

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

FBiH House of Peoples Can Show EU Commitment

OHR welcomes the positive vote for the Agreement on Police Reform in the Federation House of Representatives yesterday and hope that the FBiH House of Peoples will tomorrow seize the opportunity to show their commitment to Europe when they vote on this agreement.

The OHR looks to all parties not to obstruct the passage of this agreement.

We want to underline that this agreement has been approved and welcomed by the EC and the US Government. It will open the way for the launch of SAA talks, and put BiH on the road to EU – a road already taken by Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro and all other countries in the region.

This agreement does not undermine the rights of any BiH Peoples but it will lead to a much more effective policing system.

The OHR will be looking to the BiH Ministry of Security to lead the Directors in planning the implementation of this agreement and all levels of BiH's authorities, including the Cantons, will be represented within the Directorate itself.

This agreement will provide the people of BiH with policing based on the three principles laid down by the European Commission.

- No political interference with operational policing
- All legislative and budgetary competencies for all police matters must be vested at the State level.

- Functional local police areas must be determined by technical policing criteria, where operational command is exercised at the local level.

This means that there will be only one Ministry of Interior at the State level; no Ministries at lower levels and Police regions will be based on technical criteria, not on political criteria, which means that in the few areas necessary, they will cross the IEBL.

The OHR calls on all parliamentarians to endorse this agreement and open the way for the launch of SAA talks and for the establishment of a modern, democratic and efficient single structure of police in BiH.