

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference



OHR/EUSR, Mario Brkic
EUFOR, David Fielder
NATO, Derek Chappell

OHR/EUSR

HR/EUSR Briefs PSC on BiH Situation

The High Representative and EU Special Representative is in Brussels today to brief the Political and Security Committee – the PSC formulates European Security and Defence Policy – on the conclusions of the Peace Implementation Council meeting last week and on the political situation in BiH.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative will say that there has been a significant shift in the position of the PIC in response to the political situation in BiH, and as a result the PIC is now looking for an end state rather than an end date for OHR's closure.

The HR/EUSR will say that the goal of the Peace Implementation Council, the OHR and the EU is BiH as a peaceful, viable state irreversibly on course for European integration. To support this goal the PIC has set five objectives for the BiH institutions to meet, and requires the SAA to be signed and a positive assessment of the situation in BiH to be made before the OHR closes.

The PIC made it clear the OHR continues with its mandate intact and will continue to ensure full respect for the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement.

The HR/EUSR will outline three key points from the PIC:

First, the unity of the International Community on the decision to extend the OHR;

Second, the unanimous agreement that all parties must fully comply with the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement;

And third, the position that the BiH authorities must ensure that the objectives for OHR closure are met.

On BiH's progress on EU lead reforms the HR/EUSR will outline that police reform legislation is before the BiH Parliament, despite SDA objections. If this reform is adopted the signing of the SAA will at last be within reach.

In his assessment of the political situation the HR/EUSR will note that despite progress towards an SAA the political situation needs to be improved. Instead of trying to impose their own vision of the country on to others, political leaders should find common ground.

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And finally, I wish to draw your attention to the webpage www.reci.ba where you can find new answers by Miroslav Lajcak on citizens' questions.

EUFOR

EUFOR AND BiH ARMED FORCES JOINT TRAINING

The EUFOR multi-national battalion will be conducting training this week at Comanche military base, near Tuzla. A platoon of

soldiers from the Armed Forces of BiH will also be conducting joint training with EUFOR during this period. This is a very significant event for the AFBiH as they continue to make progress. The training will allow for both EUFOR and the AFBiH to learn from each other techniques useful in Peace Support Operations and will include Crowd Riot Control and rapid extraction of personnel from buildings under threat.

There will be an opportunity for the media to witness some of this training, on Thursday 6th March 2008, and talk to members of both EUFOR and the AFBiH. The media are requested to be at the main entrance to Comanche Base by 1230 in order to be met by both EUFOR and AFBiH personnel.

EUFOR HANDS OVER RESPONSIBILITY FOR WEAPON STORAGE SITES

COM EUFOR, Major General Ignacio Martín Villalain and the Chief of the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) Joint Staff, Lieutenant General Sifet Podzic, will all attend a ceremony at Rajlovac Barracks on Thursday 6th March 2008 at 1300. The AFBiH Minister of Defence, Selmo Cikotic is also expected to attend the ceremony.

The purpose of this ceremony is to formally hand over the responsibility of Weapon Storage Sites from EUFOR to the AFBiH. A Letter of Understanding will be signed by both COM EUFOR and Chief of the AFBiH Joint Staff.

There will be an opportunity for the media to witness this event and talk to COM EUFOR and Senior members of the AFBiH. The media are requested to consult with the AFBiH Press Office to arrange entry into Rajlovac Barracks.

AFBiH Press Office: TBC

EUFOR PRESS OFFICE STAFF CHANGES

Chief of Press Office:

Lieutenant Colonel Miguel Jose MARTIN BERNARDI from the

Spanish Army has taken over as the Chief of the EUFOR Press Office with immediate effect. He has replaced Lieutenant Commander Jan STROEHMER from the German Navy who had been in BiH for over nine months.

Spokesperson:

Lieutenant Commander Philip TRELOAR from the Royal Navy will take over this week as the EUFOR Spokesperson from Major Dave FIELDER Royal Marines.

Both the new chief and spokesperson are looking forward to working alongside the media in BiH and they anticipate that the good relationship between EUFOR and the Media will continue. The outgoing chief and spokesperson thank all those who have made their stay here memorable and are pleased that the country remains safe and secure and that positive progress towards European integration continues.

NATO

There was no statement.