

## **Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar**

	<b>Spokesperson</b>	<b>Topic</b>
OHR	Avis Benes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• C7 Government should verify the Statute of C7 Employment Bureau</li><li>• Mostar Commission</li></ul>
OSCE	Richard Medic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No statement</li></ul>
EUPM	Kilian Wahl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Steering Board – moving BiH police forward in a structured way</li></ul>

### **Avis Benes - OHR:**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to today's press conference of the International Organizations seated in Mostar. Our colleague from SFOR, Tomasso Magistretti, is not here with us today but SFOR statements are available here. Some of his colleagues are here today and will be at your disposal after the press conference.

On behalf of the OHR, I have two points for you today.

The first one refers to the Employment Bureau of Herzegovina Neretva Canton. This statement will be available in writing so there is no need for a translation. The OHR welcomes adoption of the long awaited Statute of the Employment Bureau of Canton 7 by their Management Board. This means that citizens of this Canton will finally be able to get services from the unified Employment Bureau. In order for this process to be fully functional, the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Government has to verify the Statute. Deputy High Representative Ambassador Bercot urges the Government to put this matter on the agenda of their next Government session without any delays, verify the Statute and enable Employment Bureau to function in its full capacity as soon as possible.

Second point is something you have already seen and was a matter of discussion at yesterday's press conference of the IOs in Sarajevo. It will also be available in writing. All of you who are aware of this matter know that the headline was incorrect, that the deadline was additionally extended. The original deadline was three months and it expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July. The OHR is of the opinion that even though some concrete steps have already been achieved, the work of the Commission should be intensified and a lot of time has unfortunately been spent on unproductive political games. Drafting process should be fully transparent and accessible to all the citizens and interested groups. Let me repeat Commission's e-mail address and fax number where citizens can send their proposals – mostar-statute@max.net.ba and 036-580-032. I would like to appeal to the media to really help this process be more transparent and to repeat this e-mail address and fax number in your reports in order to enable more people to get involved in this process. Bearing all that in mind, the HR encouraged the Commission members to intensify their work through even more frequent meetings, in order to fulfill the task assigned to them by the end of July

That was all on behalf of the OHR.

Richard does not have a specific statement for today but he is available for you questions as always.

Now, I give the floor to the EUPM representative Kilian Wahl who will introduce his colleague.

### **Kilian Wahl - EUPM**

Good morning on behalf of the EUPM. I am very happy to be here today. I would like to introduce our new Deputy Chief Co-locator in Mostar, Mr. Walsh from Ireland. I have a short statement from our HQ in Sarajevo and after that if you have any questions on policing matters in Mostar in I will be happy to answer them.

The EUPM would like to explain briefly the establishment of the formal Steering Board for operational police matters in BiH and its working groups, formally announced on Monday. We have seen a very good coverage on that subject but have the opinion that some of the aspects, some of the details of this Steering Board and working groups came out differentially across so I would like to just follow on some of the main issues. I think that the Steering Board illustrates very clearly how our mandate in BIH is, how cooperation in building the EUPM offices and

local police offices are. The Steering Board does serve an important purpose in that it creates an additional dimension as a joint think tank for moving the police forward. However, it should be emphasised that it is not politically but operationally oriented. The aim of the Steering Board is to identify, from the EUPM programmes, common problems that affect policing in most or all police administrations and to seek solutions that could be applied by police administrations; this should increase confidence and cooperation as well as coordination between Entities and organizations. The Steering Board consists of the Federation and Republika Srpska Police Directors, the Brcko District Chief of Police, the Director of SIPA and the Director and Chief of Service of the SBS. The EUPM is represented by the Police Head of Mission, who co-chairs the SB with a rotating SB member. Under the Steering Board, seven working groups are being established according to the core EUPM programmes. They will conduct research, consult relevant experts and institutions and advise the Steering Board on how to address challenges and implement projects.

The seven working groups will be:

- 1) Crime Police
- 2) Criminal Justice
- 3) Internal Affairs
- 4) Police Administration
- 5) Public Order and Security
- 6) SIPA
- 7) SBS

The Working Groups will be comprised of staff appointed by the respective police administrations and EUPM representatives. Staff can be Police Commissioners or Police Chiefs, but do not have to be, and this is important. Lower-level police officers that are experts on the matters discussed by each working group may also be appointed as representatives of the Steering Board members. In other words, selection should be determined by expertise rather than rank. Shortly, the Steering Board will identify and prioritise projects from the thematic areas that are covered by the working groups, be they of operational or material nature. The EUPM sees the Steering Board and its working groups as an important structure needed to move ahead in accordance with the EUPM mandate, which focuses on leaving behind a modern and professional police force under BIH ownership.

This was all. Thank you for your attention.

**Avis Benes - OHR:**

Thank you. Now your questions please.

### **Questions:**

**Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88):** I have two questions for OHR. Firstly, have you received new names for the Ministers of Justice, Interior and Education? The second question I have regards the sessions of Municipal Councils of Mostar Municipalities Old Town, North and South-East and the refusal to transfer competencies over the Mostar communal companies onto the city of Mostar. Will Mostar lose a chance to get the World Bank's grant? What is the OHR's position on this?

**A: Avis Benes:** As far as the names are concerned, no proposals have been submitted to the OHR as of this morning. As a week has elapsed since they have been rejected, we are of the opinion that political parties should really accelerate this process and submit the names of their candidates as soon as possible.

As for your second question, we do not have details about the World Bank's position on this, so perhaps you would like to ask them. However, the OHR hopes that developments at the city municipalities' sessions will not jeopardise this grant of the World Bank given that we are all aware to which extent Mostar needs resolution of utility services and ecological issues, which the World Bank and their City of Mostar could really help. Let me reiterate that the OHR strongly supports establishment of the joint city utility communal company.

**Q: Pejo Gasparevic (HINA/BBC):** You informed us that the members of the Steering Board are important policing and intelligence service leaders. Could you answer the following two questions: what is the role of the EUPM in this Steering Board and whether is this Steering Board an introduction to the formation of a single Ministry of Interior at the BIH level?

**A: Kilian Wahl:** OK, I think I will start with the last question. It is not. It has been established long before the OHR came up with the possible reform of BIH police forces. I think this is sufficient.

As for the role of the EUPM in the Steering Board is a link, think-thank so we have experts from other European countries, police experts and we of course we have experts of this country. So it is meant to be that they sit together and brainstorm, and then figure problems and solve them together. That is basically the role. So, we are, of course, monitoring but as we are in the courses with the local police, discussing these issues and of course to provide our professional help.

**Q: Zana Mrkonjic (HRT Zagreb):** I have a question for Ms. Benes. Could you please comment on the process of restructuring of PBS and FTV, which is constantly complaining they have been damaged in this process?

**A: Avis Benes:** Yesterday, the HR stated that the agent John Shearer was forced to act because the Parliaments failed to appoint members of the Board within the deadlines foreseen by the Law. Also, he stated that what has been decided is only a provisional decision. It will be replaced by the legislative amendments that will be proposed by the OHR to the BIH authorities as a necessary part for preservation of the whole system. It is known that PBS and especially entity broadcasters, i.e. FTV and RT RS, have been facing a serious financial crisis. One cannot wait for the Parliaments to postpone discussion on this matter because there has to be an urgent action in order to save what can be saved. I think that this decision has already been posted on the OHR's website. Should you be interested in any details, you can check it there.

**Q: Mirsad Behram (RTV Mostar):** I have two questions for the OHR. This morning, media outlets were notified that the C7 Government session was postponed. Does the OHR have any information as to why was it postponed?

**A: Avis Benes:** We have no information about that.

**Q: Mirsad Behram (RTV Mostar):** I am afraid that the OHR will have to, once again, rule in the case of Mostar utility company. I would like to know if you have any proposal or idea as to how this new city company should be established?

**A: Avis Benes:** As you are all aware, over the last couple of years the OHR has repeatedly warned of this unresolved problem. As for the OHR's inclusion at this very moment, we are not directly involved except for the fact that we absolutely support this plan of the World Bank.

**Q: Faruk Kajtaz:** Was any resignation within the Commission offered and subsequently withdrawn under pressures from the US Embassy and the OHR?

**A: Avis Benes:** As for any question on Commission, you could ask them. However, according to information we have there has been no resignations or pressures.

**Q: Faruk Kajtaz:** What about announcements of possible resignations?

**A: Avis Benes:** The OHR has not received any official information about that.

**Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88):** As you probably know, SDA representative Sadovic left the last session of the Mostar Commission. Do you have any information about the withdrawal of SDA from the Commission?

**A: Avis Benes:** We did not have any information about the withdrawal of SDA from the Commission. As far as I know, the Commission had a regular meeting yesterday.

**Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88):** Question for EUPM. I am not sure if you can answer this question but I will try anyway. It is a question about vehicles that have been stolen in Herzegovina and now located in Montenegro. I know that there are over thirty reports to the C7 Ministry of Interior and that the police know these vehicles are in Montenegro. Some BIH dailies reported that there is no co-operation between the BIH and Montenegro police. Do you have any information about this?

**A: Kilian Wahl:** Unfortunately, I do not have any information. It is actually not on us to respond to that. We are monitoring police work within BIH so it is on the political level. So I think it is on the political level what you are referring to co-operation with another state agencies is nothing we can comment on.