

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

I have a couple of points for you this morning but let me clarify some media reporting right off.

It was reported last night that the HR would be in Foca tomorrow. The HR is not visiting Foca but he has welcomed the lifting of the Lautenberg Sanctions on this municipality.

High Representative Hails Lifting of Lautenberg Sanctions on Foca

The High Representative has said, "This is an indication of a change in the Municipality and confirms that the application of strict conditionality can have a positive effect. Moreover the lifting of this sanction shows that making progress has benefits; an important signal for those municipalities in the RS that remain under the 'Lautenberg' sanction, and for the RS as a whole with regard its particular responsibility for improving co-operation with the ICTY" – end quote.

Parliamentarians Act to Improve Legal and Human Rights Protection

The OHR welcomes the adoption of two pieces of legislation which yesterday finally passed through the Parliamentary process, which will strengthen the rule of Law and Human Rights, confirm BiH's commitment to its international

obligations, and push BiH further down the road to EU integration.

The FBiH House of Representatives adopted the Law on Minor Offences of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This will modernise the way in which BiH deals with minor offences and is a key element in consolidating the Rule of Law in BiH. Minor offences will now be dealt with by the courts in a faster and more efficient way.

The current 71 Minor Offence Courts in BiH will be incorporated in existing Municipal and Basic Courts as Minor Offence Departments. This means that the savings can be used to improve the court system as a whole.

The adoption of this legislation opens the way for the HJPC to begin the process of reappointing judges dealing with minor offences.

The Council of Europe has said this legislation meets the requirements of the European Convention on Human Rights and the practice of the European Court of Human Rights.

(The House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament adopted the same Law on 07 March 2006)

Secondly, the BiH HoP yesterday adopted the Law on changes and amendments to the Law on Ombudsman for Human Rights of BiH.

The Law provides for the merger of the Entity Ombudsman Offices at the State level.

This institution is a key safeguard for citizens' rights.

This legislation is part of the post-accession criteria following BiH's accession to the CoE, and as such is an SAA requirement that has now been met.

EUFOR

No statement.