

# **Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference**

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## **OHR**

### **FBiH Budget Pleases No one**

Prime Minister Brankovic's promise to introduce amendments to the FBiH budget over the next three months is confirmation that the FBiH Budget pleases no one at a point when the FBiH needed a budget that would improve the business environment in the entity more than anything else.

The business community has already warned that pro-business direct tax reform and simplified administrative procedures have made the RS a more fertile ground for investment, and that some businesses that have until now been based in the FBiH are looking to move to the other side of the IEHL.

Rather than taking on this challenge, the Government has raised public-sector salaries and allowances by 22 % as well as increased spending on other untargeted programmes.

This leaves no room for direct tax reform or other economic incentives that would promote the creation of new jobs.

Making financially unaffordable commitments for the sake of pre-election gains can in this instance only come from borrowing money that the Federation must eventually pay by either raising taxes or dramatically cutting spending in other areas.

Countries in the region have found that without attracting investment and creating jobs it is impossible for Governments to begin to make the payments to the most vulnerable in society, such as pensioners, the disabled and the unemployed.

Focussing on practical legislative and administrative initiatives is a workable step to attract investment, create jobs and raise living standards. If you cannot create jobs and raise living standards, reform in every other sphere is much harder.

### **FBiH Constitutional Court Mostar Ruling**

Many of you are looking for an OHR comment on the FBiH Constitutional Court Ruling on the Mostar Statute.

As a point of principle, the OHR's position is that BiH's Constitutional Courts have the authority to review High Representative's decisions where the HR acted in place of the legislative bodies of the country – essentially where the High Representative enacted legislation.

As to today's ruling itself, the OHR is reviewing the ruling so there will be no detailed comment at this time.

## **EUFOR**

### **Operation ALTHEA in Bosnia and Herzegovina : EUFOR started Transition**

As previously announced, EUFOR is paying tribute to the improved security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and commenced its Transition Plan with the main purpose of reducing the troops in the country to approximately 2,500 soldiers during March 2007.

Today I am pleased to announce that the Multinational Maneuver Battalion to be based in Camp Butmir near Sarajevo has just arrived in the area in its complete strength and has started training. The battalion, comprising of troops from Spain, Poland, Turkey and Hungary, is the cornerstone of EUFOR's new force structure, which was endorsed by the EU at the end of February. Combined with the Integrated Police Unit (IPU) and the countrywide LOT house-structure it will be able to deploy to every place in the country on short notice.

Concurrently the Multinational Task Forces in Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka have started reducing their troops in order to close and hand over the camps to the BiH Authorities later this year.

Related to this Transition, EUFOR is launching its latest advertising campaign to inform the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina about the restructuring of EUFOR troops. The campaign will begin tomorrow, Wednesday 4 April 2007 and includes TV, radio, newspaper and billboard advertisements.

This first phase of the campaign is intended to convey 3 messages;

- EUFOR, as part of the EU family, remains committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its progress towards European integration by continuing to support a safe and secure environment,
- EUFOR retains a presence throughout the country in the form of 44 Liaison and Observation Teams (LOTs) which live and work in the community and keep a close contact to the population,
- EUFOR retains the ability to deploy additional reserve forces anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, if they are needed to react to any possible threat to the safe and secure environment.

Future phases of the campaign will provide more detailed information about assets and engagement of EUFOR in the country.

The campaign elements, as there is this TV-Spot, a similar Radio Jingle, newspaper advertisements and billboard posters as you can see here, have been contracted to:

- 7 TV-companies,
- 59 Radio stations,
- 6 newspapers and magazines,
- 70 billboard locations

and will be seen for the next 30 days.

## **ICTY**

Good morning on behalf of the Tribunal. This is a historical week because never before in its history has the Tribunal rendered three judgments in three consecutive days.

As you could see from our yesterday's press release, the ICTY Appeals Chamber yesterday dismissed all grounds of appeal filed by Miroslav Bralo and affirmed sentence of 20 years' imprisonment for a number of crimes committed in the area of Vitez in April and May 1993, including participation in an attack on Ahmići on 16 April 1993.

Today, on April 3, at 14:00, the ICTY Appeals Chamber will render its judgment in the case against Radoslav Brđanin. On 1 September 2004, Brđanin was sentenced to 32 years' imprisonment by a first instance judgment for persecutions, killing, torture, deportation and other crimes committed against the non-Serb population in 13 municipalities in the Autonomous Region of Krajina between 1 April and 31 December 1992. This is the first time ever that the ICTY Appeals Chamber will render a judgment in a case relating to so many municipalities. As usual, immediately following the judgment, the Tribunal will issue a press release.

The third judgment will be rendered tomorrow at 13:45 in the case against Dragan Zelenović. On 17 January 2007, he pleaded guilty to seven counts of the indictment related to torture and rape against Bosniak women and girls in Foča in 1992.

I have for you copies of the ICTY press release of 17 January, as well as copies of the guilty plea agreement and the statement of facts signed by Dragan Zelenović.

For all interested TV stations, I also have a few copies of DVDs showing footage from the hearings held in this case on 16 and 17 January 2007 and 23 January 2007 respectively. The third footage on the first DVD shows Zelenović's formal guilty plea given on 17 January. The second DVD relates to a sentence hearing, in the course of which the Tribunal judges asked Dragan Zelenović a number of questions.

That is all from me today. Thank you for your attention.