

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

High Representative in Mostar

As you know, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, is on his way to Mostar. He is traveling with the new Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt. This visit follows the failure of the Mostar Commission to reach agreement on a draft statute for the City. The High Representative and Ambassador Wnendt will be in listening mode when they meet political and other leaders during their visit. The failure of the Commission must not bring the process of resolving Mostar's problems to a standstill – that would merely serve the interests of a small number of individuals for whom the status quo is acceptable, and it would be completely unacceptable to the citizens of Mostar, who want a normal city with normal services, and who want that sooner rather than later. Today's discussions are not negotiations but part of the process of hearing views over coming weeks. They will provide the High Representative with an in-depth briefing, and hopefully point in the direction of a solution to the present impasse. The only press event that is scheduled for this afternoon is a photo-op at the Old Bridge at 14.00.

HR's Letter to PM Hadzipasic

There has been extensive reporting of the letter sent last night by the High Representative to Prime Minister Hadzipasic regarding the 17 July Decision by the Federation Government to dismiss all the chairmen and members of the management boards of public companies in the Federation. The issue at stake here is one of due process. This is important because due process is one of the things that distinguishes a functioning democracy from a state in which citizens and officials do not enjoy basic legal and institutional protection. The International Community, in partnership with BiH politicians and representatives of civil society, has worked to establish and strengthen the institutions that guarantee and serve democratic freedoms. This is why the High Representative alludes in his letter to the institutional means which exist to resolve this issue. As the High Representative points out, according to the Law on Ministerial and Governmental Appointments, the formal opinion as to the legality of the Federation government's decision is a matter for the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman of the Federation of BiH.