

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

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OHR

OHR Transfers Competencies to the Domestic Authorities

The mayors of Zepce and Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje municipalities were informed yesterday of the High Representative's Decision bringing an end the International Community supervisory regimes in their municipalities.

The High Representative noted that OHR has endeavoured over the past several years to facilitate the integration and smooth functioning of these once-divided municipalities. The supervisory regimes put in place in 2000 for Zepce and 2001 for Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje have helped both municipalities to make substantial progress in representing all citizens and providing them with better governance. With this, the time has come to transfer both real and titular responsibility for good governance in both towns to the local authorities.

"The overall objective has been to reunite divided municipalities, dismantling parallel administrative structures and integrating all public utilities and other service companies in each municipality. Over the past three years, this objective has been very largely achieved," the High Representative said.

You'll find more details in a press release, which will you can pick up on your way out.

CoM Session Today

OHR welcomes the fact that the CoM is meeting. There is a huge amount of work for the CoM to do. Seven laws still have to be adopted and sent to Parliament for enactment if BiH is to fulfil the requirements of the EC's Feasibility Study. These laws include the Law on Public Broadcasting System, which will be discussed and should be adopted at today's meeting. I draw attention to this law particularly because it will enable the creation of a financially and editorially independent public broadcasting system, which will give better value for public money. Another of the laws still waiting adoption by the CoM is the Law on Competition, which is a key element in creating a business climate in BiH that can attract investors who will create jobs.

What the CoM has to do now is concentrate on its core tasks – drafting, debating and sending legislation to Parliament. This is the only way it can make a positive difference to the lives of citizens.

HR Tolerance Speech

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will be speaking this evening at the opening of an exhibition on tolerance, at the National Museum . The exhibition has been organized by the Council of Europe and a number of other organizations, including the National Museum , the Banja Luka and Sarajevo Academies of Fine Art, and the Sarajevo Architecture faculty. It will be opened by Prime Minister Terzic.

In his remarks, the High Representative will focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina 's long tradition of tolerance – which has been the rule rather than the exception for most of this country's history. This is a tradition from which other countries in Europe can learn.

I've brought along copies of the speech. As usual, please check against delivery.

High Representative meets ICTY Chief Prosecutor

As you are all probably aware, the High Representative will meet later this afternoon with the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla del Ponte. We are planning a short press opportunity and should be in a position to confirm the time in the next hour or so.

OSCE

OSCE, UNHCR and EC pledge support for regional return in South Eastern Europe

The principals of the European Commission (EC), OSCE and UNHCR from Bosnia and Herzegovina reiterated their support for the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina , Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro in their efforts to enable refugee return in the region, and thus fulfil their responsibilities to the Dayton Peace Accord, at a conference held in Sarajevo yesterday.

Participating in the Regional Ministerial Conference, hosted by BiH Prime Minister Adnan Terzic, international community representatives were encouraged by the willingness of the three governments to openly discuss achievements and the outstanding challenges to conclusively tackle the remaining population displacement between these three countries.

"Even though we recognise the enormous progress that has been achieved over the past nine years in stabilizing population movements in the region, we must not forget that over 300,000 refugees are still seeking durable solutions in the region", said Udo Janz UNHCR's Representative in BiH. "It must be our common goal to tackle the outstanding obstacles for refugees to return to their original pre-war habitat in safety and in dignity", concluded Janz.

“The Declaration that was signed yesterday by the Ministers of the three countries is a step in the right direction. It allows the three countries to come to a mutual agreement on how to resolve outstanding issues on refugee return”, said Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH.

UNHCR, EC and OSCE underline the importance of proceeding with the implementation of the Declaration adopted yesterday, within the timeframe agreed, and look forward to continuing our involvement

EUPM

One of the key issues in the coming days will be the reaction to the announcement on a single structure of police, 9+1, as announced yesterday by the EU High Representative. EUPM will be closely following such reactions as they are related to issues of policing in BiH. Now that decision on single police structure in BiH has been announced the next stage will be the process of discussion and debate. To contribute that process EUPM will join with our colleagues at the OHR and the EC to insure that the public and the police in BiH are informed about the new structure and all that it means. The coming weeks and months therefore we will see a consistent public information campaign. EUPM's role in that will be especially to insure that the police officers, policemen and policewomen of BiH at all levels are advised and kept informed what a new police structure means. That public information campaign will take several months and will contribute to better information across all parts of society of BiH and ready for new effective police structure in BiH

EUFOR

No formal press statement.

NATO

This Wednesday, 2 February, marks a very significant day for

NATO Headquarters Sarajevo (NHQSa) as it is NATO Advisory Team (NAT) officially moves from Camp Butmir to offices next to the BiH Ministry of Defence in downtown Sarajevo.

NHQSa is very pleased to be able to work with the BiH Ministry of Defence in a common effort to further defence reform. This is seen in both the policy realm of the DRC, co-chaired by BiH Minister of Defence Radovanovic and NATO co-chair Dr. Gregorian and in the detailed interaction between the NAT, BiH Ministry of Defence and AFBiH Joint Staff. The NAT, with its team of NATO subject experts as well as other resources such as lawyers and interpreters, will in this new location be able to work in even closer co-operation with BiH officials and military to assist BiH in reaching its goal of NATO membership.

BiH Minister of Defence Radovanovic and Brigadier General Schook, NHQSa Commander, will be the speakers at the ceremonial opening of the NAT offices at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday in "At Mejdan Park" in downtown Sarajevo.

RTQs

Nick Hawten, BBC Correspondent.

Q: What is OHR doing to resolve the political crises in BiH at the moment? Would NATO welcome the return of the so-called Algerians from Guantanamo Bay?

OHR:

I just mentioned in my statement today that we welcomed the fact that Council of Ministers is meeting again today. I think that the High Representative has also made statements to the extent of the fact that OHR, and he himself welcomed the fact that, if there was a crisis, then it has been resolved by the institutions themselves. So really I guess that is a question

you should direct to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

NATO:

We have no response on "Algerians". Not this time.

Nick Hawten, BBC Correspondent.

If should they return to Bosnia you have got no security concerns about them.

NATO:

Of course there are security concerns but those will be addressed at the appropriate time.