Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR		• Business on My Street Campaign
OSCE	Richard Medic	• Curious budget priorities • RCD to address media in Stolac
SFOR	Maj. Fix	• Field training of French battle group in Nevesinje area

Richard Medic – OSCE

Good morning. Sorry we are running a little bit late today. Avis sends her apologies, she won't be able to make it today. We do have a short statement from OHR which the interpreter will read. And I'll leave it to her.

OHR

The statement pertains to the information campaign "Business on my street Campaign. You may have noticed that on November 4 2002, FTV and RT RS started airing an info campaign on small and medium-size enterprise development under the title "Business on my Street". The series, produced by Refresh/Sarajevo, is a follow up to an earlier campaign, "From and Idea to Business", launched by the OHR/EU QIF last year. The aim of the campaign is to show, in the context of the economic reforms in BiH, practical positive examples of successful business, to give people the perspective of possibilities for development of small and medium-size businesses and to encourage them to take initiative. The campaign, which will also be aired on local and regional TV

stations, consists of 15 such examples of wide range of businesses throughout BiH which prove there is no shortage of talents and initiative in this country. Now, we have a couple of video spots to show.

Presentation of video spots

Richard Medic – OSCE

There are two things from OSCE today.

Firstly, the OSCE Regional Center Director, Ambassador Tom Timberman, received on 4 November a letter from the Presidents of the Hercegovina Neretva Secondary and Primary School Teachers Union expressing their strong objections to the Cantonal Government's recent decision to reduce salaries of all budget users by 20%. There seems to be a strong possibility that these unions will strike. The Director recalled the details of the discussions at the 28 October 02 Government session and wishes to share with the citizen-voters his serious concern at the apparent skewed ministerial priorities reflected at that meeting. During discussions at the 28 October meeting, the deputy Prime Minister proposed that the Government donate 20,000KM to the Canton's Football Association. If approved, the money is to be used by the Association to prepare themselves for the possibility that Mostar might be one of the sites for the 2008 European Championship games. Just how this money will be spent is yet to be specified. The assumption evidently is that BiH/Croatia's bid to host the matches is successful. Mr. Coric's suggestion was apparently warmly received with Minister Vesna Covic commenting that the amount should be doubled to 40000KM. At the same meeting,the Finance Ministry representative proposed that the net total amount for salary beneficiaries be reduced by 20%. No comments were heard from the other government representatives.

The second point from OSCE – again, OSCE's Regional Center

Director Ambassador Thomas Timberman will be in Stolac today to make a public statement, as he is concerned at reports relating to the construction of a provocative religious symbol in the courtyard of the Herceg Stjepan Castle there. All media are cordially invited to this media opportunity at Herceg Stjepan Castle at 16.00 hrs today.

That is all from the OSCE today.

Maj. Fix – SFOR

From the 7th to the 8th and from the 13th to the 14th of November, MND-SE French Battle Group will perform field training in the opstina of Nevesinje and more especially in the neighbourhoods of Macipolje. 150 soldiers and about 50 light armour vehicles will take part to the exercises. The maneuvers performing without check-points, firings, searches or helicopters, will have no impact on the daily life of the population. Such drill activities are essential for SFOR-led forces in order to maintain an operational effectiveness and flexible response towards potential threats, and this, in accordance with its mandate. They demonstrate the NATO strong commitment to security and stability in BiH.

Richard Medic – OSCE

Now I'll leave it to you if you have any questions to raise.

QUESTIONS:

Q: Mirsad Behram (RTV Mostar): In relation to your media advisory – does this SFOR exercise in the area of Nevesinje have any connection with the recent discoveries of the weapon and ammunition in Eastern Herzegovina?

A: Maj. Fix: No. These two exercises are only normal training for the French battle group in order just to maintain

the flexible response in case of the real operation. This press release is just the way to alert the inhabitants for they will see many more soldiers that usual.

Q: Tina Jelin (Studio 88): Question for OSCE – Could you explain us what sort of provocative religious symbol construction in the Herceg Stjepan Castle are we talking about?

A: Richard Medic: OSCE received reports that a religious symbol, a cross, is planned to be constructed in the courtyard of Herceg Stjepan Castle in Stolac. And the Ambassador would like to make a statement and provide the media with an opportunity to hear what he has to say about this issue during the opportunity later today at 1400 hrs so I prefer not to go into details here.