

OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

Allow the PRC to do its job

Many statements have been made recently with regard the work of the Police Restructuring Commission – the PRC – but let me clarify the facts.

The High Representative in July gave the PRC until the end of the year to identify the operational, financial, constitutional and legislative issues that may at present stand in the way of creating a single effective police structure and propose solutions to them.

At the end of the year the PRC will report to the BiH Prime Minister and the High Representative. This report will be considered and forwarded into BiH's legislative procedure where Parliamentarians will be able to consider recommendations and show their support for reform, effective European policing and the EU association process.

The European Union has highlighted the Justice and Home Affairs agenda in BiH and Police restructuring is one of the 16 key requirements for BiH to start negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement. A review of police functionality in BiH conducted by the European Union and presented in July this year, found BiH's police forces to be divided, over staffed, under-resourced, and unable to operate across the IEBL.

BiH's law enforcement agencies cannot at the moment effectively tackle crime within BiH's own borders. This means that a change of attitude on visa requirements for BiH passport-holders remains a distant and unlikely prospect.

The work of the PRC focuses on proposing structures that will promote effective policing in BiH. There is agreement in civil society and the public at large that crime is a problem and that the police need to be better equipped to tackle crime effectively. The BiH Public and civil society and responsible parliamentary representatives want better policing. They also want to be a part of Europe.

The PRC is made up of BiH's foremost security experts, representatives of all three constituent peoples and both BiH Entities. The PRC now needs to be allowed to do its job.

High Representative Addresses Berlin Conference

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown will tomorrow address a conference organised by the German Foreign Ministry in Berlin entitled "Beyond Cold Peace: Strategies for Economic Reconstruction and Post-Conflict Management". The High Representative will speak of the lessons to be learned from recent conflict management concerning the sequencing of democratisation, functional governance, reconciliation, institution-building, economic development and community-building efforts.

The Conference will be opened by Joschka Fischer, the German Foreign Minister. We hope to have details of the High Representative's statement available for you tomorrow. However, those of you interested in more details of this conference should contact the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

HR meets American Bosnia Cultural Foundation

High Representative Paddy Ashdown this morning met with Joan Le Bach, vice president of the America Bosnia Cultural Foundation. Ms Le Bach is visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to distribute approximately 250 computers to schools, womens' and childrens' groups. She will be working closely with NGOs such as the Abrasevic Center in Mostar and Tutto Completo in Kakanj, as well as NGO's that help handicapped. The computers will be distributed through the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs.

The America Bosnia Cultural Foundation fosters relations between the US and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and raises money for projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative is a patron of the organization.