

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR Transfers Competencies to the Domestic Authorities

The mayors of Zepce and Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje municipalities were informed yesterday of the High Representative's Decision bringing an end the International Community supervisory regimes in their municipalities.

The High Representative noted that OHR has endeavoured over the past several years to facilitate the integration and smooth functioning of these once-divided municipalities. The supervisory regimes put in place in 2000 for Zepce and 2001 for Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje have helped both municipalities to make substantial progress in representing all citizens and providing them with better governance. With this, the time has come to transfer both real and titular responsibility for good governance in both towns to the local authorities.

"The overall objective has been to reunite divided municipalities, dismantling parallel administrative structures and integrating all public utilities and other service companies in each municipality. Over the past three years, this objective has been very largely achieved," the High Representative said.

You'll find more details in a press release, which will you can pick up on your way out.

CoM Session Today

OHR welcomes the fact that the CoM is meeting. There is a huge amount of work for the CoM to do. Seven laws still have to be adopted and sent to Parliament for enactment if BiH is to

fulfil the requirements of the EC's Feasibility Study. These laws include the Law on Public Broadcasting System, which will be discussed and should be adopted at today's meeting. I draw attention to this law particularly because it will enable the creation of a financially and editorially independent public broadcasting system, which will give better value for public money. Another of the laws still waiting adoption by the CoM is the Law on Competition, which is a key element in creating a business climate in BiH that can attract investors who will create jobs.

What the CoM has to do now is concentrate on its core tasks – drafting, debating and sending legislation to Parliament. This is the only way it can make a positive difference to the lives of citizens.

HR Tolerance Speech

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will be speaking this evening at the opening of an exhibition on tolerance, at the National Museum. The exhibition has been organized by the Council of Europe and a number of other organizations, including the National Museum, the Banja Luka and Sarajevo Academies of Fine Art, and the Sarajevo Architecture faculty. It will be opened by Prime Minister Terzic.

In his remarks, the High Representative will focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina's long tradition of tolerance – which has been the rule rather than the exception for most of this country's history. This is a tradition from which other countries in Europe can learn.

I've brought along copies of the speech. As usual, please check against delivery.

High Representative meets ICTY Chief Prosecutor

As you are all probably aware, the High Representative will meet later this afternoon with the ICTY Chief Prosecutor,

Carla del Ponte. We are planning a short press opportunity and should be in a position to confirm the time in the next hour or so.