

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

High Representative, Minister Kebo to Launch Intervention Fund

The High Representative and the BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Mirsad Kebo, will tomorrow launch a new initiative aimed at getting practical economic assistance to returnees throughout BiH in a faster and more focused way. This involves an Intervention Fund that will, among other things, make grants of up to 5,000 KM available to returnees in order to acquire tools and materials that are needed to resume commercial or agricultural activities. The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees will be issuing a media advisory later today with details regarding media coverage of this event.

VAT Need Not Cause Price Rises

Also tomorrow, the Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, will visit Klas Bakery in Sarajevo . Ambassador Butler will meet the Klas management to discuss current strengths and weaknesses in BiH's business environment. He will also discuss the company's approach to the introduction of VAT. As you know, media coverage of this issue has focused on predictions of major – and in most cases unjustifiable – price increases as a result of VAT and, following the 1 January launch, on some firms that have taken advantage of VAT simply to increase their profit margins. Klas, a successful and competitive company, has not raised the price of bread.

The management will brief Ambassador Butler on how they have been able to do this. Ambassador Butler will tour the Klas production facilities and take questions from the media, from 15.00 to 15.45 tomorrow.