Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

2006 a Year of Possibilities

On behalf of all at OHR may I wish you a Happy New Year. As the High Representative has pointed out, 2005 was a pivotal year for Bosnia and Herzegovina , culminating in the launch of Stabilisation and Association Agreement negotiations with the European Union. In 2006 we will find out whether BiH's political leaders are able to take advantage of the possibilities that this and other promising developments open up. We have begun the year with the successful introduction of Value Added Tax, a milestone in BiH's Euro-integration process and a major pillar in efforts to invigorate the economy, attract investment and create new jobs. Work is also under way to reach agreement on how best to reduce the size of government and increase its efficiency. All of the major reforms now being pursued have a single, fundamental object – to make life better for the people of BiH. The International Community remains fully engaged in the reform process – but ultimately the success or failure of this process will depend not on the IC but on the political will of the people of BiH and their leaders.

OSCE

No statement

EUPM

Brigadier-GeneralVincenzo Coppola new Head of the EUPM

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina is glad to announce that Brigadier-General Vincenzo Coppola has today officially assumed his duty as the new Head of Mission.

Brigadier General Coppola is a very experienced senior officer of the Italian Carabinieri with extensive Balkans experience. Among past posts covered, he served as Head of the Police Unit of the EU Council in Brussels (2001-2004) and in the Balkans during the SFOR mission in BiH (1998) and the KFOR mission in Kosovo (1999-2000).

Building upon the achievements and successes of the first three years, the EUPM will in the coming two years play a more pro-active role in assisting local police in planning and conducting major and organized crime investigations.

"There are important tasks ahead of us such as the police reform" said General Coppola today in Sarajevo. *"We will continue to support the building up of the state level law enforcement agencies SIPA and the SBS which are crucial in the countries efforts to curb organized crime."*

Brigadier Coppola's biography is enclosed.

EUFOR

"Happy New Year to you all. I have nothing as formal as a statement but two points of note.

Firstly, EUFOR heartily welcomes the inauguration of the Ministry of Defence of the State of Bosnia-Herzegovina and looks forward to working with them in the future, consolidatiung the good work of NATO, EUFOR and the Armed Forces of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past.

Secondly, although this time of the year appears quiet, EUFOR have continued with operations throughout the Christmas and New Year period. Border patrol operations, in support of the State Border Service, anti-smuggling operations, localized weapons harvests, mountain rescue training with the Armed Forces of BiH, Liaison Observation Team (LOT) patrols and continual patrols by elements of EUFOR's Integrated Police Unit (IPU), all mostly in support of local authorities, have continued throughout the holiday period and across the country. For EUFOR it has been business as usual."