

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

Registry Agreement To Be Signed Tomorrow

President Tihic and the High Representative will tomorrow at 15.00 in the Presidency Building sign an agreement setting up the Registry within the Court of BiH.

The importance of trials held in the Court of BiH is clear. The Court of BiH and the BiH Prosecutors Office are responsible for BiH's most serious crimes; including War Crimes and Organized Crime Cases.

These trials must be independent and effective and are an essential element of the Rule of Law reforms in BiH. The Registry system supports this by providing independent administrative support to the Court. This means that the Registry will ensure that judges are selected for particular cases at random and will assist the Court to select qualified defence lawyers who will be available for defendants and appropriately compensated. The Registry also ensures that judicial resources are utilised as efficiently as possible – so avoiding unnecessary backlogs. Essentially the BiH Courts Registry will ensure that the Court of BiH has the capacity to meet the requirements place on the court.

The BiH Court 's Registry system has been developed in coordination with the President of the Court and is fully supported by BiH's most senior Judicial Institutions including the BiH Chief Prosecutor and the BiH Ministry of Justice. The BiH Presidency adopted the Registry agreement on October 27th 2004 and both House of BiH's Parliament have adopted amendments enabling the Registry to be set up [the BiH House

of Peoples on October 21st 2004 and the House of Representatives on September 23rd 2004 – though in different versions which now need to be harmonised at the session of the harmonisation commission on Dec. 2].

More details on the ceremony should be available from the Presidency's press service later today.

State Veterinary Office Takes over Border Inspections

Deputy High Representative and Head of the OHR Economics Department Patrice Dreiski is speaking at a ceremony, round about now, at Sarajevo Airport to mark the State Veterinary Office's assumption of responsibility for inspecting animal products at BiH border posts. Till now, these inspections have been the responsibility of the Entity Agriculture Ministries. The result of two border inspection systems rather than one has been a level of unnecessary disorganisation and inefficiency that has made the transmission of disease from animals to humans in BiH scandalously high.

From today, BiH will start developing a unified animal inspection system that can effectively protect consumers and prevent or help eradicate disease. This kind of system is standard in most other countries.

Mr Dreiski will note that, and I quote: "today's event may come to be seen as a turning point. Food safety is a basic requirement that citizens are entitled to expect their government to provide. Until now the authorities in BiH have been unable to guarantee food safety. From now on, they will have the basic mechanisms in place to start addressing this issue. Today is a beginning. A great deal still has to be done, but it's a promising beginning and the authorities are to be congratulated, despite long and avoidable delays, for getting to this point. We encourage them to move further and faster in the future."

PDHR Hays Highlights Importance of Civil Society

PDHR Donald Hays is speaking today at the George C. Marshall Centre in Garmisch, Germany . He will be drawing lessons from the experience of BiH in post-conflict reconstruction. Ambassador Hays will argue that post-war recovery benefits donor countries as much as it benefits countries receiving aid, and that “the five billion-dollar post-war international aid programme for BiH has been equally good value for money, for the people of BiH and for the International Community” because a prosperous and stable Southeast Europe offers obvious benefits, in terms of trade and security, to the rest of the continent.

Ambassador Hays will also argue that money and military intervention are only part of the recovery equation. Expanding and strengthening the role of civil society in nation building and transition means going to work on the very fabric of a country. This is not an undertaking that can be encompassed in a six-month action plan or a one-year commitment of funds and personnel. You need to approach such efforts with a more sustained commitment. In other words – we need “an end state, not an end date mentality.”

You will find copies of Ambassador Hay’s speech on the OHR Web page.