

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Oleg Milisic
OSCE, Emira Bayrasli
EUPM, Zinaida Ilaria
ICMP, Doune Porter
EUFOR, Frank Cockburn
NATO, Derek Chappell

OHR

High Representative in Srebrenica Tomorrow

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will tomorrow visit Srebrenica where he will attend a special meeting of the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery being held just five days ahead of the ceremony, which will mark ten years since the genocide committed in Srebrenica.

Amongst other items the meeting will hear a report on the activities regarding the commemoration of the Srebrenica tragedy.

The High Representative used to chair the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery until this position was taken on by Mr. Beriz Belkic. The Foundation owns the Memorial Centre in Potocari. The High Representative remains a member of the Board.

In Srebrenica tomorrow afternoon the High Representative will speak at the opening of the CIMOS car parts factory in Srebrenica. This is a key investment by the Slovenian company TMD Ai and the herald of much needed jobs for the Srebrenica area. The opening will also be attended by BiH Presidency Member, Sulejman Tihic and the Slovenian Ambassador to BiH, Tadej Labernik.

Monthly Economic Report

The collated statistics produced by the Central Bank of BiH, Breaux of Statistics of BiH, FBiH & RS, Sarajevo and Banja Luka Stock Exchanges for April 2005 have now become available – you can collect a copy of the report at the end of the press conference, at the but let me give you the highlights.

The KM's balance of trade for April was positive. More foreign currency was exchanged into KM by a margin of 82 million KM. This was enough to wipe out the previous negative balance and even leave an additional 44 million KM in the Central Banks reserves.

The Sarajevo Stock Exchange also reported a successful April – the value of turnover rose by over 14 per cent in comparison to the same figure for March. By contrast the value of its turnover Banja Luka Stock Exchange had a less successful month, with the falling by 81,6 per cent in April. These results underline the unpredictability of the two markets and their extremely high volatility, as had been noted before.

BiH's Trade Figures show a continued rise in exports during the month of April. This maintains the positive trend that began at the start of 2004. However, it should be noted that imports have maintained a steady rate of growth too, albeit at a lower rate than exports.

Unemployment figures in the Federation are high and apparently static. The RS does not report monthly unemployment.

OSCE

No statement.

EUPM

“Improving awareness on the work and responsibilities of police spokespersons” and “Ways of strengthening the work and effectiveness of police spokespersons” will be the main topics of a discussion among more than 30 Spokespeople from all parts of BiH, who will attend EUPM-sponsored workshop, on Thursday and Friday (7-8 July) in Sarajevo .

The participants will also discuss future activities relating to issues such as: *Increasing citizens interest in the work of police, Gaining citizens support for the work of police, Getting citizens feedback on the quality of service, Making sure the public understands how the police functions, etc.*

Ability to effectively communicate with citizens is crucial to the successful reform of BiH police forces. A good relationship between police forces and the public is very important for the success of police activities. EUPM has been working with the law enforcement agencies for the last two years on development of this aspect of police work. In that respect, a series of workshops and training seminars has been designed in partnership with the local authorities, which will be held until the end of 2005. EUPM will continue to support such initiatives in the future.

ICMP

Good morning from the International Commission on Missing Persons. I have two brief items for you today.

This will be the final international agency press conference before the tenth anniversary of the 1995 fall of Srebrenica. The final number of victims who will be buried on July 11 at the ceremony in Potocari is 583. That number includes one person from Srebrenica who was killed in 1994 and one person who was killed in May 1995. Their families requested that they be buried at the Potocari cemetery during the July 11 memorial service, and the Potocari Foundation granted their request.

Today, the last 233 bodies for next week's burial are being transferred from ICMP's Podrinje Identification Project in Tuzla to the Visoko company that will prepare them for burial. The total number of Srebrenica victims identified by ICMP to date is now 2079.

The pace of identifications at ICMP's Podrinje Identification Project, which deals with Srebrenica victims, has increased markedly this year, partly because the ICMP staff have been working especially hard to identify as many victims as possible for burial during this important month, and partly also because we have also begun to close cases for which we do not yet have entire bodies.

So far this year, we have identified more than 400 Srebrenica victims, compared to 523 for all of last year.

ICMP has also just completed a blood collection drive in Switzerland to collect blood samples from family members for DNA identification of their missing relatives. From Friday, July 1st through Sunday July 3rd, our teams collected almost 400 blood samples. Most of those related to cases of missing persons in Bosnia Herzegovina, and the rest, just under 30, related to cases of the missing from Kosovo.

The majority of the cases are new ones- that means cases of persons for whom no family member had so far given a blood sample, so we hope that we will soon find matches for them on our DNA databases.

And, of course, this would be a very good moment to remind everyone of how important it is for family members of missing persons to give blood samples for DNA identification of their loved ones.

EUFOR

EUFOR will establish a discrete press information centre at BRATUNAC during the period 7-12 Jul. Responsibility for the organisation of the Srebrenica Commemoration events and press accreditation lies with the local authorities but EUFOR remains on standby "out of sight but not over the horizon" to assist the Local Authorities should there be any incident which is beyond their resources.

The press centre will be located in the centre of Bratunac next to Restoran Lovac. A media advisory will be issued tomorrow with full details.

NATO

No statement.

RTQs

Journalist #1:

Question for EUFOR and EUPM: Do you have any knowledge about this explosive device which was found allegedly in Potočari, and how it was dealt with and at what stage it is now?

EUFOR:

EUFOR's got a short statement: last night EUFOR received some information that there may be some explosive materials near the Srebrenica memorial center. EUFOR immediately passed this information to the RS MUP and to the EUPM, who are taking further action as we speak. Thank you very much.

EUPM:

As far as EUPM is concerned I can tell you that obviously we are aware of the situation and our people are at the location. We are in constant contact with the local police, but at this moment for, obviously, reasons that the investigation is ongoing, we can't provide further details. But you can surely get in touch with the RS police spokesperson for more information who is, according to my information, at the location itself.

Journalist #2:

Do you find this worrying, I mean like with what 6 days ahead of the ceremony, fifty thousand people are expected to attend, and yet we find the explosives?

EUFOR:

At the present moment time we do not have enough information, so it would be inappropriate to speculate.

Journalist #2:

Do you have any details? We have it confirmed that they did find the explosives at two sites within the center, so that's not speculation?

OHR:

I think what you've heard is that details are in the process of being gathered, so on that it's going to be impossible to comment further at this particular moment.

Journalist #2:

Is it worrying or is it not worrying?

OHR:

Well, I'm sure you can expect a further comment later on.