

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

Education

The OHR would like to support what the OSCE has just said about education reform.

The World Bank has confirmed that because BiH has not undertaken the necessary reforms, the World Bank is unable to provide millions of dollars that had been earmarked for students in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There is an important message here. The politicians have grown too accustomed to the international community saving them from the consequences of their own irresponsibility. But Bosnia and Herzegovina is entering a new era – an era where the elected politicians of this country have to take responsibility for their actions, as politicians in other countries do.

If they fail to carry out reforms, they cannot expect the international community to do their work for them.

It is time to bring this dependency culture to an end.

The High Representative hopes that this decision of the World Bank's will be a wake up call for this country's politicians.

They are responsible to the citizens of this country for carrying out the reforms that are necessary to unlock international assistance.

And if they fail to act responsibly, the citizens of this country will have every right to hold them accountable for

these failures.

HR to visit Kakanj and Zenica

Tomorrow, the High Representative , Paddy Ashdown, will visit Kakanj and Zenica to meet students and young people, not least to ask them what they think of politicians who are prepared to put narrow political interests above the interests of the youth of BiH.

Media Advisory later today.

Tourism promotion

This afternoon, at 2.00 at Svrzina Kuca in Sarajevo, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic, and Head of the European Commission Delegation in BiH Michael Humphreys will take part in a presentation on BiH's emerging tourism industry, which will include the launch of a BiH tourism strategy report prepared by universities in the UK, Italy and BiH.

The High Representative and Minister Ivanic, along with Deputy Foreign Minister Lidija Topic, will travel between 14 and 20 May to six European capitals, along with three BiH tourism experts.

The High Representative will use this opportunity to start to change perceptions about BiH. He will be explaining, to people who have heard little about Bosnia since 1995, how this country has emerged from a war zone to a potential tourist destination.

He will be setting out how much has changed – how the country is now at peace, how the warring factions have been demobilized, the remainder brought under state control, how BiH has the most stable currency in the region, how the economy is reforming.

In short, he will be explaining how a country that was

recently at war is now considering joining NATO's Partnership for Peace, integrating into Europe, and is now in a position to exploit its natural beauty and cultural heritage to build its tourist industry.

BiH Minister of Defence Appointed Co-Chair of DRC

Finally, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today appointed BiH Defence Minister Nikola Radovanovic as co-chair of the Defence Reform Commission (DRC).

We will be issuing a press release later today.