers to meetings that Wnendt held with leaders of political parties in Mostar regarding the re-organization of this city. Could you tell us if these talks resulted in any sort of positive steps forward and when does this process, which is in crisis, stand at the moment?

A: Avis Benes: As for your first question, the OHR does not want to comment on inaccurate speculations of Dnevni List on this matter.

As for your second question, the OHR can confirm that Senior Deputy High Representative Ambassador Wnendt is holding an extensive range of consultations with various bodies before it is decided which steps will be taken by the OHR on this matter. At this point in time, details of these talks are not being disclosed to public and we do not want to comment on them any further. However, Ambassador Wnendt will inform the High Representative in September of his findings. As it is already known, decision on Mostar i.e. direction which this process will take will have to ensure that solution is found by the end of this year given that municipal elections are scheduled to take place next year.

Q: Angelina Puljic (HTV Mostar): What is the OHR's view on the fact that at the recently held Old Bridge diving competition a tribute was paid to fallen soldiers of only one nation? Was it an accidental mistake or....?

A: Avis Benes: The OHR does not want to speculate on this matter. In order to get an answer to this question I suggest you to contact the organisers.

Q: Pejo Gasparevic (HINA/BBC): As far as I know this was the first time that SFOR and KFOR held a joint military exercise. Is this the beginning of process of unification of SFOR and KFOR? Secondly, could this be considered as the first, initial signs that NATO could get a mandate to arrest individuals indicted for war crimes in the entire Balkans and not only in BIH as was the case so far.

A: Capt. Magistretti: Regarding your first question on KFOR and SFOR – as you probably know both of these missions as well as the mission in Macedonia and in Albania are within the control of the AF South which is the NATO headquarter based in Naples. So it is a joint exercise together with SFOR and KFOR to rehearse specific task which is to have in short time, at a short notice a lot of incoming troops in attempts to face possible threats to the peace.

For your second point, as you know the main task of SFOR is not the same as for KFOR is not to arrest persons indicted for war crimes but just to create the framework for local authorities, to help them, to succeed in [...]