

OHR Bulletin 4 - May 27, 1996

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Republica Srpska

The OHR continues its efforts to secure full compliance by each of the Parties with the Peace Agreement, especially on those provisions which exclude indicted war criminals from public office.

The OHR expects the leadership of the Republika Srpska (RS) to deliver on its undertakings in this regard with respect to Radovan Karadzic. The High Representative, Mr. Carl Bildt, conducted further consultations to this end, both with the RS leadership and with President Milosevic of Serbia.

The question was also discussed at the meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 24 May in Paris.

Economic Reconstruction

Significant progress was made last week in implementing the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) Government's Priority Reconstruction and Recovery Program led by the World Bank, the European Commission and other donors.

Highlights include:

- Three credit agreements, worth \$ 121 million were signed on 20 May for projects in war victims rehabilitation, education and district heating. The projects, for which the World Bank has provided \$ 40 million, aim to provide support for the physically disabled victims of war through the production of prosthetic and orthotic devices. It also envisages repair work in 77 primary schools, as well as providing textbooks, education material and equipment in the Federation, an education reconstruction needs assessment, and provision of textbooks to primary schools in the Republika Srpska. Repair work to the Sarajevo central-heating system and improvement of heat metering and billing systems, as well as an engineering survey of the district heating system in Banja Luka are also encompassed by the project. Implementation of the projects will start in the coming weeks.

- Two contracts were signed on 16 May with contractors from Bosnia and Herzegovina to carry out repairs to the Bijela and Jasen bridges on the Sarajevo – Mostar road. The time frame for the completion of these works is six months.
- The first loans to private enterprises under the line of credit component of the Emergency Recovery project financed by the World Bank, the Netherlands Government and other donors were approved last week. Loan agreements were signed with two private BH companies, a plastic wrap manufacturer and a car muffler manufacturer, were signed on 22 May. This line of credit offers working capital loans through local banks up to 300.000 DM to small and medium enterprises to restart production. About 30 other loan applications are under consideration, primarily in the areas of food processing and light industry.
- The issuance and evaluation of bidding documents for the supply of approximately 2.400 tractors and around 6.400 head of livestock, including pregnant heifers, sheep and goats, under the Emergency Farm Reconstruction Project is continuing. Delivery is expected to take place between the months of August and October.
- The first consignment of pharmaceutical supplies donated by the European Commission under the PHARE Essential Aid Programme arrived in Sarajevo last week. Urgently needed pharmaceuticals, estimated worth DM 300.000 were delivered to the Ministry of Health for distribution throughout the Federation by the Central Medical Store.

The medical supplies were procured locally from the BOSNALIJEK company in Sarajevo based on a priority list prepared in conjunction with the Ministry of Health. This is the first part of an aid package worth approximately DM 7.6 million allocated to the Health Sector under the PHARE Programme. The second part of the package, to include ambulances, laboratory and medical equipment is scheduled to arrive in the forthcoming weeks. The European Commission awarded this contract to a Bosnian company with the view to support the restoration of local production capability.

The European Commission's Special Envoy to BH, Mr. Donato Chiarini, signed on 22 May a Memorandum of Understanding with Mr. Ahmed Smajic, Minister of Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry in the Government of BH with regard to the supply by the European Commission, also under the PHARE programme, of farm mechanisation equipment, worth 7.3 million US\$ to private farmers.

This complements earlier signed agreements in support of the agricultural sector. The total European Commission assistance to the agricultural sector amounts to date to US \$ 10 million.

The main objective of the programme is to support private small-scale subsistence farmers who have been heavily affected by the loss or destruction of their farm equipment as a result of the war. Up to 1.300 small-size, single-axle tractors or motor-cultivators with standard implements will be distributed. This type of equipment is popular in Bosnia-Herzegovina and most suitable for the small plot sizes in the country.

The delivery and distribution of the equipment is scheduled to start from July. Special attention will be paid to supporting refugees or internally displaced persons who wish to return to their land.

Another Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Messrs. Chiarini and Smajic providing financial aid, amounting to US \$10 million, for the purchase of urgently needed equipment and materials for the water supply sector. The main objective of the project is to improve the delivery of basic water services to the population in 58 municipalities throughout the Federation, by providing essential rolling stock, construction equipment and materials used for routine maintenance and repair.

In addition, the European Commission will provide specific equipment (pumps, pipes and materials) to local water authorities in 14 municipalities in the Federation to enable urgent repair works.

Elections

The Provisional Election Commission (PEC) announced on 23 May that the registration of Political Parties and

Independent Candidates – which started on 10 May – will end on 7 June. Applicants must obtain the signature of a specific number of voters and submit these signatures along with the completed registration form to the PEC in Sarajevo. Voters may sign the application forms of one or more political party or candidate.

The OSCE Mission to BH remains profoundly concerned over nationalistic tendencies which will make the holding of free and fair elections difficult.

The OSCE specifies some threatening remarks made by Vice-president of the SDA party, Mr. Edhem Bicakcic and carried by the local media on 24 May, that the SDA will “undertake certain steps towards the opposition and will have no mercy”.

The OSCE Mission continues to note numerous reports by its own Human Rights Monitors concerning anti-democratic activities by incumbent Bosniak leaders, especially in provincial communities. These activities include termination of employment, cancellation of contracts, and general economic punishment when signalling sympathy for views of the opposition.

The OSCE calls upon all parties to respect democratic norms as the electoral process begins to intensify.

Following a series of mediating meetings between the OHR and the key players in Sarajevo, Zagreb & Mostar, an agreement on the local elections in Mostar was officially reached on 25 May in Mostar. The agreement stipulates that elections in Mostar will take place by 30 June 1996 at the latest and will be conducted in line with the existing agreements and decrees of the European Administrator who will also decide on the precise date for the voting to take place.

The agreement, finalised during a session of the Advisory Council of the EU Administration in Mostar, was signed by the Mayor of East Mostar Mayor, Safet Orucevic, the Vice-president of the Croatian Municipal Council, Mile Puljic and the representative of the Serb Community in Mostar, Rajko Gatalo.

Under the agreement, all Mostar citizens who were on the 1991 lists will be able to vote on the political future of the city. Arrangements are being considered to allow for the transport of refugees back to Mostar to vote or, alternatively, to enable them to do so in those countries where they are at present – notably Sweden, Germany, Norway and Switzerland.

All parties have committed themselves to ensure full freedom of movement and safety for all those travelling to Mostar to exercise their right to vote, as well as within the city itself, while the government of Croatia has promised full support and co-operation to ensure free passage through its territory for voters returning to Mostar.

The countries who have accepted refugees on their territories will be asked to facilitate the voting of refugees in the elections and to ensure that the status of the refugees would not alter as a result of participating in the voting, especially if they wish to vote in Mostar.

Media Development

Following on an initiative by a group of existing local broadcasters and journalists in BH aimed at developing a self-supporting independent TV network prior to the elections, the OHR organised a meeting of interested donors in Brussels on 22 May.

A strong level of support for the project was shown and over half of the total US \$ 17.5 million budget required was pledged. The main contributors included the US (\$ 3 mil.), the EU (\$ 2.4 mil.), OSI-Soros (\$ 3 mil.), the government of Sweden (\$ 0.5 mil.) and the government of Germany (DM 0.5 mil.). This was seen to be a good start on the path of implementation and the OHR and OSCE Mission to BH will continue to support this project, stressing the urgency to move on a crucial project which shows tangible potential.

The High Representative, Carl Bildt, also discussed this issue, among other things, with members of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board during its session in Paris on 24 May.

Human Rights

- Representatives of the Human Rights Task Force property subcommittee (OHR, OSCE, and the UN Mission in Bosnia) met on 20 May with Republika Srpska Justice Minister Arsovic to express concerns about existing property legislation that presents obstacles to the return of refugees and displaced persons. The meeting is part of a series of initiatives to highlight the international community's concern about property laws which have discriminatory effect and infringe upon basic human rights.
- OHR staff met last week with members of a visiting U.S. delegation, led by William Montgomery, Presidential Special Advisor for Bosnia Implementation, to review a range of human rights issues that have implications for the electoral process in BH.
- The Human Rights Co-ordination Centre (HRCC) hosted a working session on 20 May with representatives of UNHCR, OSCE, IPTF, and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to discuss freedom of movement concerns from a human rights perspective. The HRCC will investigate the issue of non-recognition (and frequent seizure) of individual identification papers and suggest strategies which could be used to address this issue in the Freedom of Movement working group.

Refugee And Humanitarian Affairs

UNHCR is publishing Repatriation Information Reports (RIRs) on each of the 112 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each 6-8 page report will survey one municipality, with detailed information on housing, security and public order, freedom of movement, demographics, infrastructure, public services and more. The aim is to help refugees, displaced persons, governments and other interested organisations make informed decisions about repatriation and relocation. The reports will be updated regularly once all 112 municipalities are complete. UNHCR has already published RIRs on 16 municipalities in February and March and expects to come out with 10-20 more each month. The report and a list of municipalities covered so far are available from:

UNHCR – Sarajevo, Susan Kinsley, Senior Information Training Officer.

Fax: 387-71-44 78 68 – Tel. 470 171.

Within its Dissemination to the Armed Forces Program, the ICRC conducted a first training course for the RS Army last week. The two-day-long seminar took place in Banja Luka with 40 senior officers from the RS 1st Krajina Corps taking part. Following this seminar, the ICRC trainer received a request to set up a training program for the Military Academy in Banja Luka. In the coming period, the ICRC is expecting to conduct the same training program with the main forces of the RS Army. Similar training has already been conducted for BH Army and HVO senior officers.

Looking Ahead

- **29 May:** Joint Civilian Commission – Sarajevo
- **30 May:** Regional Working Group on Refugees and Displaced Persons NE, Banja Luka
- **30 May:** Expert Group on Missing Persons and Exhumations, Geneva.
- **31 May:** Joint Civilian Commission, Sarajevo
- **2 June:** US Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, and members of the International Contact Group meet with the Presidents of Serbia, Croatia and BH, Geneva.
- **3-4 June:** North Atlantic Council summit, Berlin
- **4 June:** Contact Group ministerial meeting, Berlin

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton

Agreement. Suggestions and contributions are welcome and should be addressed to the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo (387-71) 447 275 ext. 562. Callers from outside BH dial via Brussels switchboard: Tel. (32-2) 737 7000 & Fax (32-2) 737 7901