

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

HR in Brussels

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will be in Brussels today where he'll meet with Javier Solana Secretary-General of the Council of the EU and the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy. The High Representative will also hold a series of other meetings with senior EU and NATO officials.

The High Representative will discuss BiH's progress in the Stabilization and Association process, membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace program, preparations for the SFOR-EUFOR hand over and BiH's cooperation with the ICTY.

We hope to be able to give you more details of the discussions following the HR's meeting with Javier Solana late this afternoon.

PDHR and USAID Mission Director to visit Sarajevo Municipal Court Commercial Division

Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays and USAID Mission Director Howard Sumka will visit the newly established Commercial Division of the Sarajevo Municipal Court on Wednesday. Ambassador Hays and Mr Sumka will be briefed by President of the Court Aida Salcinovic-Kuljunain and by judges of the Commercial Division.

There will be a media opportunity immediately after this meeting, at which Ambassador Hays, Mr Sumka and Judge

Salcinovic Kuljanin will take questions. I've brought along a media advisory with the details.

Commercial Divisions have been set up through the reallocation of resources and personnel so that commercial cases can be heard on a dedicated basis by judges who are specialists in business law. The object is to clear the backlog of commercial litigation in BiH and to reduce the average time of commercial court cases from years to months.

This is crucial for securing more investment and creating conditions for economic takeoff. A cumbersome commercial litigation system drives away prospective investors. They will not put their money in BiH if they are afraid of being bogged down in the courts in the event of a dispute. In addition, a slow legal process sends a signal that the authorities are not serious about creating a competitive business environment. The establishment of the Commercial Divisions sends the opposite signal – BiH is very much open for business and is serious about attracting the investment that can create jobs and raise living standards.

FBiH Veterinary Chamber established

Yesterday (Monday) representatives of the BiH Association of Veterinarians and the Herzeg Bosna Association of Veterinarians agreed on the final text of the statute governing the new FBiH Veterinary Chamber.

The OHR commends the respective veterinary authorities for resolving outstanding issues and thus removing remaining obstacles to the delivery of competitive modern veterinary services – which are crucial for food safety, for the fostering of a recovery in the agricultural sector and for BiH's integration in Europe.

The new Chamber will contribute to the quality of veterinary medicine in BiH and will play a significant role in promoting

reforms in the veterinary sector that will be required if BiH is to make progress in the Stabilization and Association Process. Establishing this Chamber also fulfills a Phase II Bulldozer recommendation.