

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

High Representative to visit returnees in Visegrad Area

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and his wife, Jane, stayed last night at the return site of Rohci, near Visegrad. Today they are spending time helping to repair the houses and clear ground for cultivation.

This is the most recent in a series of visits that Paddy Ashdown and his wife have undertaken to talk to returnees to find out more about the challenges and difficulties they face. Many of those who have returned to Rohci have been living in tents and face very difficult circumstances, while waiting for reconstruction of their war damaged houses. Agriculture is their main livelihood.

PDHR visits Hidrogradnja

Tomorrow at 11.30 the Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, will visit the SIGMA cement factory in Butmir, to help put the privatization process back on track. SIGMA is one of the key companies due for privatization in the next round.

Sigma is part of GIK Hidrogradnja, the construction and civil engineering group that has its headquarters in Sarajevo. Hidrogradnja has more than 1,000 employees and generates income of around 100 million KM every year. It is expanding its presence in the international civil engineering market, a process that can be facilitated through a strategic investment partnership.

At the start of his visit to the cement factory, Ambassador

Hays will speak to the press about progress that is being made on relaunching Bosnia and Herzegovina's privatisation programme. As you know, the results of privatisation have so far been disappointingly modest. At Bijelasnica in April the governments committed themselves to relaunching the privatisation process and ensuring that citizens begin to experience the benefits of this process sooner rather than later. People still tend to associate privatisation with job losses. It is a fact that when money is poured into a newly privatised company the comprehensive restructuring needed to turn the company around often involves job losses in the short term – but in the long term, as companies are returned to profitability, they *create* new and better-paid jobs.

After the short press conference, media will be invited to cover Ambassador Hays' visit to the cement factory. We will be issuing a media advisory later today.

Bjelasnica-Igman Working Group meeting

Tomorrow the High Representative will chair the second Bjelasnica Working group meeting, which will take place at the OHR.

As agreed on the previous meeting Cantonal authorities will present full information about the current situation at Bjelasnica and Igman by providing and presenting cantonal plans for development of the project.

HR to meet with Queen Noor

Short announcement is that the HR Paddy Ashdown will meet on Wednesday 11 June with the Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan. She is here in her role as a director of the ICMP, and they will of course be discussing Srebrenica and other issues. More details will follow during the day.

Briefing on PIC Steering Board Political Directors meeting

OHR Director of Communications, Julian Braithwaite, will hold a press conference to brief members of the press on the upcoming PIC Steering Board meeting at the level Political Directors, which will take place in Sarajevo from Wednesday evening to Friday of this week.

The briefing will be held tomorrow, **Wednesday, 11 June at 13.00 hrs, at the OHR, Sarajevo**