

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

High Representative Welcomes Completion of First Court of BiH Case into People Smuggling

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today welcomed reports that Court of BiH has passed its first sentence for crimes involving people smuggling on Tuesday. The offence involved bringing Turkish citizens illegally into BiH. Reports indicate that the final destination in these cases were countries in the European Union.

I would now like to read out the reaction of the High Representative:

"I am particularly pleased that this smuggling ring was broken through resolute crime-fighting by the State Border Service and the Office of the BiH Prosecutor. The Court of BiH acted promptly, effectively and independently, and this is a positive development for BiH's reputation in Europe. The effective functioning of the respective BiH institutions, particularly the newly established State Court, shows that BiH can be a full partner in the fight against organised crime and corruption, which often uses BiH as a transit route for smuggling anything from people to drugs and arms. It is also a testimony to the quality of those professionals in the State Court appointed through the HJPC process. Only through this type of action, successfully undertaken by BiH's institutions, will BiH rid itself of the reputation of a criminal space. This in turn is one of the essential pre-requisites for easing visa regimes for BiH citizens travelling abroad."

"We must now ensure that this capability to fight crime

effectively is strengthened in the coming months. This means establishing a single professional intelligence agency and implementing state-level law enforcement, as well as a single, independent High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council – until we do so BiH will simply not be equipped to play its full part as a partner in the war against organised crime and terrorism that threatens the security of us all,”.

High Representative visits Mostar

And the High Representative will be in Mostar on Friday where he will meet the representatives of the political parties involved in the process of the restructuring City of Mostar through the Commission chaired by Mr. Norbert Winterstein. The High Representative underlined that there will be no compromise with the desire of the citizens of Mostar for a single city administration with guaranteed power sharing. The twin principles will be *no parallelism* and *no domination* by one Constituent people over the others. The visit will be part of a process of building support through dialogue and consultation for a solution based on the Winterstein Report.

At the conclusion of his visit, the High Representative will hold a press conference at 12.00 on Friday 09 January 2004 at OHR South – Mostar.

PDHR Visit to Kana

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, will visit Kana Textile Co. in Sarajevo on Monday to meet workers and management. Ambassador Hays will be briefed on Kana's successful progress from a post-war start-up financed by a small amount of money borrowed privately to an export-oriented concern employing 21 people. Ambassador Hays will meet reporters at the conclusion of his visit, when he will lay out the economic reforms which the BiH authorities must implement by the end of June this year if they are to begin negotiating a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU. We'll

be issuing a media advisory with full details.