

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

Scheffer and Solana visit Sarajevo

NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and Javier Solana, the Secretary General of the Council of the EU and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, will visit Sarajevo on Thursday for talks with the BiH Presidency and Council of Ministers and representatives of the International Community, including High Representative Paddy Ashdown, COMSFOR Major General Virgil L. Packett II and EUPM Police Commissioner Kevin Carty.

Mr de Hoop Scheffer and Mr Solana are visiting BiH in order to discuss details of the changeover, at the end of this year, from SFOR to EUFOR.

As you know, the UN Security Council has just extended SFOR's mandate until the end of the year, noting at the same time that EUFOR will take over in the New Year. This is in line with the comprehensive policy on security for BiH adopted by the European Council on 17-18 June 2004.

There will be a press conference at the OHR at 14.30 on Thursday and then another press event at the EUPM Headquarters, starting at 15.25. We will be issuing details about all the media opportunities in a media advisory in due course.

SDHR Fassier on Round Table

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Bernard Fassier, is

taking part this morning in a roundtable in Sarajevo organized by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. The roundtable will analyze the negative impact which the continued liberty of indicted war criminals is having on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ambassador Fassier will reiterate BiH's obligation to cooperate fully with the ICTY. Nine years after the war, the two most wanted indictees, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, remain at large, blocking BiH's path toward European integration. BiH has not been invited to join NATO's PfP programme because of its failure to respect international law. It will not be invited to join PfP until this is fixed. Likewise, failure to cooperate fully with the ICTY is bedeviling BiH's efforts to meet the criteria set out in the EC's Feasibility Study for BiH to begin Stabilization and Association talks with the EU. There is too a fundamental issue of justice – in a country governed by the rule of law, the law simply cannot be flouted. Those accused of crimes must stand trial.

Monthly Economic newsletter

I have brought along copies of OHR's monthly economic report. This report brings together monthly figures that offer a snapshot of the BiH economy. This month's report shows that BiH's financial position – the strength of its currency and banking sector – continues strong, which is a basic prerequisite for economic growth. However, employment growth is sluggish and the trade figures continue to run at a deficit.