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

OHR Calls On State, and Entities To Complete Defence Reform

BiH is fast approaching the entry into force of the new State Level laws on Defence -January 1st, 2006.

This is a major achievement. However, key legislation has to be adopted in order to ensure the smooth transfer of competencies to the State Level.

At the State Level changes need to be made to the Criminal Code, and the Law on Ministries. We urge the state do this without further delay.

At the Entity Level a number of laws need to be passed or amended in order to ensure the transition and implementation of the State Defence Laws goes smoothly. Both the RS and the Federation are leaving very little time to do this.

The RSNA must also adopt Constitutional Amendments and four Laws which would clarify that the RS’s role in Defence has ended. In addition, the RSNA needs to adopt the Constitutional Transfer Agreement that would move responsibility for Defence fully to the State Level.

The FBiH Parliament similarly needs to amend or adopt five Laws to clarifying that responsibility for Defence has now passed to the State level. The FBiH HoP is expected to consider final changes to the FBiH Constitution during today and tomorrow that would allow the complete transition of responsibility for Defence to the State Level.

OHR calls on both Entity governments to prioritise this legislation at their forthcoming sessions, and to schedule

special sessions if necessary to ensure that this reform is completed by the end of the year, so that the new defence regime is fully operational on January 1st.