

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Kevin Sullivan

OSCE, Aida Besic

EUPM, Zinaida Ilaria

EUFOR, Jem Thomas

OHR

BiH on the Threshold of a Euro-Atlantic Future

The OHR urges delegates in the BiH House of Peoples to support the EC-approved political agreement on police reform and vote in favour of its passage today. Approval by the HoP of the agreement – without any amendment – will help clear the way for Stabilisation and Association talks to begin.

This agreement will provide the people of BiH with policing based on the three principles laid down by the European Commission. It will make BiH's policing more effective and co-ordinated in the fight against the growing problem of crime.

It is the last major reform before BiH begins a strategic change, from post-war stabilization on the one hand and transition towards Europe on the other.

It is part and parcel of putting BiH irreversibly on course to effective statehood, and onto the path that leads to the EU and NATO. From here on in, BiH has a clear view of where it is going and what has to be done in order to get there.

It is well worth emphasising that no country that has embarked on the road to Europe through a contractual relationship with

the Union has yet failed to complete the journey towards full membership.

In the context of the imminent launch of SAA talks and BiH's deepening relationship with NATO, the scaling back of the role of the OHR also becomes possible – another clear indication that BiH is moving into a new era.

What remains now is for the BiH HoP to adopt the text of the agreement as it stands, without any amendments.

Procedurally, the European Commission will require a certain amount of time to prepare a positive recommendation to the European Council, but it is possible for this to happen before the end of this year.

New Business Legislation Needed to Attract Investment, Create Jobs

As you know, a roundtable has been organized in Banja Luka this afternoon to discuss the draft legislation that has been prepared, in conjunction with the German development agency, GTZ, to replace the Federation, RS and Brcko Laws on Obligations. Today's roundtable is part of an important public consultation process ahead of parliamentary debate, which we hope will take place before the end of this year.

The existing laws on obligations are out of date and have contributed to the fragmentation of the BiH economy. This has driven away the kind of inward investment that is needed in order to create new jobs – so it must be fixed. OHR therefore urges all stakeholders to engage in the public consultation. This legislation is a crucial element in improving BiH's business environment. The sooner it is enacted, the sooner benefit can be expected in terms of investment and jobs.

Ambassador Douglas Davidson Addresses the FBiH House of People

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina , will address the Federation of BiH House of Peoples' special session focused on education today.

Ambassador Davidson will highlight the urgent need to remove politics from education. He will also use the opportunity to remind the lawmakers that, although it has been two years since the BiH Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, the observance of the essential tenets of this law is in many areas still lacking.

Reiterating the call by the Peace Implementation Council, Ambassador Davidson will stress the need to overcome the remaining hurdles to the reform of education in line with European standards and with the international commitments freely undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina . He will also call for the establishment of an effective mechanism at the state level to co-ordinate education, in order to enable the country to meet those standards and honour those commitments. An important and urgent first step in this direction is the establishment of the state-level education agency.

On this note, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina wishes to commend and support the BiH Union of Elementary Education in its calls for a state-level agency. It is precisely this type of advocacy by citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina that will be necessary if the reform of education in this country is to proceed and changes are to be made that will provide better prospects for BiH's future generations.

Meeting on Regional Co-operation in War Crimes

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina together with the missions to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro and in co-operation with the BiH State Court will host a two-day expert level meeting on regional co-operation in war crimes

proceedings in Mostar starting tomorrow.

This meeting is a continuation of the Palic process that started last November and that aims at finding solutions to obstacles encountered by judges and prosecutors in their efforts to ensure effective prosecution and fair trial of alleged war criminals.

EUPM

The European Union Police Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in co-operation with the BiH law enforcement agencies has recently finalized and published a so called "Charter of Public Information."

The Charter is addressed to the citizens of BiH. It describes the role of the police in a modern democratic society and informs the citizens of their rights and duties vis-à-vis the police and which mechanisms they have at their disposal to hold the police accountable.

This project is a component of a broader community policing programme, jointly implemented by EUPM and local partners across Bosnia and Herzegovina . Its overall objectives are to improve the relationship between police and community, to increase the level of transparency of police activity and to ensure a climate of personal and public safety.

The Charter can be found in foyer areas of all police stations across the country and can also be downloaded from the EUPM website www.eupm.org.

EUFOR

No statement.

RTQs:

Fedzad Forto, FENA:

Kevin, please, regarding these events surrounding the name of Sarajevo airport I would agree with the OHR's stance that that decision was a political mistake. But, according to the officials from the SDA party you gave a green light for that decision two months ago. So what happened in this time? The second question is how can you tolerate the names of some other streets or bridges named after some pronounced war criminals like Jure Francetić, Mile Budak, Hakija Hadžić, Draža Mihajlović, etc?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

Regarding a green light I should emphasize that the High Representative made it very clear to Mr. Tihić that this proposed course of action was unwise and that was the message that was sent and the High Representative's subsequent action is consistent with that. Vis a vis the issue of airports versus streets and squares and so on, as the decision makes clear there is a distinction between an international airport and everything else. When you learn that an international airport, the name of that airport, sends a message about the country as a whole and it's this distinction that the decision recognizes and addresses.

Nenad Glušica, NTV Studio 99:

Mr. Sullivan, I have a similar question. How do you comment the statement made by the president of the SDA party (Party of Democratic Action) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Sulejman Tihić, that due to these actions the High Representative has lost the support of the SDA party of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

Well, the High Representative acted for very clearly stated

reasons and what the motive for any act of this sort is the interest of Bosnia and Herzegovina , which have been laid out in the decision and beyond that I don't think that it's useful to comment.

Branka Kusmuk, RTRS:

A question for the OHR. Regarding the Lukić case, have you received the information you requested from the government of Republica Srpska and if you have, are you satisfied with it?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

Well, the RS government has clear steps which it has to undertake and these involve complying with commitments that it has made to replace the Board of the Faculty, to ensure that any salary payments that have been made to Mr. Lukić are recovered and to ensure, and this is very important, that the interests of students are met because Mr. Lukić is not an authorized teacher and therefore does not have the authority to give courses or to set or adjudicate exams, and therefore these steps have to be taken and that is what the OHR requires of the RS government. These provisions have been made clear to the government and OHR expects the government to carry them out. Beyond that I wouldn't develop.

Branka Kusmuk, RTRS:

I apologize, correct me if I'm wrong, but wasn't today the deadline for the government to deliver certain information, and has the government done so?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

The process as you say is still underway and at a point where it's not been completed within the time laid down. We will certainly comment, but we haven't reached that point yet.