Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 17 April 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday, 17 April 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	• 2003 EU Expansion a "Wake-Up Call" for BiH's Leaders • EU Visa-Ban Statement from HR • Bulldozer Banja Luka
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• OSCE's Fair Employment Project
c. EUPM	Gail Van Hoever	• No Statement Received
d. ICTY	Refik Hodzic	• No Statement Received
e. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	• No Statement

2. Twenty-two members of the media including four television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

- **2003 EU Expansion a "Wake-Up Call" for BiH's Leaders**

As you know, the European Union expansion treaty was signed by the new accession states in Athens yesterday. The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, has drawn attention to thye relevance of this to BiH. He described the treaty as “a wake-up call for BiH’s leaders”.

“Today’s accession agreement shows that with perseverance and dedication to the reform process, when leaders show real statesmanship and vision, membership of the European Union – and the support and stability that this offers – is a realistic aspiration for transition states. That means that it is a realistic long-term aspiration for Bosnia and Herzegovina,” the High Representative said. “The Citizens of BiH are clear about where they wish to go,” he added. “They want jobs, and they want a European future for themselves and their children – they want EU membership.”

BiH has made significant progress in recent years on the road to Europe and has completed the Road Map successfully. It now has to move forward with the Stability and Association process, and it must catch up with its neighbours in this respect. The EU is clearly a willing partner in this process – as the High representative points out: “it is BiH’s elected leadership that will determine how fast BiH moves towards achieving its goal of EU membership. That is why we must move quickly, and why with each step we must make sure that we are putting in place European standards without exception. BiH should be beating down Europe’s doors – otherwise they will remain shut.”

- **EU Visa-Ban Statement from HR**

The publishing of a list of individuals who will not receive EU visas is a major development. It is a development that the High Representative fully supports. It strengthens the hand of all those who are working to see that war criminals and the Balkan Mafia are brought to justice.

As the assassination of Zoran Djindjic demonstrated, organised crime and politics are interlinked, and because of this the lives of millions of people are directly affected by the activities of a few hundred hoodlums. The support networks for indicted war criminals and the networks of organised crime have to be broken up, and the EU is sending a clear message that it will take part in breaking these networks up. These bans are a practical help to law enforcement agencies throughout the Balkans.

OHR was asked to contribute names to this list and as you know the HR has long been concerned about Momcilo Mandic and Milovan Bijelica, because of their alleged links to organised crime and in particular to indicted war criminals – this is why the HR imposed financial sanctions on them last month – and why the OHR submitted their names to the EU.

OHR will be submitting more names over coming weeks, but we will not go into details now.

- **Bulldozer Banja Luka**

There will be a joint meeting of the Federation and RS governments and Brcko District authorities in Banja Luka tomorrow to discuss harmonising the Bulldozer reforms.

The 150-day deadline for completing the reforms expires next week. The Federation Government meets today to discuss two remaining proposals. It has already adopted 26. The RS government has adopted all 19 of the proposals that were submitted to it. Next week the various houses of parliament will debate the reforms – so we are entering the last lap of a process that began at the end od last year and has seen an unprecedented partnership between businesspeople and BiH politicians with a view to making changes that will create jobs. Once Bulldozer Phase I has been completed, the Committee will immediately launch a new round of 50 reforms with the aim of completing this before the end of this year.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Twenty-four Bosnia and Herzegovina employers have successfully participated in OSCE's Fair Employment Project. They will receive certificates for completion, starting today in Mostar, followed by Travnik, Banja Luka and Zenica. 17 private and public companies, as well as 7 municipal administrators, participated in the project; all based in areas of high minority return. The goal of the project is to promote equal employment opportunities to reduce discrimination, create conditions for sustainable return and facilitate free movement of workers. The employers changed internal regulations and personnel policies to incorporate equal opportunities policies, began to advertise vacancies widely, and changed internal practices to implement equal opportunities in all aspects of the employment relationship. As a result of such practices a number of returnees were employed at the areas of their return, in the companies that participated in the Fair Employment Project. The OSCE will continue to promote fair employment practices in Bosnia and Herzegovina, through its work with employers, employees and legislators. We invite the largest employers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially public companies and government administration, to adopt the Fair Employment Policy, in which they will have all the support from the OSCE. Tomorrow, the Head of the OSCE Mission, Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, will address the 45 participants who have concluded a one year leadership training programme for Bosnia and Herzegovina youth, called the Successor Generation Initiative. This will be followed by a press conference with Ambassador Beecroft and three of the participants, to which all of you are cordially invited. It starts tomorrow morning at 10:50 at the National Art Gallery here in Sarajevo.

Gail Van Hoever – EUPM

No Statement Received.

Refik Hodzic – ICTY

No Statement Received.

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

No Statement.

Questions and Answers

Q: Jadranka Milosevic – FTV

I would just like to ask your comment about the information that allegedly the High Representative {Started Over} Sir I would just like to hear your comment on our assumptions that is the alleged information that which have been circulating in the media and in the public and that is that the current High Representative has decided to use all the possibilities and that the violation of decisions of the former High Representative entails. And when I say this I'm speaking about the land around the Yablanitza Lake.

A: Kevin Sullivan – OHR

If I understand your question correctly, you're discussing the High Representative's purchase of property near Yablanitza. Is that correct?

Q: Jadranka Milosevic – FTV

I'm referring to the ban to allocate or sell state owned property.

A: Kevin Sullivan – OHR

The High Representative decision to purchase a house is essentially a private matter however, the High Representative will be issuing a short statement on this issue later today.