

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Kevin Sullivan

EUPM, Zinaida Delic

OSCE, Mersiha Causevic

EUFOR, Lt. Cdr. Frank Cockburn

NATO HQ, Derek Chappell

OHR

World Journalists' Day

The High Representative would like to extend his best wishes to all of you and to all of your colleagues in the BiH media, on the occasion of World Journalists' Day. This is a day on which we reflect upon the difficulties journalists face – from risking their lives all the way through to contending with unhelpful public officials who are reluctant to provide information that ought, by rights, to be in the public domain. Some people may fail, consistently or obtusely, to understand the importance of the job you do (none of these people, by the way, will think twice about reading the newspapers or watching the TV news that they habitually belittle); probably the main thing is that *you* understand it. "The BiH media must continue to play a robust role in scrutinizing and criticizing the work of the authorities – that is their job and it is a job that is essential in a democracy," the High Representative said today. "Following a clear, principled path, independent of interest groups (except for the only interest worth favouring, and that is the citizen's interest) is a difficult thing to do. Most BiH reporters and presenters manage to do it, and I salute them for it. They are performing a function which underpins

normal democratic life. However others fall short of this, and by doing so bring their profession into disrepute.”

High Representative, Chancellor Schroeder to Discuss PBS

The High Representative will meet German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder this afternoon at the BiH Presidency. Discussion will focus, among other things, on the parliamentary effort now underway to provide BiH with a European-standard Public Broadcasting Service that meets the needs of all its citizens.

The Feasibility Study requirements are based on the belief that politically directed or mono-ethnic channels will not contribute to the democratic development that will carry BiH into the European Union. The EC has therefore requested the establishment of one single and economically viable Public Broadcasting Service that will equally represent all people of BiH. It is therefore crucially important that the BiH Public Broadcasting System Law, which has been stalled in parliamentary procedure due to amendments tabled by the HDZ, is enacted in its original form, meeting a major EC Feasibility Study requirement and opening the way for planned EC assistance for PBS.

There will be a photo opportunity at the start of the meeting, which is scheduled to begin at 13.30. However, camera crews are advised to arrive early as the schedule may be brought forward by ten or fifteen minutes.

PDHR Larry Butler Calls on BiH Authorities to Implement Laws They Have Enacted

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, is speaking today to officers of the BiH armed forces who are participating in a Peace Support Operation course at Butmir. Among the points Ambassador Butler will be making is that – and I quote – “Reform is not just about *enacting* laws and ticking off boxes covering the requirements of NATO or the European Commission; it is about *implementing* laws and

securing real benefits for citizens. It's not, for example, a matter of changing the organisation of the tax office just for the sake of change; it's about reorganising the fiscal system so that it works better for the people of this country. It's not about tinkering with chains of command in the armed forces, but about giving the armed forces a modern, responsive and efficient chain of command that will allow them to discharge their primary duty – to protect the citizens of BiH."

Ambassador Butler will point out that "the development of BiH's Peace Support Operations capacity is a sign that BiH is beginning to acquire a military posture appropriate to a modern democracy."

I have brought along copies of the speech. We will be distributing a local-language version this afternoon.

Ambassador Butler, by the way, will give a press conference at 11.00 on Friday morning, here at the OHR, at which he will talk about his priorities for promoting economic reform in BiH.

OHR Monthly Economic Report

Finally, I have brought along copies of this month's OHR Economic Report, which brings together key data from the Statistics Offices, the Central Bank and the Stock Exchanges to offer a snapshot of the BiH economy. Notable in this month's report is the continuing robust performance of the two stock exchanges, which are emerging as authentic – because market-driven – barometers of the BiH economy, and whose positive performance can therefore be taken cautiously as evidence that BiH is beginning to register some of the economic benefits – as well as the economic trials – of transition.

EUPM, OSCE, NATO

No statement.

EUFOR

Statement not available.

RTQs

Tarik Lazović:

Tarik Lazović, VIP. A question for the NATO spokesperson. How does he comment the fact that the government of Republika Srpska is working on the construction of a building for the Ministry of Defense of Republika Srpska, setting this against the fact that according to the defense reforms this ministry should be closed down by the end of the year?

Derek Chappell, NATO:

Well my comment to that is that I think you are talking about two separate processes. How the RS ministry of defense chooses to spend its funds is a matter for it and for the citizens of the RS to decide upon. We are involved in a process of defense reform and it is very clear that the way ahead for Bosnia and Herzegovina is for the entity MOD's to be merged into a state level MOD. Now that has not yet happened. We hope that it will happen very soon, but until it does the entity defense ministries are certainly free to spend their funds, which are raised from their taxpayers, in a way that they see fit.

Journalist:

I think you didn't say, so after the meeting with Mr. Schroeder will there be a press release or will there be statements?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

The meeting is organized, or Chancellor Schroeder's meetings are organized principally through the BiH authorities, so statements emanating from any of his meetings will be mediated by them. What we anticipate with the High Representative is a photo opportunity, although there may be an opportunity to have one or two remarks immediately after that.

Zana Filipovic, Radio Slobodna Evropa (Radio Free Europe):

May I ask Mr. Sullivan a short question? Radio Free Europe . When you said, concerning this law on PBS, that the High Representative shall propose that it should be adopted in the form of the draft as adopted by the Council of Ministers. In the last few days, it is already quite certain that certain corrections shall be proposed and as a compromise solution the request made by the HDZ has been introduced, for three regional centers: Sarajevo , Mostar, Banja Luka , which leads to a national concept. However it seems that this will be the nearest to a final solution. What is OHR's position on this issue?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

In the sense of the original draft, I mean with the original intent, it will be up to parliamentarians to ensure that the original intent is met and that European standards and European criteria are fulfilled.

Thank you very much.