

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

Third Anniversary: HR's Mandate from 27 May 2002 to Today

On his first day as High Representative Paddy Ashdown identified his primary aim as "putting BiH irreversibly on the path to statehood and on the road to Europe."

That has been the focus of the last three years – and substantial and steady progress has been made. BiH has now moved decisively away from the era of Dayton to the era of Brussels .

EU integration is now the defining context of political debate in BiH – a far cry from the arid nationalism that still prevailed three years ago.

The High Representative has said that his overriding aim for the rest of the year is for BiH to adopt the reforms that are necessary for the country to start negotiations for an SAA agreement, and to secure a position for BiH in NATO's PfP program. That will require a political agreement on police reform, as well as significant progress on defense reform. It will also mean continued cooperation with the ICTY, including the transfer of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic to The Hague

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But progress towards EU and NATO accession progress will depend upon the willingness of politicians in BiH to adopt the reforms that necessary reforms. Only by assuming responsibility for driving through strategic reforms such as police and defense reform will they succeed in taking BiH into the EU and NATO.

The speed and the ability of BiH's institutions to adopt and implement reforms will also help determine the future shape and size of international presence in the country. The sooner reforms are undertaken, the sooner the international presence in the country will shift from being lead by the HR to being lead by the EU.

This process has already begun. The number of HR's impositions has been reduced dramatically. Significantly, the process of regularizing status of removed individuals has begun.

Over the past three years, an institutional framework for a functioning sovereign state has been extended. Key areas of reform are:

- Reform of the judiciary. The HJPC, Court of BiH, Commercial Chambers and the War Crimes Chamber are all operational.
- State level intelligence, border service and information and protection agencies have been established and are operational.
- A state level tax collecting authority has been set up. This will enable BiH to borrow on the international capital markets as a sovereign state
- Mostar's city administration has been unified.
- Special Audits have exposed abuse of public companies; package of corporate governance legislation has tackled this key area of economic life.
- CoM expanded from six Ministries in 2002 to ten

Ministeries today.

Defense Reform is also well advanced; Police Reform is likewise advanced, pending resolution of political issues.

Clearly, none of the broad legislative agenda that has been enacted will have any impact if the laws are not implemented.

Implementation lags well behind, which is why reforms have not yet translated into tangible improvements in the standard of living.

But a huge amount of the groundwork has been done. The framework for comprehensive and effective implementation is now in place.

OSCE

OSCE Ambassadors to pay visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina

A delegation of four ambassadors to the Organization for Security and Cooperation to Europe will pay a visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina between 28 and 30 May 2005.

Diplomats from Ireland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Spain, will meet with BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic, High Representative Ashdown, EUPM Commissioner Kevin Carty as well as the representatives from various non-governmental organizations from BiH. The delegation will also visit Mostar to meet Richard Williams, MIU Director and OHR Regional Office in Mostar.

This visit is part of a regional trip to familiarize delegations with OSCE's field work. It is an excellent opportunity for the OSCE's 55 participating states to see the OSCE's work in action. The OSCE's strength is rooted in its field work, where it puts into practice efforts to promote long lasting stability.

From BiH, the delegation will move on to Podgorica, Serbia and Montenegro.

EUPM

No statement.

EUFOR

Moja BiH Band Competition

The run up to this very successful band competition sponsored by EUFOR will culminate in the final to be held outdoors at FIS Sarajevo, on the evening of Saturday, 28 May 2005 between 20:30 and 22:00 hrs.

The event will be broadcast live on Television with the highlights retransmitted at a later date.

The Press are invited to attend what is anticipated to be a truly spectacular and emorable event.

Entrance to the final of the Moja BiH Band Competition will be free.

NATO

No statement.