

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka

The Office of the High Representative has received last night's RSNA conclusions and is examining them carefully. At this point in time, we can only offer preliminary comments.

In particular, we note that the RSNA suggests a renegotiation of the October 2005 Agreement.

The OHR points out that the EU agreed to launch negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of the October 2005 Agreement. The initiative for the October 2005 Agreement came from Republika Srpska and the RSNA was the first parliament to adopt the Agreement.

As the European Commission has pointed out, the signing of the SAA requires that the obligations in the October 2005 Agreement are implemented.

Starting police reform over again would set Bosnia and Herzegovina back several years. It is not a realistic option, if the country is to sign an SAA in the near future.

Furthermore, the issues remain the same; the EU principles remain the same; and the areas for compromise remain the same.

The Police Reform Directorate has produced a good report based on the Police Reform Agreement. Solutions are on the table for resolving remaining outstanding issues. An agreement is within reach.

The European Commission has said that the SAA could still be signed before the end of the year.

However, if the RS Government and Parliament were to take the view that a whole new process was necessary, they would have to take responsibility for a delay, possibly of several years, in the signing of an SAA.