

OHR Bulletin 43 - April 07, 1997

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PIC Steering Board

The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council met in Istanbul on 2 April.

Following the meeting the Steering Board issued a [statement](#) welcoming the 27 March signing of a comprehensive agreement on the Implementation of the Sarajevo Protocol by the leaders of all political parties represented in the Sarajevo Canton Assembly. With the implementation of this agreement, Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs alike will have guaranteed participation on all levels in the governance of the capital of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thus making a commitment to the multi-ethnic character of Sarajevo, enabling return to the City and ensuring that all peoples and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can identify with their capital, the statement said.

The Steering Board deemed it crucial to implement the Agreement in all aspects and within the given time frame, which included the adoption by 9 April of the amendments to the Federation and Canton Constitutions on Sarajevo and Mostar, as well as the convening on 10 April of the new City Council and election of the Sarajevo Mayor and his two Deputies. This, the Steering Board said, would constitute an important signal, in particular on the eve of the papal visit.

In addition to the above, the Board urged the Croatian Government and the local Serb leadership in Eastern Slavonia to do their utmost to prevent an exodus from the area into neighbouring countries.

Brcko

The United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution increasing the IPTF strength by 186 police and 11 civilian personnel to be deployed in Brcko. The resolution, number 1103 urged member states to provide qualified monitors and other forms of assistance to the IPTF in support of the [Dayton Peace Agreement](#). It also called on the parties to the Agreement to implement all its aspects and to fully co-operate with the international police.

Principal Deputy High Representative Michael Steiner, accompanied by Deputy High Representative for Brcko Bill Farrand met on 1 April with RS president Biljana Plavsic and RS minister Aleksa Buha in Pale to discuss

implementation of international supervision in Brcko.

OSCE / Elections

The Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Frowick announced last week the decision by the Provisional Election Commission (PEC) regarding the certification of Opstinas that will be contested in the forthcoming municipal elections in September. The PEC authorised a total of 133 municipalities, 73 in the Federation and 60 in the Republika Srpska.

Ambassador Frowick, speaking at a press conference in Sarajevo, added that progress is being made in the 18 split municipalities divided by the inter-Entity boundary line.

The PEC decided not to include the central district of Mostar in the elections although the other six opstinas in Mostar would be part of the elections. Regarding Brcko, Frowick said that it was decided that it was too early to include it on the list but that everyone on the commission indicated a desire that Brcko should be included in the elections in September.

The registration deadline for political parties, coalitions and independent candidates to run in the municipal elections has been set at 17:00 hours on 25 April 1997.

The OSCEs Media Experts Commission (MEC), charged with monitoring media compliance and investigating violations, released a new set of rules and regulations for media for the period of the September municipal elections. The rules, produced by the MEC and approved by the PEC, have been strengthened and broadened since the general elections of 1996. Numerous violations were reported during the previous campaign period, committed primarily by state-run media and political parties, including manipulation of OSCE voter education programming. In a press release marking the publishing of the new set of regulation, the OSCE said that the MECs enhanced powers enable them to oblige violators to publish or broadcast materials of the MECs choosing at a time and manner determined by the MEC. During the course of a formal investigation, media organisations, if asked, must identify and provide information on the ownership and release all documents pertaining to financial transactions, both foreign and domestic. Furthermore, the MEC retains the right to impose fines, penalties or other appropriate actions against violators. The MEC plans to increase the number of media monitors across the country and will appoint a total of five independent experts to its commission and sub-commissions.

Sarajevo

An agreement on implementing the Sarajevo Protocol to establish a city government was signed on 27 March by representatives of the Democratic Action Party (SDA), Croat Democratic Union (HDZ), Party for Bosnia & Herzegovina, Social Democratic party, Union of BiH Social Democrats (UBSD), and the Principal Deputy High Representative, Michael Steiner.

Party representatives signed a draft amendment to the Federation constitution which anticipates the organisation of Sarajevo as a local autonomous administration, a draft city statute, and a draft amendment to the Sarajevo Canton

Constitution according to which the city will be composed of four municipalities. The Federation assembly and cantonal parliaments are due to adopt the draft amendments by 9 April. The first session of the city council which is expected to pass the city statute and appoint the mayor will be held on 10 April.

Mostar

The Deputy Mayor of Mostar, Safet Orucevic, sent a letter to the Principal Deputy High Representative Ambassador Michael Steiner announcing the removal of the sleeping policemen on the Bulevar/Donja Mahala in Mostar. The work was completed on 29 March by 12:00 hrs in accordance with the deadline set in a letter sent by Ambassador

Steiner on 26 March to the President and Vice-president of the Federation. The OHR issued a statement on the same day announcing its satisfaction that the deadline was met and the work completed.

The Head of the Regional OHR in Mostar, Sir Martin Garrod sent a letter on 4 April to the president of the Herzegovina-Neretva canton government, Mijo Brajkovic, warning against the alleged construction of a Croat National Theatre and Cathedral in Mostar. In his letter Garrod states that the OHR has received information suggesting the construction work on the two buildings would commence on 7 April. If this is true, and particularly in view of the events of the past two months in Mostar, I must remind you that anyone who initiates action which leads to the raising of tensions in the city, especially in light of the forthcoming visit by the Pope will bear the full responsibility for any consequences, Garrod warns in his letter before adding that the sites on which it is intended to build the Theatre and Cathedral are located in the Central District which is under the control of the City Council.

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers (CoM) held its fifteenth session at Lukavica on 3 April, chaired by Haris Silajdzic. The ministers had a long detailed discussion of the proposed agenda before a reduced agenda was agreed and further debate started. Although no further progress was made on the Quick Start Package draft laws, the CoM agreed to set up a secretariat under the direction of Vice-chair Neven Tomic to support the Councils works and requested OHRs support. OHR was also asked to mediate in deciding which ministry was responsible for air traffic control, the Foreign Trade ministry or the Civil Affairs and Communications.

The CoM agreed that Finance ministers, their Deputies, and Entity Finance ministers should meet to discuss the status of foreign debt on 16 April. The next session of the Council itself is due to take place in Sarajevo on Thursday 10 April.

Refugee and Humanitarian Affairs

The Principals of OHR, [UNHCR](#), [SFOR](#), [UN IPTF](#) and [OSCE](#) issued a press release on 31 March noting with great interest the statement delivered by the Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications of Bosnia & Herzegovina, on behalf of the Council of Ministers and the governments of the Federation and the RS to the Expanded Regional Meeting of Ministers and Commissioners responsible for refugee matters in Geneva on 21 March 1997.

The Principals welcomed the fact that it has been possible to present such a statement in common expressing hope that it will be a prelude to similar joint commitments in other areas of governmental concern. On the substance of the statement, the Principals welcomed that it confirms prior commitments to fully allow safe freedom of movement on the whole territory of BiH and to fully support the commencement of the return process to municipalities, towns and villages within the so-called minority areas. The Principals also welcomed the decision by the BiH, Federation and RS authorities to fully harmonise all legal acts of theirs with the Peace Agreement and with international law and conventions with the aim of lifting all obstacles to the repatriation and return process.

Human Rights

The International Police Task Force (IPTF) denounced the placement last week by unknown persons of a Croat flag over the remains of a mosque in the Vitez area destroyed in 1993. The IPTF spokesman in Sarajevo described the incident as beyond taste and disgusting. The flag was subsequently removed, following the intervention of the Federation Deputy Interior Minister Jozo Leutar.

The IPTF reported last week of incidents of violence and arson directed against Serbs and Serb-owned property in the Croat-held town of Drvar. The IPTF said that little was being done by the Croat authorities with the incidents becoming a daily occurrence in Drvar where the few remaining Serbs are being subjected to harassment.

Economic Assistance

Japan and BiH signed last week an agreement for US \$ 32 million in assistance to Bosnia to improve the transport system in Sarajevo.

The agreement was signed by the co-Chair of the Council of Ministers Boro Busic and the Vienna-based Japanese ambassador to BiH Yushu Takashima at the OHR in Sarajevo. The donation will be used to purchase around 80 new buses, including some specialised vehicles for the disabled. The funds will also be used for the repair of elements of the power transmission system throughout BiH. The aim of this part of the project is to create the technical possibilities to establish power transmission between the two Entities. The project is an integral part of a joint endeavour by Japan-UK-Canada to improve the electricity system in BiH.

The EU is undertaking to finance the reconstruction of destroyed homes in Bosanski Petrovac, Bosanska Krupa and Odzak prior to the return of refugees from those areas. The Berlin Senate Health and Social Policy Department and the Office of the Senate Commissioner for Foreigners Issues Barbara John said the EU plans to repair per 75 facilities in Petrovac and Krupa and 100 in Odzak. John said Bosnian refugees in Berlin who are from these areas are urged to come to the office and apply to receive reconstruction assistance. Those who return to Bosnia will be provided with transportation and financial aid as well as being granted a one-off financial aid package from the International Organisation for Migration.

A total of 201 homes were repaired last year by the German humanitarian agency GTZ in municipalities in northeast Bosnia. Over 3.500 refugees and displaced persons have now returned to those areas in the municipalities of Gracanica, Banovici, Srebrenik, Zivinice, Tuzla and Brcko. In Celic, GTZ invested DM 300.000 to solve the housing problem of another group of refugees, while in Kalesija DM 1.1 million was spent on the revitalisation of state institutions.

Humanitarian Aid

US relief agency Samaritans Purse presented a donation worth half a million German marks to the Sarajevo state hospital last week. The donation, presented by the agency's president Melvin Cheatam consisted of beds for patients, computerised equipment for visual control of all vital functions and operational instruments, as well as a central monitor which enables a constant insight and monitoring of the blood pressure of all patients.

The Swiss trust for providing assistance to children Hilfe fur Kinder gave 12.000 German marks to the Sarajevo Institute for Special Education and Training of Children Mjedenica last week. The Institute, which is marking its 50th anniversary this year will use the money to purchase materials and equipment for disabled children.

The German SFOR battalion donated last week 20 special chairs to children suffering from cerebral paralysis in the Sarajevo Centre for Disabled Children.

Looking Ahead

12-13 April

Scheduled visit to Sarajevo by Pope John Paul II

See our [Chronology](#) for a full list of activities

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

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