

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

Peace Implementation Council Steering Board to Review BiH Reform Progress

The Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board will meet at the OHR in Sarajevo on Thursday 23 June and Friday 24 June. The Political Directors last met, in Brussels, on 7 April. This week's meeting will address Bosnia and Herzegovina's current difficulties in resolving remaining obstacles on the road to Europe. The meeting will also consider the progress being made in reviving the BiH economy and tackling poverty, and also the current effort to streamline government so as to make it more efficient and more affordable.

Prime Minister Adnan Terzic will brief the Steering Board on his strategy for realising his and the High Representative's "joint ambition" that Bosnia and Herzegovina should be in a position to launch Stabilisation and Association negotiations by the tenth anniversary of the Dayton-Paris Accords later this year.

Cameras are invited to record the beginning of Prime Minister Adnan Terzic's presentation to the PIC at 9.00 on Friday 24 June, in the Main Conference Room of the OHR, Sarajevo.

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will make some short comments to the media at the conclusion of the meeting and will take some questions. This media opportunity will take place at 13.00 on Friday 24 June, in the Main Conference Room

of the OHR, Sarajevo.

BiH Does Not Need Knuckle-Dusters

As you will know, the Indirect Taxation Administration (ITA) is reported to have confiscated several hundred thousand KM worth of arms this week that were being shipped into BiH. The authorities are now investigating the shipment, which reportedly contained side-arms, as well as 10,000 knives and more than 3,000 knuckle-dusters.

One thing on which everyone can agree is that BiH does not have any use whatsoever for 3,000 knuckle-dusters, or similar offensive weapons. This case is a good illustration of the fact that establishing cost-effective and efficient institutions in BiH is not simply a matter of meeting EU accession criteria. It's about protecting citizens and ensuring that the people of this country can go about their daily business free of the intimidation and corruption that accompany organized crime.

The ITA is developing its single institution status. In this respect, the OHR welcomes the fact that the revised rules for the conduct and discipline of ITA employees, as required under the Law on the Indirect Taxation System of BiH (which created the ITA) has now been prepared. Its adoption by the ITA's Governing Board at its next session will build on current successes.