

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 02 January 2003

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 02 January 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don Hays letter to Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic.• H R visiting Prijedor.• Decision to extend for six months the requirement for transit centres.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on the OSCE's work with municipal and cantonal authorities.
c. EUPM	Jon Oscar Solnes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The European Union Police Mission introduction
d. UNHCR	Majda Prljaca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PLIP Statistics.
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statements.

2. Nineteen members of the media including three television crews attended the conference.

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

A. Ollivier
Col. (FR A),

Julian Braithwaite – OHR

Thank you very much for coming on the day after New Year. I will briefly introduce our new colleague he is Jon Oscar Solnes, who you may have seen yesterday, he is the new spokesman for the European Union Police Mission. He will be giving a full statement today, setting on the role mandate and other details about the European Union Police Mission.

The OHR has three items for you today.

The First is that Don Hays, has just written to Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, to tell him two things. First, that customs reform is the High Representatives number one priority as we begin the New Year and second, that the principle of a single unified customs administration for Bosnia and Herzegovina, is non-negotiable.

Don Hays was responding to a letter that Mr Ivanic had sent him on 26 December, setting out some proposals for customs reform

Don makes the following points in his reply.

First, that Mr Ivanic's, proposals disappointingly ignore the fundamental problem, which is that there are three customs administrations, in Bosnia and Herzegovina not one as in other countries.

Second, that because of these divisions, 600 million KM in customs revenue that should have gone to pay teachers, doctors, pensioners and war veterans ended up in criminal hands in 2002.

Third, that the IMF, WB and the EC all agree that the fragmented nature of customs administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the root cause of this fraud and inefficiency,

and that a single administration for Bosnia and Herzegovina that collects customs for both entities is the solution.

Fourth, that the EC considers the unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina customs administration such a high reform priority that they have made their 65 million Euro aid budget for Bosnia and Herzegovina, this year conditional upon it

Therefore, fifth, that while there is much to be discussed about the technicalities and the distribution of revenues, the principle of a single customs administration for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina is non-negotiable.

In his letter, Don Hays asks Mr Ivanic, to follow through on his commitment to nominate experts to take part in the technical discussions about how such a single administration will be set up, and how revenues will be redistributed back to the entities.

The High Representative also reinforced these points when he met Mr Mikerevic, this morning in Banja Luka. Which brings me to my second point, the High Representative is in Republika Srpska today. He is visiting Prijedor in his capacity as European Union Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, accompanied by EU Police Commissioner Sven Fredriksen.

Sven Fredriksen is leading the EUPM, under the overall political supervision of Paddy Ashdown in theatre as the EUSR and Javier Solana in Brussels.

They will visit the Imam's house in Kozarac to underline the European Union Police Mission's commitment to the security of returnees. They will then visit the Prijedor Police Station to meet the local police, and the EUPM officers who will work with them on the two EUPM priorities of returnee security and the fight against organised crime. Finally, they will visit a restaurant that was recently subjected to a grenade attacks. Police investigations have concluded that this was a Serb-on-

Serb crime, the result of organised crime, which is a particular problem in Prijedor and therefore a particular concern for the EUPM, the High Rep will be back in Sarajevo tonight.

My third point is that, the High Representative yesterday, took a decision to extend for another six months the requirement that the domestic authorities take steps to ensure that all collective centres and transit centres are used as alternative and emergency accommodation and a press release will be available afterwards. Thank you very much

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good Morning. Since as my colleague is going to have a lengthy statement, I will try to cut mine as much as possible and I will have the full text available outside for you

Today, I have just an update on the OSCE's work with Municipal and Cantonal Authorities, which has been focused on improving administration and infrastructure, financial management and to increase citizen participation. This work is vital, because the municipalities and cantons are the first stop for the average citizen, who depends heavily on the way leaders and authorities at the local level perform their tasks.

We are all aware that local authorities face multiple challenges, the lack of financial resources being the most obvious. Nevertheless, through our work we find that local governments can do much, often at little cost, to improve the lives of citizens and the development prospects of the community.

Two of the projects which had significant impact on local governance were the Cantonal Administration Project and the Municipal Infrastructure and Finance Implementation Project. In the coming year, one of the main aims of those programs is more budget discipline and improved budget policies.

The CAP, Cantonal Administration Project, includes now five cantons. A special focus has been on developing a modern personnel management system and on consolidating the cantonal budgets. Still, the budget practices need much improvement and with the prospect of revenues rising in most, if not all, cantons, this year it will be imperative that this additional money is used well to encourage economic development projects and the creation of jobs in the private sector.

In 2002 altogether 45 municipalities were involved in the Municipal Program. In participating municipalities the administrative work has visibly improved. Budgeting has become more realistic. Expenditures are better controlled. Communication lines between municipal administrations and the public were established. This work will continue in the coming year and ten new municipalities will be included in the project. That is all for my today, thanks

Jon Oscar Solnes – EUPM

The European Union Police Mission is the first civil crisis management operation launched under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). It will add an important component to other European programmes, such as institution building in BiH, working towards achievement of the Union's overall policy in the region. The mission will be led by EU Police Commissioner Sven Frederiksen under the overall supervision of High Representative Paddy Ashdown, who is also the European Union Special Representative for BiH.

It will build on the achievements of the IPTF over the past 7 years, however, the EUPM will not emulate the effort, and the UN has put into reforming the police in BiH. For, as Commissioner Sven Frederiksen stated yesterday: "the time has come to move on and to place more responsibility into the hands of the local authorities". Thus the mission of the EUPM is to help the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities develop

local police forces that meet the highest European standards by the end of its mandate. This will not be achieved overnight. Accordingly the EUPM mandate is for the next three years.

At this junction I would like to note, that the establishment of the EUPM has been widely welcomed by the international community, supported by both the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council and the UN Security Council. Furthermore, EUPM was explicitly invited to undertake its mission by BiH authorities.

In the course of those next three years, the EUPM will endeavour to help the law enforcement component of the Rule of Law in BiH to progress to European standards. This, the EUPM will do through monitoring, mentoring and inspecting BiH police managerial and operational capacities.

The Mission will be conducted following the principle of intensive presence and deployment or co-location of experienced international police and civilian experts alongside mid and senior level BiH police officials in police institutions and Ministries, at State, Entity, Canton/PSC (Public Security Centre) and Brcko District level. The HQ in Sarajevo will control and administer the mission. The EUPM police mission will consist of around 900 staff members, 500 of which will be experienced and carefully picked police officers. There will be around 50 international civilian experts and more than 300 local staff.

A little bit about the contributing countries. As earlier stated this is a European Union Police Mission, with most of the police officers coming from the 15 EU member states. However, the EU has also invited closely allied third nations to contribute to this first ESDP operation. Those are among others, Accession states and Non-EU Nato states.

Now let me say a few words on the EUPM strategy. The EUPM

adds a new dimension to the intense engagement that the European Union already has in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The decision to launch the EUPM, in addition to comprehensive economic development programmes underscores that the rule of law is absolutely central to the EU.

The EUPM thus has a long-term strategy for raising law enforcement in BiH to European standards. This, the Mission plans to achieve with the BiH, through a number of programmes that have been carefully planned and will be executed throughout the mandate of the EUPM. It would take too long to try and make you fully acquainted with them from this podium today. But let me briefly outline them.

1. Crime Police

It is no coincidence that I first name this programme as it contains distinct projects to help the police of BiH fight organised crime. And here we are focusing both on current pressing issues and the long term sustained capacity to deal with organised crime. Through reform and restructure, under BiH ownership, a multi ethnic police force will be trained and equipped to assume full responsibility and to independently uphold law enforcement at the level of international standards. And here maybe is a distinction from the previous international presence, that the time will come, and has indeed come to place more responsibility into the hands of local authorities.

It is important to have a long term strategy but organised crime constitutes such a problem currently that immediate projects will be launched, that is MOC the Major Organised Crime project and the special project FIGHT, which stands for Fight and Intervention Against Human Trafficking.

Here I cannot disclose fully the nature of these projects for operational reasons. However, I would like to reject the notion, which has been made public in the media recently, that

such horrendous crimes as Human Trafficking will not be a primary priority of the EUPM. Moreover, the FIGHT project will off course not be understaffed as wrongly suggested, recently in some of the Media. On the contrary, the organic structure of the EUPM with the matrix flows of expertise and assessment of the task at hand from co-locations and specialists tasked with the project will constitute valuable tools in the fight against organised crimes of this nature. I will not go into details, but just want to remind you of the fact that the EUPM will seek to make technical capabilities and equipment available in a way not seen before in law enforcement in BiH.

So we do not get bogged down in the most spectacular issues of battling criminality, I would like to mention other programs as well, so you can get a picture of the holistic approach the EUPM has towards helping the BiH police to a higher sustainable standard through monitoring, mentoring and inspecting.

2. Criminal Justice

Including enhancing the relationship between the Police and the Judiciary and the development and training of Court Police.

3. Internal Affairs

This entails among other, increasing the transparency of the police through reliable internal control systems in order to strengthen the confidence of the public in law enforcement.

4. Police Administration

Here we are addressing such things as assuring a fair administration of the BiH police to leave behind, at the end of the programme, a sustainable multi-ethnic administration, operating according to transparent and democratic principles.

5. Public Order and Security

I will get to that one later on for special reasons.

6. State Border Service (SBS)

Here the EUPM will advise to build on recent achievements in terms of training, equipment and professionalism.

7. State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA)

Here the end state would see SIPA as the primary state level agency in charge of facilitating co-operation and co-ordination within BiH police services to fight organised crime and also to interact with its European counterparts for the same purpose.

I told you I would get back on programme 5., Public Order and Security. This program, in short, will strengthen the BiH police capacities to face civil disorder, that is to stop confrontations between ethnic groups.

Thus, it is addressing one of two key issues, Commissioner Frederiksen identified in his commencement statement yesterday. We have already discussed organised crime, the other was the safety of returning refugees and possible violent incidents. Programme five, exactly deals with ensuring that returnees are protected.

To underscore the deep commitment to this issue, Commissioner Frederiksen will visit Prijedor and Kozarac today, with the High Rep, who is also the European Union Special Representative in BiH. (The Commissioner will pay a number of visits to EUPM co-locations and local police in the next few weeks. Media will be advised in advance.)

I would like to end on a brighter note, though, reiterating Commissioner Frederiksen's promise to co-operate with the local police and monitor them in order to bring law enforcement to European standards.

Let me end by quoting these recent remarks by Javier Solana,

EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, on the launch of the European Union Police Mission:

“The European Union is proud to enhance in this way its commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a long-term commitment, and a real partnership with the authorities and the people of the country.

The European Union Police Mission was fully operational as of yesterday, 1st January.

Majda Prljaca – UNHCR

Good morning and Happy New Year.

The PLIP agencies OHR, UNHCR, OSCE, CRPC and UNMIBH wish to announce the Property Law Implementation statistics for November 2002. They note an overall increase of three percent in the property law implementation rate, which as of the end of November stands at 67 percent throughout the country.

In Brcko District, 73 percent of property claims recorded in these statistics have been solved. In the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation, 71 percent have been solved. While in the RS 61 percent of claims were resolved. However, out of the total caseload currently registered in housing offices throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are still around 82,000 claims unresolved. The overall increase in the implementation rate results primarily from a decrease in the number of claims recorded. The reason for this, according to housing offices, is ongoing revision of files and the exclusion of destroyed properties from the statistics. Thank you, a copy of the Press Release and PLIP Statistics are available outside on the table.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No statement from SFOR this morning.

Julian Braithwaite – OHR

Any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Amra Hadziosmanovic – AFP

Ives, Could you tell us what is going on in Pale, because we have reports that your troops entered the premises of Radio Sveti Jovan run by Karadzic's daughter?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

All I can tell you is that we are presently conducting operation in the area of Pale, since it is an on-going operation, I am not going to see anymore. I might have something more to say this afternoon, but as the operation is on going, I can not comment on it.

Q: Amra Hadziosmanovic – AFP

Is it linked to Karadzic?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No.

Q: Amra Hadziosmanovic – AFP

No?

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

You must have a really strong reason to raid the radio station, is not a military facility, it is not a police facility, is it linked to broadcasting? Did they broadcast something that is offence, or did the OHR or someone ask you to go there and close the station down or what?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Like I said, this is an on-going operation, I am going let the operation go through, and after that I will make comments. But, as the operation is on going, I am not at liberty to discuss details and the why and the how of this operation.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

The OHR and OSCE have been very much involved in media development, creating free and independent media. How do you view this, SFOR raiding a radio station? You set up communications regulatory agency to deal with any possible breaches of media roles? How do you see the situation? Are you aware of this? Do you know what the reason is for this?

A: Julian Braithwaite – OHR

The co-operation between the commander of SFOR and the High Representative is extremely close and I am not going to go into details of what they discuss particularly on operational matters. But I can say that, the OHR did not request this raid.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

How do you view this, we are in 2003 now?

A: Julian Braithwaite – OHR

I think you have to wait until SFOR are in a position to brief on the reasons for the raid, before we can have a general discussion about its utility.

Q: Bernard Milosevic – SRNA

Julian, I just wish to check about the Minister that requires waiting process from the OHR. Has the OHR so far received anything from Mr Terzic?

A: Julian Braithwaite – OHR

I can tell you that Mr Terzic, said on the 30December, that he would provide all the names on the 31December, and indeed he did. The vetting process is now underway and we would like to be able to finish it in time for the meeting of the House of Representatives tomorrow. That may not be possible in which, case the House of Representatives would have two choices. The first will be to delay the approval of all the Ministers for the Council of Ministers, until the International Communities vetting process is complete. The second will be to approve the list subject to the OHR and International Community confirmation of those Ministers who are being vetted, those Ministers therefore will not be able to take up their duties until the vetting process is complete.

Q: Bernard Milosevic – SRNA

It is possible to get the names?

A: Julian Braithwaite – OHR

I think, that is a matter for Mr Terzic to brief on not us.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Yves, just one clarification, you said it has nothing to do with Karadzic, since the station is owned by Radovan Karadzic's daughters, Sonja. Did you mean it has nothing to do with Radovan Karadzic?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Radovan Karadzic, that is what I meant to say.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

It has nothing to do with Radovan Karadzic?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

It has nothing to do with what Radovan Karadzic, has to do with. It has to do with an on-going operation that we are conducting. As soon as it is completed since there is interest on your part, I will likely put out a press release to tell you the why, how it went and, basically the reasons why we did it. But, unless the operation is completed, I cannot go into it in detail, so I will have to wait until it is over then I will be able to speak about it. Since we have troops on the ground and it concerns on operational security, I cannot go in to any details.

Q: Sead Humanovic – AVAZ

Ives, two questions. How could you be sure that there is nothing related to Karadzic in this regard and is there anything new in Fiuljanin case?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

He is still being detained at Eagle Base and I have nothing further to report on his detention. With regards to the operation we are conducting we will just have to let the operation conduct itself. Then I will issue a statement, or you may want to call me later, for one on one interview's, if you wish to do so. But, I have to let the operation take its course.

Julian Braithwaite – OHR

Any further questions, then thank you very much.