Transcript of the Press Conference in Mostar

	Spokesperson	Topic
OHR	Avis Benes	• OHR welcomes appointment of the Commission for restructuring of Mostar by the City Council
OSCE	Richard Medic	• Segregation of students in C7 • OSCE welcomes Commission for creation of a Statute for the City of Mostar • FEP certification ceremony
SFOR	Capt. Magistretti	• Weapons found near Rogatica

Avis Benes – OHR:

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen and welcome to yet another press conference of the international organizations based in Mostar.

On behalf of the OHR, I have one point regarding yesterday's extraordinary session of the Mostar City Council. This statement will be available in writing.

OHR welcomes yesterday's appointment of the Commission for re-structuring of Mostar by the Mostar City Council. OHR also congratulates Mayor Hamdija Jahic and Deputy Mayor Ljubo Beslic for their constructive work in nomination of candidates for this Commission. It is now up to the members of the Commission to constructively and seriously start working on this important process regarding the future of their city, and

in a democratic and transparent manner. OHR expects that the Commission will complete its task in the agreed deadline of three months. Finally, as Deputy High Representative Jean-Pierre Bercot emphasized while addressing the City councilors yesterday on behalf of OHR, during its work the Commission should be open for various suggestions of public and public discussion in general. Mostar cannot afford to ignore constructive voices of its citizens.

That's all on behalf of OHR for today. Now, let's hear Richard and OSCE.

Richard Medic – OSCE

Dobar dan. I have two points and a very brief media advisory.

The OSCE Mission to BiH is concerned over the continued segregation of students attending 'two-schools-under-one-roof' in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. In 'two schools under one roof', Bosniac and Croat children, as well as their teachers, often have no mutual contact. Once unified schools in Stolac, Capljina, and Prozor-Rama are now physically divided and there are currently approximately 5,000 students in this canton studying in 'two schools under one roof.' In some of these schools students are taught in different shifts and their teachers do not use the same teachers' rooms. Administrative unification of 'two-schools-under-one-roof' aims to eliminate the physical, social and psychological separation of students outside the classroom. Through administrative unification of these schools the authorities should register the schools as single legal bodies, with one Director, a multi-ethnic steering board and parent/student councils. Administrative unification is not related to the curriculum or the work within the classroom; however, it would entail joint teaching shifts and intermingling of classrooms to minimise the physical divide between students of different ethnicities. OSCE welcomes the proposal developed for administrative

unification by the Capljina Municipal Authorities. OSCE also welcomes the recent improvements in the integration of two schools under one roof in Stolac and Prozor-Rama. In these schools, both student bodies have equal access to the sports hall, library and computer room. The Stolac secondary schools are also preparing a joint project proposal for the equipping of laboratories for foreign languages, IT, chemistry and biology teaching. OSCE urges both the caretaker and the incoming Cantonal Government to issue instructions and work with the School Directors in implementing administration unification in all 'two-schools-under-one-roof' by the start of the next school year. In laying a foundation for administrative unification, the School Directors are also urged to improve the interaction between students and teachers through organizing joint extra-curricular activities.

My second point: OSCE welcomes Mostar City Council's appointment yesterday of the members of the Commission for creation of a Statute for the City of Mostar'. OSCE RC Director, Ambassador Thomas Young, said afterwards that 'the good will expressed during the Council session demonstrated a positive step for the future of Mostar.' The Ambassador now calls on the Commission members to move forward by listening to and addressing the views of the public, and by avoiding party politicking. 'This Commission's success depends on it carrying out its work according to the principles of compromise, inclusiveness, and timeliness,' Ambassador Young said.

And just a very brief media advisory. All media are cordially invited to attend the Fair Employment Project certification ceremony, which will be held at the premises of OSCE RC Mostar, at 11.00 a.m. tomorrow morning.

That is all I have for today. Thank you.

Avis Benes – OHR

Thank you Richard. Now, I give the floor to SFOR and Maj. Magistretti.

Maj. Magistretti – SFOR

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Yesterday early in the morning in the village of Seljani, near Rogatica MNB SE soldiers in co-operation with EUPM and local Police had searched some privately owned houses. During this search following weapon had been found and seized: MG 49 machineguns, M48 rifles and AK 47 automatic rifles, carbines, mines, rifle bombs, thousands of rifle ammunitions, and explosive. We will provide exact figures and pictures later this afternoon. Brigadier General Chiarini, who was present in the spot during the operation, said: "I am very proud of the professional way our troops conducted this activity." MNB SE Commander added that "The opportunity to avoid unwanted consequences that holding and hiding of illegal weapons carries on, during campaign Harvest weapons can be surrendered to the closest local collecting points." Next Harvest Campaign will start on the 19th May and before this date I will provide you with the detailed operation agenda.

That's all I have. Thank you.

Avis Benes – OHR

Thank you. And now your questions please.

Questions:

Q: Faruk Kajtaz (Youth Radio X): I have a question for OSCE. Does OSCE have any thoughts about the issue of education in Mostar taking into consideration that the schools in Mostar are not even located under the same roof? Perhaps the situation in Prozor/Rama and other municipalities you mentioned is better than in Mostar, not to mention the problems of the Gymnasium or the Universities.

A: Richard Medic: The points I raised in this press release concern schools in the whole of the Canton, including the schools in Mostar. We are working closely with the municipal authorities as well as with the caretaker [Cantonal] Government to work through the issue of ‘two schools under the same roof’. But I have to add, as I mentioned last week, that it is difficult working with a caretaker Government, so I think it is best for me not to go any further.