

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

OHR Welcomes Increased ICTY Co-operation from BiH

The OHR welcomes the reported transfer of documents from the RS Ministry of Interior, the RS Supreme Command and the RS Army Headquarters to the Hague yesterday in line with the request from the ICTY for records held from the war period in BiH. The fact remains that the RS is yet to assure the transfer of a single individual indicted for war crimes to the Hague.

The Law on Co-operation with the ICTY, the RSNA's Declaration on support for ICTY co-operation in May, setting up the Srebrenica Commission and the statement of President Cavic on the Commission's report in June this year all suggest an apparent increased political will to co-operate with the ICTY in the RS. If the documents continue to move from the RS to the Hague then this is a welcome development.

At the same time the OHR notes that with the appearance of Naser Oric, accused of crimes against Serbs in the Srebrenica region, and other non-Serbs who have either been tried or are awaiting trial in Scheweningen – those who in the past have tried to argue that the ICTY is an anti-Serb institution have clearly been proved wrong.

The fact remains that RS will not lift the stigma of being the only region not to be fully complying with the ICTY until it assures the transfer of individuals indicted by the court. The longer the RS continues to delay these transfers the longer

the biggest road block on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration will remaining place.

PDHR in Banja Luka

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays will be in Banja Luka today and tomorrow. Ambassador Hays will have a series of meetings with representatives of the parties in the RSNA, and he will also meet, tomorrow afternoon and tomorrow evening, with RS PM Mikerevic and RS President Cavic.

The main focus of his meetings will be the status of BiH's current effort to meet the requirements laid out in the EC's Feasibility Study and also the importance of securing enactment of a BiH Law on Obligations before the end of this year.

The Law on Obligations will bring business law in BiH into line with business law in the rest of Europe. It will modernize the legislation that applies in practically every sphere of business; and it will introduce European-standard protection for BiH consumers and help attract the investment that is needed to create jobs.

This law, which runs to hundreds of pages and represents the most ambitious attempt to date to bring the BiH market into line with the global market, needs to receive the active support of the main political parties, a point which the PDHR will make during his discussions today and tomorrow.

High Representative to address the Venice Commission

The High Representative will tomorrow attend the Venice Commission, which is the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters. The Venice Commission will discuss the constitutional situation in BiH, and the High Rep will give a presentation. We will give you further details later.