

# OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Mostar

## Mostar authorities have to speed up the pace of integration in the city

The deadline given by the High Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling to the Mostar authorities to speed up the pace of integration in the city, passed yesterday. In his letter to Mostar political leaders sent late last week, the High Representative has expressed his concern about the current political stalemate, and has asked them to intensify their efforts to resolve two outstanding issues in particular:

- The completion of the systematization including the appointment of civil servants positions, and
- The unification of the public utilities companies.

A report yesterday from the city authorities to the High Representative indicated that there may be further progress on those issues in the next session of the Mostar City Council, which convenes today. The OHR is following the session closely, and encourages the council to move ahead and adopt already overdue decisions.

As a reminder, this week the High Representative will address the Peace Implementation Council, and will report on the progress, or lack thereof, in Mostar.

The HR has called for a follow up meeting in Sarajevo in the first week of July to discuss the progress report and draw conclusions from that.

## **Systemic Solutions Benefit Everyone**

The High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, and the Principal Deputy High Representative, Larry Butler, will meet with representatives of the international chambers of commerce this afternoon in Sarajevo.

As you know, the High Representative has made it a priority since he took up his duties at the start of February to promote the Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise sector in BiH. This comes from his own experience running an SME before he went into politics. He has repeatedly said that BiH can follow the example of Germany and other countries in Western Europe whose postwar recovery and economic prosperity was built on a thriving SME sector.

The High Representative has focused his activities until now on encouraging the development of more effective business advocacy, and in the past few months he and Principal Deputy High Representative Larry Butler have held a series of meetings with chambers of commerce and other business support organisations, such as the Business Service Centre in Zenica.

This afternoon's meeting will explore ways in which the international chambers can work with their BiH counterparts to make business advocacy in BiH more effective.

Business advocacy in BiH has traditionally been premised on resolving individual problems or promoting individual projects – whereas in other countries lobbying is more conventionally viewed as a means of resolving systemic problems. If a systemic problem is fixed then more than one company can benefit.

**Three Prime Ministers and Brcko Mayor Convene to discuss and endorse National PAR Strategy on 22 June – Important Step for Future of BiH**

The Prime Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation and Republika Srpska, as well as the District Mayor of Brcko are meeting tomorrow to discuss the PAR strategy at a national conference on Public Administration Reform (PAR).

The joint endorsement of the PAR strategy and its accompanying action plan is an essential step in Bosnia and Herzegovina's process of European Integration and will help make the public administration more effective, efficient and accountable. Progress in PAR is also vital for Bosnia and Herzegovina to complete the Stabilisation and Association negotiations and is a clear signal that the authorities of this country are willing to move ahead with reforms that will have a direct and positive impact on the lives of citizens.

This PAR strategy has been developed by the PAR Coordinator's Office in the course of the last few months with significant input from – and endorsement of – nominated representatives from the State, Entities and Brcko district. The PAR Strategy is largely based on the recommendations deriving from the EC-financed system reviews of the Public Administration carried out in 2004-2005.

Once approved, the International Community is ready to financially support the governments in the implementation of the PAR Strategy. We believe that the PAR strategy should provide the main framework for assistance in this sector. Therefore, the EC and the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom have joined forces to develop a PAR Fund which will finance activities deriving from this PAR action plan. In addition to the direct technical assistance to the PAR Coordinator's Office, the PAR Fund has so far mobilised 4,5 million Euro for this purpose. We encourage all donors active in this sector to ensure that their activities are fully in line with the PAR strategy and are co-ordinated through the PAR Coordinator Office

We congratulate the PAR Coordinator Office for having

developed this comprehensive PAR strategy jointly with relevant stakeholders at all government levels. We urge the State, Entity and Brcko authorities to adopt the strategy and begin implementing the action plan as soon as possible.

### **The High Representative to meet with German Minister of Defence**

The High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, will tomorrow meet with German Minister of Defence Dr. Franz Josef Jung. The two will discuss the current political situation in BiH, progress in BiH's defence reforms and the potential for BiH to join NATO's Partnership for Peace.

A short press opportunity will be organized at **12.45 on Thursday 22 June at the OHR Sarajevo.**

All representatives of the media are cordially invited to attend.