Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Mario Brkic
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OHR

HR Visiting Bijeljina

The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, is visiting Bijeljina today where he will hold meetings with the City Mayor, the District Prosecutor and the District Police Commander.

The visit will be an opportunity to get an update on the situation in the Bijeljina region since he last visit in September 2006.

All media are invited to a press opportunity following the meeting with Mayor Mico Micic at 12.30 hrs at Bijeljina Municipality Building.

High Representative To Penalise Political Parties in HNC

As announced last Tuesday, today is the deadline for the formation of a government in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. A

Cantonal Assembly session is taking place at midday today and we expect Deputies to take this opportunity to form a government.

If the session fails to produce results, sanctions will be imposed through a Decision of the High Representative at the end of the day.

Financial sanctions will be imposed on the HDZ BiH, HDZ 1990-HZ, SDA and SBiH and penalties will increase until a government is formed.

According to the High Representative's Decision, money levied through the fining of political parties will be transferred to social programs in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton,

These sanctions are a direct result of the failure of the political stakeholders in the H-N Canton to form a government eight months after the elections. They can still avoid the consequences I have just outlined if they form a government today.

OSCE

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is Concerned by the Escape of Radovan Stankovic

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina expresses its grave concern at the escape of the convicted war criminal, Radovan Stankovic, from prison on 25 May 2007. The Stankovic case was the first such case transferred from the ICTY to be tried by the Bosnia and Herzegovina courts. It represents a crucial test of the ability and willingness of the country's justice and penitentiary sectors to successfully process war crimes cases domestically and to ensure strict enforcement of sentences.

The Mission urges the relevant BiH authorities at all levels

to undertake every necessary action and adequate measures, with the utmost haste, for Stankovic's recapture. The OSCE Mission to BiH also calls on the authorities to conduct a thorough investigation of the escape to ensure that all individuals who may be involved in the incident are brought to justice and similar incidents do not occur in the future.

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A delegation of experts from BiH Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Security and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as members of the OSCE Mission's Department of Security and Cooperation, are in Helsinki this week to consult with experts from the Finnish and Estonian National Defence Courses. The purpose of consultations is to develop the BiH Security Policy Course, which will be launched this July in the form of a pilot course. In addition to the consultations, the BiH delegation will conduct bilateral discussions with representatives of the Finnish Ministries of Defence, Security, Foreign Affairs and Interior.

The Mission's DSC has organized the visit in the context of its institution-building programme in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Defence and BiH Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Security and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

EUFOR

EUFOR Status in Bosnia i Herzegovina

Yesterday, on Monday 28 May 2007 the new EUFOR Multinational Battalion, based in Camp Butmir near Sarajevo received its battalion banner from the hands of COM EUFOR, Rear Admiral Hans-Jochen Witthauer, after having proved its full operational capability.

This provides a good opportunity for a short update on EUFOR

status in BiH. The Transition commenced in March is now almost completed. The 3 multinational Task Forces in Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla with additional camps in Rogatica, Doboj, Zenica and in Rajlovac were closed down by the end of April. The maneuvering forces have left the country and the camps will be handed over to the national authorities soon, last one will be Camp Rajlovac by the end of the year.

The previously mentioned Multinational Battalion now represents the EUFOR maneuvering force, supplemented by the Integrated Police Unit, also based in Camp Butmir. In case of need this force will be reinforced by up to 4 battalions in short time, which are in a reserve status in their respective home countries.

In addition to these forces EUFOR is represented by 44 LOT house spread all over the country. Five RCCs (regional co-ordination centers) as control elements for the LOT organization have been established in Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica since the multinational task forces were closed down.

The reduction of troops from 6000 to approximately 2500 is now almost completed.

RTQs:

Nezavisne novine, Mirza Ćubura:

Will the penalties be the same for all of the political parties and how high will they be?

OHR, Mario Brkić:

Details related to the penalties will be made known via a press release after the decision is signed this afternoon. At this moment I would rather not say anything more.

Journalist #2:

Can the OHR assess the Washington negotiations between Dodik and Silajdžić? Can you, in short, comment on what went on at the negotiations and why Croat representatives did not participate in the negotiations?

OHR, Mario Brkić:

Well, if you have been following earlier questions concerning the Washington negotiations you will know that we always refer journalists to the State Department, that is the American Embassy for comments and answers to such questions, therefore the same comment applies in reference to your question. As far as the nonparticipation of the Croat representatives in the negotiations is concerned, the question should be posed to either them or the organizer of the negotiations. I really do not know the answer to your question.

Journalist #2:

Today at 14:00 negotiations will commence at the German Embassy. Is the OHR involved in these negotiations in any way?

OHR, Mario Brkić:

Negotitations on what?

Journalist #2:

Dodik as well as all other representatives will participate in the negotiations.

OHR, Mario Brkić:

The OHR is generally involved in all reform processes, however I really cannot comment on what will be happening in the German Embassy.