

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

Vlasic Negotiations

The Vlasic negotiations are scheduled to go on until 27, with a possibility of them running into the morning of the 28th. Our expectations are to find a political solution that adheres to the EU's three principles. The participants have agreed not to comment on the outcome of Vlasic talks now – since that would influence ongoing talks.

OSCE

OSCE Mission to BiH 7th Education Forum successfully completed

Over 500 people from across BiH participated in the 7th Education Forum this past Saturday, 23 April in Sarajevo . Building on the recommendations presented by over 500 participants of the 3 mini-forums held across the country between 12-15 April students, parents, teachers, education experts as well as officials from Cantonal, Entity and State government discussed the future of BiH's fragmented education system. Those recommendations are available on our website and

will be form the basis for continued discussions in the future.

The OSCE's Mission to BiH recently published report "Raising Debate: Is BiH living up to its international obligations in the field of education" provided a good backdrop for the event—with participants seeking to answer some of the questions the report raises about the state's capacity to implement reform internally and ensure respect for commitments in education such as ensuring an accessible, acceptable and effective education for all citizens.

While positions on how to move forward on this differ, there is general agreement that the current structure is not working and more needs to be done to improve the state of education in BiH. The OSCE Mission to BiH looks forward to working with students, parents, teachers, education experts and local authorities in agreeing upon sustainable solutions, but would like highlight once again that these solutions must be articulated and ultimately implemented by the citizens of BiH.

OSCE's Mission to BiH ceremony honouring the successful completion of COPI project

Representatives from 27 municipalities and non-governmental organisations throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina will receive Certificates of Recognition for the successful completion of the OSCE Mission to BiH Citizen Outreach and Participation Initiative (COPI) project, funded by the British Government, tomorrow, 27 April 2005, beginning at 1200 hrs, at the UNITIC amphitheatre, Fra Andjela Zvizdovica 1, Sarajevo.

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, and Ms. Kate Knight-Sands, Deputy Head of the British Embassy in Sarajevo , will deliver opening remarks, address the project graduates and hand over the certificates.

This project was implemented through six interactive workshops in Sarajevo , Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka , involving 27

municipalities throughout BiH. COPI initiative has led to concrete outcomes in each of the municipalities. This project has promoted the importance of co-operation between local government and citizens through the implementation of joint initiatives to bring sustainable benefits to their communities. It aimed at strengthening democratic governance through regular and more frequent communication between government and citizens in the decision-making process.

A particular focus was put on the local levels of government, where political processes most closely touch the lives of citizens; the environment, youth participation, improving access to information and promotion of gender equality.

EUPM

BiH Law enforcement Bodies to strengthen cooperation on missing persons

The Head of the European Union Police Mission, Commissioner Kevin Carty, met yesterday with ICMP Chairman James Kimsey, Director of FBiH Police, Mr. Zlatko Miletic, Deputy State Prosecutor, Mr. Vaso Marinkovic, representative of SIPA, Mr. Andjelko Hrgic and representative of the RS police, Ms. Dragica Djukic, to discuss resolution of the missing persons issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The participants discussed on how cooperation between the relevant law enforcement bodies in BiH and the ICMP can be improved. It was agreed that a working group be formed that would coordinate signing of a Memorandum of Understanding. The MoU would serve as a tool for development of professional and efficient cooperation and exchange of information between the law enforcement agencies, the ICMP and the Missing Persons Institute of BiH, which will be set up by the BiH authorities in the near future.

Commissioner Carty offered EUPM's assistance in coordinating the set up of the working group and signing of the memorandum. Mr. Kimsey was pleased with the end result of the meeting and thanked all participants for making an effort to take a step forward in creating a sustainable process of resolving the missing persons issues in BiH..

EUFOR

No statement.

NATO

Yesterday NATO conducted search operations at two locations in Pale. Both properties were owned by Mr. @eljko Maljukan. In our Press Release we stated that our investigation led to seizure of a quantity of illegal arms and ordnance for which Mr. Maljukan was arrested by the Republika Srpska Police.

I can now give you more details of that seizure. It consisted of approximately 10.000 rounds of 7.62 mm armour piercing ammunition, about 8 rifle grenades, a quantity of mortar rounds, smoke grenades and approximately 3.000 rounds of various ammunition. The investigation is now in the hands of the RS Police.

Following the meeting of the Defence Reform Commission tomorrow, Wednesday 27 April, a special Press Conference will be held. The Press Conference will be held at the UNITIC Towers, Tower A, on the 19th floor at 16:30 hrs. All media are invited. A Press Release will be issued later today to confirm these arrangements.

RTQs

Nedim Dervić, Reuters: It's not a proper question but rather a plea for all of you, especially NATO and EUFOR to try and better coordinate what is being said to media, cause we had a very very difficult situation yesterday where two groups of media kept receiving two different sets of information what you were doing there and still you didn't say anything about this operation as to leading to Mladić, while your colleague, you know. In situations like this, in stories like this, very sensitive and important, if you speak on the record at least to coordinate what you are saying, otherwise you are putting some of us at disadvantage. This time and others, next time. Thank you.

Derek Chappell, NATO: Okay, if I could reply to that. I think yesterday we actually coordinated our messages quite well. Major Mood, the former spokesman was actually on scene with the military authorities, with the RS police, at the scene of the raid in Pale. He was in both locations, he gave interviews and he gave comments to press that went to the scene. I was at the NATO base and I was in telephone contact throughout the day with Major Mood and with EUFOR. Our lines were consistent, we gave information as it developed during the day. You have to realize that these operations are fluid. We performed one operation, which led to a second operation, which led to a weapon seizure, and as that information developed it was released to the media, as it was confirmed and as it was appropriate. And that was followed up with a press release at the end of the day that summarized everything we were able to say. So I take your point about coordination, but I don't think yesterday's is a subject for which we should be criticized. There is much speculation in the media about who this man was and what his linkage was to certain wanted persons. We did not confirm that, we never do. If we do a search we do not link it to an individual. That is my reply.

Zdravko Ljubas, DPA: Can you just clarify who was arrested, because NATO statement said it was Željko Maljukan while the Republika Srpska police said it was his father Danilo. So who is in jail now?

Derek Chappell, NATO: The person that was arrested was Mr. Željko Maljukan. He was the owner of the business in which a quantity of illegal weapons and ordinance were discovered. Those weapons have been seized and as I said this is now a law enforcement issue, not a NATO issue, and it is the RS police that will pursue this.

OHR: If there are no more questions, thank you very much for coming.