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

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Thursday 20 June 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	• HR in Herzegovina. • Board of Principals on Srebrenica incident of June 17. • PLIP Deadline. • High Representative sends proposals to CoM on Fighting Organised Crime. • Handball Associations Agreement.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• World Refugee Day.
c. UNMIBH	Stefo Lehmann	• Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein's address to Security Council. • World Refugee Day. • Deadline for applications to Academy.
d. UNHCR	Majda Prljaca	• Mr. Werner Blatter, will hold a special press conference today • UNHCR PI posters campaign.

e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	• World Refugee Day SFOR marking occasion by joining UNHCR in a visit to Derventa

2. Thirty-nine members of the media and four-television crew attended the conference.

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

C. Minck
Lt. Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Good morning every body, I have a number of items for you today and as you know there is a follow on press conference, so we will move right ahead.

First of all, as you know the High Representative is today in Herzegovina, on the second day of a two-day visit. For those of you who do not know, today is World Refugee Day, and during his two-day visit the High Representative has focused on returnee issues, among other things. The High Representative wants to hear directly from ordinary citizens of their problems and their opinions, it is the returnee group in Bosnia and Herzegovina who have for so long been the victims of unsuccessful politics. The High Representative wants to show that the future of BiH is not just for the political elite to decide, all must have their say, and everyone's opinion must be taken into account. Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians must realise this. Linked to this is the High Representative's message that registering to vote is crucial – even if you think that nothing will change. If you do not vote, it becomes even more likely that nothing will change.

This morning the High Representative visited a health-care facility and the FEAL Company in Siroki Brijeg. This afternoon at 13.00 the High Representative will give a press conference at the Hotel Ero. Two photo opportunities this afternoon are planned; firstly at the Old Bridge reconstruction site in Mostar at 14.00 and then at 17.00 during a visit to Croat returnees in Radesine near Konjic. Of course journalists are welcome to attend all three of those events.

Secondly, the Board of Principals at its regular weekly meeting in Sarajevo today considered an incident in Srebrenica earlier this week during which police had to protect Bosniaks from Serbs. This incident confirms the importance of fundamental and robust measures to support the return process. Much has been done to promote sustainable return and there has been considerable progress in this respect in Srebrenica. This week's incident is being investigated. However, it is clear that prejudice and ignorance remain basic stumbling blocks to the return process. The Board of Principals wishes to make it clear that behaviour on the part of individuals or the authorities calculated to obstruct return or intimidate returnees anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, will not be tolerated by the International Community. Return is the bedrock of democracy and prosperity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly, the agencies of the Property Law Implementation Plan; that is OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, CRPC and UNMIBH, wish to remind the owners of socially owned apartments destroyed during the war, that claims for the repossession of such apartments must be made by July 1st, this year. If your pre-war socially-owned apartment was devastated and uninhabitable on October 4th 1999, that is within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Or April 19th 2000, again similar but for the Republika Srpska and you have not previously submitted a claim for its

repossession, you have a chance to do so now. This applies only to apartments that were destroyed during the war, not to apartments that were undamaged. July 1st 2002, is the deadline to file a claim with your Municipal Housing authority or OMI office to repossess it, regardless of whether or not it is still uninhabitable or has since been rebuilt. There is a press release for you on the tables outside.

Fourthly, as you know the High Representative at the start of this week announced proposed legislation under which special organised crime, economic crime and corruption panels would be established in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Prosecutors' Office. Yesterday afternoon the OHR forwarded draft legislation on this to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications, asking the Ministry to propose the law for consideration by the Council of Ministers. The new legislation will tackle serious inter-Entity crime and international crime that involves Bosnia and Herzegovina. The legislation is designed to create a department in the State Court which will focus on hearing cases of organised crime, economic crime and corruption, which together with the criminal code and criminal procedure codes that are currently being developed, will protect public funds and generate confidence amongst international investors.

The High Representative expects all responsible political parties to support these proposals. He hopes that the legislation will be the subject of vigorous parliamentary debate. He reminds the Parliamentary Assembly that any attempt by deputies to dilute this legislation's capacity to protect public funds, or to delay this legislation needlessly, is unacceptable. Again those of you who are interested in this legislative proposal can get a copy form me at the end of today's press conferences.

Finally, OHR would like to welcome yesterday's agreement to form a single Handball Association in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Without going into details I would just like to say that the broadening of opportunities, both domestic and international, that comes with this type of agreement has to be good for both the sport and the players. The OHR wishes those involved in the sport the best of luck in the future. Thank you, that is all I have for you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning, I have a few points for you.

Firstly, on the World Refugee Day, we want to use the opportunity to draw once again the attention to a part of the refugee returns that is sometimes forgotten and that is the sustainability of returns. Sustainability is a function of how well human rights are safeguarded. Returnees must be assured of non-discriminatory access to the justice system, social services, jobs and education. Under the human rights standards applicable in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the authorities must provide such access. The process of returns can be sustainable. The major return movements we have seen recently indicate that the will to return exists and that local authorities are beginning to take steps to facilitate it. However, they must do much more. Seven years after the conflict ended, it is absolutely unacceptable that only half of all claimed properties have been returned to their pre-war owners. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina urges all responsible authorities to speed up the process of repossession, which is the basis, and to ensure appropriate conditions for returns.

Secondly, the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Adrian Severin, finishes his visit to Sarajevo today. During his stay, he has met with a number of Bosnia and Herzegovina officials, including Zivko Radisic, Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency member, Safet Halilovic, President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Dragan Cavic, vice president of the Republika Srpska. He also met the

representatives of international organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Severin and the Bosnia and Herzegovina officials discussed mainly the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina; rule of law, strengthening central Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions, implementation of constitutional amendments and upcoming general elections. Severin stressed in particular the need to establish the rule of law and I quote: "The rule of law will be the element that brings the country together and holds it together. Every citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to know that the institutions of the government are able to protect him and her".

President Severin said after the meeting with Zivko Radisic.

Could we have quiet in the room? I will try to be quick, but I still have to do this.

Finally, the OSCE mission welcomes President Beriz' Belkic comments in Vienna yesterday, where he said that Bosnia and Herzegovina's goal was to become active in the implementation of OSCE agreements. It is a positive step to see that the State Presidency is committed to adhering to Bosnia and Herzegovina's obligations, as an OSCE member, regarding arms control, since the implementation until now has not been very good. Thank you very much.

Stefo Lehmann – UNMIBH

Good morning, we have three items for you today.

As you know the UN Special Representative Mr. Klein briefed the UN Security Council in New York yesterday. Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein told the Council members that Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a "work in progress", which, like many countries in transition, still faces political, economic and social challenges. He said the quickest path to achieving peace and reconciliation was to put an end to the culture of defiance and impunity by achieving the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic and their trail in The Hague

and a firm commitment by all involved to do so was long overdue.

Regarding the transition to the European Union Police Mission, on the 1st January 2003, he said planning appeared to be going well, but he emphasised that the success of the European Union Mission depended on establishing mutually supportive relations with the European Commission. One of the constraints on UNMIBH has had, was lack of access to guaranteed funding, he urged the European Union and European Commission to ensure from the beginning that their projects and funding priorities were mutually reinforcing. The full texts of his remarks are available outside on the tables.

Inline with our common theme of World Refugee Day, we also have an item, today in fact marks the second World Refugee Day. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan reminds us that those who have fled violence and persecution deserve protection and assistance, not suspicion and contempt. I will quote from his official statement marking this: "Let us not forget that the great majority of the worlds refugees and asylum-seekers are women and children. That is why the focus of this year's World Refugee Day is on refugee women. These women face tremendous challenges. Yet they show enormous courage and determination in holding their families together. Today is a day to pay tribute to their vital role and contributions. On this World Refugee Day, let us remember that, like those of us fortunate enough to have a home, refugees and asylum-seekers have families and feelings. But they often have little else, and let us remind ourselves that one day, anyone of us could be knocking at someone else's door, asking for help." Copies of his full remarks are also available outside and Majda will also have additional information, with regard to the World Refugee Day.

And finally, please remind your readers, listeners and viewers that the deadline for applying for positions in the Republika

Srpska Police Academy is 30th June, which means ten more days. Priority will be given to displaced persons with pre-war residence in the Republika Srpska, and to women. If we are to increase minority representation in the Police Forces of the Entities, you have to help us out here. That is all we have, thank you.

Majda Prljaca – UNHCR

Good morning from UNHCR.

UNHCR Regional Co-ordinator for South East Europe and UNHCR Chief of Mission for Bosnia and Herzegovina Mr. Werner Blatter, will hold a special press conference today at 16:00, on the occasion of the 20June, World Refugee Day. It is only fitting that he would spend the day out in the field among returnees in Derventa. This day will be marked in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the team celebrating returns. The ceremony will be held on 22 June, in Trnovo near Sarajevo, on the Inter Entity Boundary Line. Trnovo is an area where two-way successful returns have been taking place for the past two years. Trnovo is positive example as to how annex 7. of the Dayton Peace Agreement, should be implemented and is therefore an ideal place to show the public at large, that coexistence has become a reality for many returnees and in particular for the residence of Trnovo.

UNHCR is inviting the media to attend the press conference at the UNHCR premises:

Fra Andjela Zvizdovica, Unis Tower 3rd floor at 16:00 today.

2002 letter message from UN High Commissioner for Refugees, is available outside.

And another thing there is a new UNHCR PI campaign, with posters, you can see them over there. Exhibited to increase awareness in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the plight of the

refugees, the campaign posters will be visible throughout Sarajevo and major cities around Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thank you.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR.

SFOR is marking this occasion by joining UNHCR in a visit to Derventa and the surrounding area to meet with local officials and some of the refugees and displaced persons who have returned to the Derventa municipality.

Deputy Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant-General François de Goësbriand, is representing SFOR for this visit. He will tour Derventa and the resettled towns of Plehan and Velika with UNCHR Chief of Mission for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Werner Blatter. He will meet with individual returnees and also have informal discussions with local officials and representatives from the returnee community.

From the beginning of its mission, SFOR has worked to create the conditions necessary for the return of displaced persons and refugees. SFOR's continued maintenance of a safe and secure environment throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina has done much to improve the rate of returns and that concludes my statement

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Are there any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Julie Harbin Poucher:

This is a question for Oleg. I have one question about the Handball Association is there a joint Handball league as well or is this just a joint association?

A: Oleg Milisic – OHR:

I am not a 100% sure. Like I said, I did not want to go into details. I will check that out for you, I think it does probably mean a joint league as well or at least one in the future.

Julie Harbin Poucher:

Thank you.

Oleg Milisic – OHR:

OK, if that is it? I would just like to ask you all to keep your seats and we will have a quick change around with our colleagues from ICTY