

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

HR/EUSR in Berlin

The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, is in Berlin today on the last day of a two-day visit to Germany in advance of this week's meeting of the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board.

Germany will be holding the EU Presidency in the first half of 2007. This six-month period will be especially important because it is the last six months of the Office of the High Representative, during which time the presence of the EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be strengthened.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative will be meeting with Norbert Lammert, the Speaker of the German Parliament, this afternoon to discuss the possibilities of creating a bilateral parliamentary friendship group involving parliamentarians from both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Germany. A friendship group already exists between German parliamentarians and their peers in Southeast Europe, but not specifically with Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Yesterday, Mr Schwarz-Schilling met with Foreign Ministry and Chancellery officials, including Christoph Heusgen, Chancellor Angela Merkel's senior foreign policy adviser, and Emily Haber, the diplomat responsible for relations with Southeast Europe.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative briefed on the outcome of the 1 October elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, progress in coalition-building and prospects for fulfilling Stabilisation and Association Agreement requirements. He stressed the need to restore momentum to the reform process, especially police and constitutional reform, now that the elections are over.

German officials expressed their support for Mr Schwarz-Schilling's policy on transition and welcomed the strengthening of the EU Special Representative's presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUFOR

Dangers of weapons and ammunition : EUFOR appeals for assistance from the Citizens of BiH

During the last months and weeks, accidents involving the public, and in particular children, have occurred due to the presence of unsecured, surplus weapons and munitions. EUFOR offers its sincerest sympathy to those who have lost relatives and we hope that those who have been injured make a full and quick recovery. Such incidents highlight the danger posed by weapons and ammunition that are retained within local civil communities.

Holding of unlicensed weapons, ammunition, mines or explosives is illegal. The majority of weapons and munitions EUFOR recovers are old and in poor condition. They present a life-threatening hazard to anyone, especially children, that find

or handle them.

As part of the mandate to maintain a Safe and Secure environment EUFOR, through its HARVEST OPERATIONS, continues in its efforts to recover ammunition and weaponry held in homes and hidden in the countryside. We appeal to everyone in the local communities to notify us of hidden weapons, or to hand in ammunition and small arms to either EUFOR or the local Police collection points, for its safe disposal and to prevent unnecessary accidents or future loss of life.