

Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR	Mario Brkic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The High Representative visits the Agricultural Laboratory in Mostar
OSCE	Richard Medic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OSCE urges HNC officials to open schools on time
SFOR	Maj. De Lambert	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement

Mario Brkic - OHR

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to this morning's IC press conference in Mostar. On behalf of the OHR I have one point for you - it is actually a reminder.

As you have already been informed, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will visit an agricultural laboratory in Mostar Municipality South-East today. The laboratory supports economic development of both returnee and domicile communities and population. The project was established and held by the Italian NGO CEFA in November 1999, and provides soil and water analyses to agricultural producers in the region helping them to grow their produce organically. Following the meeting with the representatives of the laboratory, as well as representatives of local agricultural co-operatives, there will be a short media address by the High Representative at 13:45 hrs at the Agricultural Laboratory in Mostar Municipality South-East, it is on the road to Blagaj, off the M-17 road. Of course, all media are cordially invited to attend this event. That is all from the OHR. Thank you.

Richard Medic - OSCE

I have just one short statement, reasonably short statement from the OSCE today. This summer the international community assigned OSCE an important new task - coordinating the education efforts in BiH. Ambassador Beecroft, OSCE's Head, alluded to it during his June visit to Mostar and expressed his personal excitement, as a former teacher, to be given this responsibility. There is no more important job for the future of BiH, he said, than guaranteeing full access to quality education for its children. OSCE is in the process of building its education department at the Regional Center in Mostar and across the country. All of us will be working in close collaboration with parents, teachers, educators, students, government officials and counterparts in other international agencies. We want to be a small part of the solution, not of continuing problems. For this reason, RC Mostar is disturbed to learn that some of the primary and secondary schools in Canton 7 may not open on 2 September. The reason, we're told, is insufficient cantonal funds to pay teachers' past-due salaries and allowances. No one can work to improve an educational system that cannot begin its academic year on schedule. OSCE joins all parents, students, and educators in urging cantonal officials to address and solve this urgent problem. Clearly, education ranks near the top of issues on voters' minds here as in other countries, as they consider their 5 October election choices.

Thank you. That is all I have.

There were no questions.