

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

PDHR Donald Hays will visit Banja Luka tomorrow where he will meet with RS President Dragan Cavic and PM Dragan Mikrevic, as well as RSNA Speaker Dragan Kalinic and members of the RSNA.

In Banja Luka Ambassador Hays will visit Hemofarm, a company that manufactures and sells drugs. More than nine million Euros have been invested in the Hemofarm production line, and the company, which employs more than 100 people, exports 90 percent of its products. During his visit to Banja Luka, Ambassador Hays will emphasise, to politicians, to business people and to the public, that Bosnia and Herzegovina's is engaged in a neck-and-neck race between poverty and prosperous democracy. This is a race that this country cannot lose – prosperity and democracy have to win, and that means that there can be no further delay in implementing desperately needed reforms. BiH has to export its way out of recession.

It's not simply a matter of passing new laws – though that's part of it. The governments also have to get rid of legislation and regulations that make it difficult for businesses to operate profitably, employ more people and step up exports. We saw how effective this can be during the first Phase of the Bulldozer Committee's work. (In this context it is worth noting that today six regional Committees are having presentation to the FBiH Parliament and FBiH Government. Tomorrow they'll do the same at the BiH Parliament.)

At Mrakovica this Spring the leaders of the Entity and BiH governments committed themselves to implementing a swathe of reforms during the summer – this Summer Offensive on Unemployment is now underway. Ambassador Hays will be discussing progress with RS government officials when he meets them tomorrow.

Ambassador Hays will speak to the press after his talks with Prime Minister Mikerevic and after his meeting with members of the RSNA. Journalists are also invited to accompany Ambassador Hays during his visit to the Hemofarm plant. I have brought along a media advisory with the details.