

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

HR to visit Fojnica

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will visit Fojnica tomorrow. During his trip the High Representative will visit the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Fojnica, which was built in the mid 14th century. Through time, in addition to its religious role, the monastery has played a significant role in preserving the cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina . After a meeting with Abbot Mirko Majdandzic the High Representative will attend a ceremony to launch a facsimile edition of "Fojnica Heraldry" one of Bosnia and Herzegovina 's most important mediaeval manuscripts.

At the conclusion of his visit to Fojnica the High Representative will hold a meeting with parents and teachers of the "Ivan Goran Kovacic" Primary School. The object of this meeting is to give parents and teachers an opportunity to tell the High Representative directly about their concerns; discussion will focus on current and future arrangements for

funding schools in BiH, efforts to raise academic standards and to prepare BiH students so that they can meet the extremely demanding challenges of the global economy; and the provisions that are necessary to ensure that affordable and academically excellent education also preserves and protects the specific cultural heritage of each BiH school child. All of this is being pursued against the backdrop of BiH's drive to become a member of the EU – European education is based on the rigorous pursuit of knowledge and on cultural diversity.

We'll be issuing a media advisory later today with details of press opportunities.

OSCE

No formal press statement

EUPM

Today's press reported that the Canton 9 police broke up 5 groups involved with car thefts. This was achieved in close co-operation with the East Sarajevo PSC. The EUPM welcomes this type of co-operation and would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the police on this effective action. Furthermore, this successful police operation is proof that closest co-operation between police forces across the IEBL results in a more effective fight against crime.

However, this kind of co-operation will be even more effective if it was organized in a structured and institutionalized way. The current fractured police system in which more than 20 police forces work separately clearly presents a problem. Today's news shows how a unified structure for policing would result in greater synergies between different police departments.

That would be all from EUPM. Maybe just quickly to introduce my new colleague who has just arrived last week – Bart Coppens. You will be seeing him attending the press

conference. I am sure that you will establish good co-operation.

EUFOR

General Leaky wishes to support the comments of the High Representative, Lord Ashdown, in welcoming the recent action by Republika Srpska authorities to effect the transfer of ICTY indictee Savo Todovic to The Hague . This action is a significant step forward. General Leaky shares the hopes of the High Representative and the International Community that it is also the beginning of a process that sees all fugitive war criminals transferred to the ICTY to stand trial.

The continuing liberty of indicted war criminals remains the most significant obstacle to Bosnia and Herzegovina 's progress towards membership of the European Union. EUFOR stands ready to offer support to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina who, as signatories of the Dayton Peace Accords, are primarily responsible for the apprehension of indicted war criminals. The Force will also continue to work in close co-ordination with NATO and the International Community to conduct military operations in support of the ICTY.

NATO HQ

Before we get started I have a Media Advisory that I would like to put out. There will be a New Year's reception hosted by NATO HQ commander Steven Schook at 7.30 this coming Monday, the 24th, at the Federation Army Hall in Sarajevo. Due to a large volume of press request we would like to have R.S.V.P. by 6.00 pm this Friday, the 21st. You can fax us to our office at 033 495 221. The itinerary for that: At 8.00 o'clock the press will arrive, they will be issued a badges and than set up on a balcony. At 8.30 we anticipate the speech given by General Schook and at 8.50 we will conclude the ceremony.

I have three points for you this morning.

1. NATO Headquarters Sarajevo welcomes the transfer of ICTY PIFWC, Savo Todovic by the Republic of Srpska to the Hague tribunal.

2. We hope this significant first step will lead quickly to the arrest, surrender and transfer of all remaining PIFWCs to The Hague , and so help BiH at last fulfill its Dayton and UN objectives. With full ICTY cooperation, BiH will be ready to join Partnership for Peace and continue it's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, including the European Union.

3. Citizens wishing to report suspected PIFWC activity may do so at their local EUFOR LOT House or call safely and anonymously at 061-222-305.