OHR’s Statement at the International Agency’s Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka

Elected officials must be accountable to their electorate

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, visited this morning two returnee villages Dubiste in FBiH and Podkozara in RS which are divided by the IEBL where returns started in 2000. In this area, near Gorazde almost 300 pre-war inhabitants of Serb nationality returned and their needs are becoming the same as the needs of other residents: jobs, education, religious and cultural freedom, social welfare, effective government.

In meeting with local authorities Ambassador Wnenedt will highlight that elected officials must demonstrate commitment to effectively address the needs of local citizens. They have a duty toward every citizen no matter of their national, cultural, religious background. There is on going reform of local self-governance that should enable local officials to deliver better services to citizens and to be less expensive.

This afternoon, SDHR Wnendt will meet Foca Mayor Zdravko Krsmanovic and Municipal Assembly Speaker Lutvija Sukalo to discus ways of improving cooperation between local communities.

Ambassador Wnendt will address the media following this meeting at 15:45.