

# **OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference in Mostar**

## **Town Hall meetings on Police Restructuring**

The European Union Police Mission (EUPM) and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) will continue a series of public meetings being held throughout BiH on police restructuring. Next weeks events will be held in Mostar, Trebinje and Nevesinje. The purpose of these meetings is to present the Police Restructuring Commission's (PRC) proposal to citizens, police, civil society representatives, and other interested stakeholders, and to open a broad dialogue on the ongoing process of police reform.

The EUPM will begin each meeting with information about the police restructuring process to explain the benefits of police restructuring, what it means for public security and why it is necessary. They will point out that police restructuring which will;

- make it much harder for criminals to operate. Right now, police in BiH are at a disadvantage when compared to criminals who operate without hindrance across BiH.
- allow for significant savings in police administration, which means it will be possible to redirect budget funds to urgent needs in BiH society or, for example, to increase spending on schools and hospitals.
- give police officers better access to modern crime fighting technology
- equalize salaries and working conditions for police officers wherever they work in BiH.

The meetings will deconstruct the myths linked to police restructuring, which is not about abolishing the entities, or the Entity Ministry of Interiors – it's about creating an efficient police service, accountable to the community. Those who say police restructuring is a guise to abolish the entities are simply scare mongering.

The European Commission has made structural police reform a requirement for BiH to proceed to the next stage of accession to the European Union. Europe will not lower the bar on this issue; European taxpayers are as concerned about criminality as the BiH taxpayers are.

Each public meeting will focus on answering questions from members of the public.

The meetings will be held in the Hrvatski Dom Herceg Stjepan Kosaca at 18:00 on 22 March, in the Conference Room of the Assembly Building in Trebinje at 18:00 on 23 March, and at the Municipal Assembly in Nevesinje at 18:00 on 24 March. Events are being planned in Mostar on 22 March, Trebinje on 23 March, and Nevisinje on 24 March, as well as other locations throughout BiH. Details of each event will be announced on local radio before each event.