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

BiH Court War Crimes Chamber Donors Conference in the Hague

An hour or so ago in the Hague the Donor Conference got under way. The conference is aimed at raising international support for the funding of a Specialized Chamber in the Court of BiH which will deal with war crimes.

Experts will present a breakdown of the proposed budget and how the work of the specialized chamber will fit into existing structures.

This process started in 2002 when the HR met with the ICTY President and agreed that developing BiH’s capacity to try war crimes was essential.

Since then detailed discussions have taken place between BiH’s Judicial and Government institutions, the OHR, the ICTY and other international agencies present in BiH. The BiH Ambassador in the Hague, H.E. Zeljko Jerkic, will attend for BiH.

In February (21st) 2003, an OHR / ICTY working group lead by Amb. Fassier and the then ICTY President Claude Jorda assessed that a number of steps had to be made to establish a Special War Crimes Chamber within the BiH State Court, the logical institution for this kind of serious crime.

It was clear that this chamber would need Judges and staff, a War Crimes Department in the Prosecutors Office of BiH, the renovation of facilities, safety and security measures, safety measures, a witness protection program, and State level

detention facilities.

The total cost was estimated at 38 million Euros for the first five years of operation.

The High Representative in October (8th) spoke to the UNSC on the formation of a Specialised Chamber in the BiH Court to deal with war crimes. He said that "there is little point in willing the ends unless we are also prepared to will the means". It is clear that unless majority of the costs for the first two years, estimated at 17.2 million Euro, is assured at today's donor conference it is unlikely this project will get off the ground.

The Conference is organised by the OHR and hosted by the ICTY in the Hague. The members of the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board (Canada, the European Union, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, the Russian Federation, Turkey, the UK and the US), other EU member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and Sweden) and Norway, Switzerland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia have all confirmed their attendance.

There will be a joint OHR/ICTY statement describing the results of the conference at around 17.00 today.

PDHR with Trade Union

Ambassador Hays had a very productive meeting yesterday with BiH Trade Union Confederation President Edhem Biber and representatives of the Confederation's affiliate trades union. Ambassador Hays noted that the privatisation that has so far taken place in BiH has failed to generate the volumes of inward investment and expertise that can revive business and establish the conditions for companies to expand their operations and create new jobs. The governments are now engaged in a concerted and serious effort to relaunch the

privatisation process – the privatisation Working Group brings together all the relevant parties and is forging a path forward past the obstacles that have bedevilled privatisation till now. The Principal Deputy High Representative urged the unions to monitor and cajole the authorities to move ahead with correct privatisation that reinvigorates companies and leads to job growth. There will be new jobs only after tough decisions are made and real transition starts to be achieved – so the unions must pressure governments to get on with the process seriously and systematically, and monitor the governments' performance. The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, will visit the districts of Petrovo and Gracanica, near Doboj, on Friday morning, and Banja Luka on Friday afternoon. The focus of Ambassador Hays' visit to of Petrovo and Gracanica is the launch of OHR's "Agriculture and Profit" campaign and in Banja Luka PDHR Hays and Prime Minister Mikerevic will take part in a debate with students.