

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

Floods in Central Bosnia

The High Representative Paddy Ashdown is traveling to the region around Travnik right now to assess the flooding that hit this region and express his support for the people and the local civil protection agencies that are dealing with the flooding. Further details available from Oleg Milisic who is traveling with the High Representative. His mobile phone number is 06 161 382.

HR in Livno and Glamoc

The High Representative will visit Glamoc and Livno on Wednesday 14 April 2004 where he will meet with director of Herceg-Bosanske Sume Mr. Marko Bagaric and his staff. It is encouraging seeing the positive steps that this company, established in 1998, has taken to combat illegal activities, regulate its operations, and hire staff based on their individual skills rather than ethnic makeup. Forestry operations in general, throughout BiH, remain in a disastrous state. Immediate measures are needed to protect the forestry of BiH and make it much harder for illegal sawmills to operate and export. Rough estimates say that up to 1600 illegal sawmills operates throughout the country.

The USAID December 2002 study shows that besides agriculture and tourism, BiH has a great potential in wood industry. The study says: "This is based primarily on BiH's strong competitive strengths: its high-quality raw materials, long tradition and international reputation in wood

production and wood-working, and relatively low cost labor.”

Growth of BiH wood sector depends on breaking into world markets. To do so, BiH must adopt a world-class set of national standards governing the export marketing of sustainable harvested timber and wood products. Future of Bih forests depends on it.

Poor protection of forests has been identified in EC Feasibility Study in a sense of the environmental awareness. Combating illegal sawmills – BiH protects its environment.

During his stay in area, the High Representative will visit Textile Company Pavone in Glamoc. Detailed media advisory will be issued during a day.