OHR and OSCE Call on Vasic to Uphold Rule of Law

Vasic's Conduct Calls into Question the Role of his Ministry

The Office of the High Representative and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina condemn the June 1 press statement by Mr. Rajko Vasic, Republika of Srpska's Minister of Information, in which he called for the public prosecution of journalists in Republika Srpska who he alleged wrote false reports.
Mr. Vasic states that these articles were "false news and an obvious manipulation of the public." But these events did occur, and proper explanations have now been given and reported in the media. However, even if these reports had been mistaken, prosecution of journalists for mistakes in their stories is wrong in any case, and other remedies for dealing with errors exist.

The OHR and the OSCE call upon Mr. Vasic to correct the record publicly and to withdraw the demand for the Public Prosecutor to take action against these or any other journalist whose reports are accurate, but politically out of favor with Mr. Vasic. The OHR and the OSCE also remind Mr. Vasic and all other elected and appointed officials that violations of journalists rights are violations of human rights as prescribed under the BiH Constitution and Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Mr. Vasic's condemnation of "certain RS print media," the RTRS and his implicit attack on the BETA Agency are simply unacceptable. Mr. Vasic clearly continues to believe it is his role to control and sanction the media, as Mr. Milosevic is trying to do in Serbia. Such efforts have no place in BiH's emerging democracy.