

Meeting of the Media Support and Advisory Group

The Media Support and Advisory Group (MSAG) met last night under the chairmanship of Principal Deputy High Representative Ambassador Klein. The group reviewed the editorial standards of both SRT Pale and HTV Mostar, SRT compliance with the Udrigovo agreement and the future policy for International Community press briefings in Pale.

Concerning the Udrigovo Agreement, the MSAG expressed general acceptance that the terms of the agreement were being met and that SRT Pale were indeed allowing at least 1 hour of access for alternative views to be viewed during prime time. The level of cooperation experienced with SRT Pale in the execution of the agreement had been acceptable and a more varied and interesting approach to this 1 hour slot was now being developed as a joint venture.

Concern was expressed over the editorial standards of both SRT Pale and HTV Mostar news programmes. SRT Pale continue to issue political statements presented as news items devoid of any balance or alternative opinion. HTV Mostar have been guilty of highly irresponsible and inflammatory news programming since the 17 September car bombing. Both the editor in chief of SRT and HTV Mostar will be invited to explain their editorial policies at a time and place to be decided by the MSAG.

The MSAG also considered a resumption of press briefings in Pale as unnecessary at this time. Republika Srpska media in Pale are invited to take part in the daily International Community press briefings at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo. Transport and suitable escorts to provide the required level of confidence for Pale journalists will be made available on request, as well as accreditation facilities.