

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

OHR Welcomes Wednesday Progress For Euro-Atlantic Integration

Bosnia and Herzegovina took several important steps yesterday towards fulfilling its Euro-Atlantic integration aspirations. The OHR welcomes the maturity and responsibility seen in both the BiH House of Peoples and the RSNA.

The RSNA yesterday voted to uphold the EC's three principles on Police reform and the EC has confirmed that their proposal meets the conditions they have set and which would enable the European Commission to recommend the launch of SAA negotiations this year – provided that BiH's other Parliaments now meet the three EC principles for police reform. This is good news.

Within five years BiH will have a single integrated police service at the state level, and local police areas, which will cross the IEBL in the limited areas where it is technically necessary.

Significant progress was made on PBS reform yesterday too. PBS reform is the other outstanding requirement for the launch of Stabilisation and Association negotiations. By adopting the public broadcasting system law, the BiH parliament made an important step toward creating more functional and efficient system of public broadcasting settlement in BiH.

Now the respective state and entity governments and parliaments must adopt harmonized legislation regulating one

state and two entity broadcasters within the 60 days deadline defined by Law.

The House of Peoples yesterday also adopted defence reform legislation. This is a major step forward on Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. Membership of PfP, and eventually NATO, the worlds most powerful and successful security alliance, will greatly enhance BiH's security. A NATO invitation is a recognition of military and political stability and encourages foreign investment, which creates jobs.

10 years after Dayton the final adoption of the defence reform by the BiH parliament shows that BiH is prepared to set the stage for the eventual conclusion of the military elements of the Dayton Peace Accords.

PIC meets in Sarajevo

The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council will gather in Sarajevo today for a two-day meeting to consider BiH's progress on reform.

The Political Directors last met in June. This week's meeting will consider the progress that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made since then, particularly in BiH's road to Euro-Atlantic integration; on police restructuring and defence reform.

The meeting will also consider the progress being made in reviving the BiH economy and tackling poverty.

The meeting will start late this afternoon with the usual update on the most recent political events

Prime Minister Adnan Terzic will brief the Steering Board on the activities of the BiH Institutions on Friday Morning.

At it's main session tomorrow the PIC will discuss progress on

the requirements for the launch of the Stabilisation and Association negotiation and Partnership for Peace. The PIC will look ahead to the introduction of VAT on 1 January 2006, education reform, and progress on the implementation of the Brcko Final Award.

Media events are planned and journalists can expect the Communiqué as usual on Friday afternoon. We will be issuing a Media Advisory with the details during the course of the day.