

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Kevin Sullivan

OSCE, Aida Besic

EUFOR, Karen Halsey

OHR

OHR Welcomes Public Debate on Parliamentarians' Salaries

Members of the BiH Parliament have submitted legislation for debate which would increase their benefits and pensions.

In the past the OHR has warned when legislation like this has been unaffordable and unacceptable. OHR welcomes the fact that this debate is now being taken on by the media and the NGO sector.

It is understandable that there is considerable popular outrage about a proposed salary hike – as the salaries of ordinary workers, and the benefits paid to those who are unemployed have not been the subject of comparable parliamentary proposals for substantial increases.

The gist of public comment has been that parliamentarians clearly have to be paid at a level that is appropriate to the importance and the demands of their work – but this isn't a license to give themselves a salary increase.

The BiH Ministry of Finance is now preparing a Salary Law, which will rationalize salaries paid to BiH parliamentarians and civil servants and bring these into line with salaries paid by the Entities and Brcko. The guiding principal of this

Law will be that parliamentarians cannot pay themselves from funds that don't exist, and that those funds that do exist must be allocated in the most productive way, with the interests of citizens as the guiding criteria.

The OHR urges parliamentarians to debate and enact the Salary Law before the October elections. Parliamentarians should focus their energies on this law – which is comprehensive and equitable – rather than on legislation designed principally to give themselves more money.

Plans are being prepared to draw down the OHR with its Bonn Powers by the middle of next year. This is an election year and it will be the electorate that will be in a position to censure this initiative in just a few months.

OSCE

Beacon Scheme Award Ceremony is to be held tomorrow in Sarajevo

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is pleased to announce the winners of the Beacon Scheme at the Award Ceremony to take place tomorrow, Wednesday, 05 April 2006, in the UNITIC Business Centre amphitheatre in Sarajevo.

The BiH Beacon Scheme is designed to raise standards in municipal governance by recognising excellence and supporting the dissemination of best practices throughout the country. The Beacon Scheme Award Ceremony marks the beginning of the dissemination phase and during the next twelve months six Beacon Municipalities will share their experiences and best practice with other municipalities. The second round of the Scheme and the broad themes for 2006-2007 will also be announced during the Award Ceremony.

The Scheme was developed as a result of collaboration between

the OSCE Mission to BiH, Council of Europe, Associations of Towns and Municipalities of Republika Srpska, Brcko District and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and receives financial support from the British and Swiss governments.

The press conference is scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday, 05 April 2006, at 12:15, Fra Andjela Zvizdovica 1, Unitic Business Centre amphitheatre, Sarajevo.

EUFOR

No statement.