

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 20 March 2003

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 10:30 hours on Thursday 20 March 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Mario Brkic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HR visit to Mostar• Audit of FBiH Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OSCE commends the important progress made at meetings this week• OSCE applauds the progress made this week by educational authorities• Audit findings
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• EUPM Commissioner on the road• EUPM Commissioner in Banja Luka
d. UNHCR	Majda Prljaca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Statement.
e. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operations in Iraq to have no impact on SFOR mission in BIH

2. Twenty-seven members of the media including four television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

Mario Brkic – OHR

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown will visit Mostar tomorrow. During his visit the HR will meet with the Mostar Mayor, Hamdija Jahic, and newly elected Mostar Deputy Mayor, Ljubo Beslic. After that the High Representative will meet with the City Council members. More details to follow during the day in MA that will be issued.

The Special Auditor for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska this week completed an audit of the FBiH Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons.

The findings and recommendations of this audit will be presented at a special press conference by the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, Bosnia and Herzegovina's Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Mirsad Kebo, Senior Deputy High Representative, Gerhard Enver Schrömbgens, and other representatives of the IC today at 12.00 at the OHR in Sarajevo.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

The OSCE commends the important progress made at meetings this week of the Co-ordination Board for the Implementation of the Interim Agreement on Returnee Children and the newly-established Common Core Curriculum Steering Board to address issues including school names and symbols and common core curriculum.

The establishment of a Commission to develop criteria for school names and symbols was agreed to at a meeting of the Co-ordination Board in Banja Luka on Tuesday March 18. The Board, which consists of representatives from ministries of education and pedagogical institutions, decided that ministries must now appoint representatives to the Commission

with the goal that only appropriate school names and symbols will greet children as they begin the next school year in September.

Representatives of the Co-ordination Board also agreed to a draft instruction on harmonisation of the national composition of school boards. The instruction provides that in all schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the returnee students are 10% or more of the total number of students in school, that should be reflected in the composition of existing school boards.

The first meeting of the Common Core Curriculum Steering Board took place on Wednesday March 19 in Sarajevo and was attended by appointees from the RS and Federation education ministries plus Brcko, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the International Community. This Steering Board was set up following the 5 March 2003 Education Ministers' Meeting in order to create a broad common core curricula and syllabi for all subjects. At the meeting, the Steering Board discussed and agreed on working methods to establish and oversee the work of subject specific working groups, which will harmonise curricula by the end of July 2003.

The OSCE applauds the progress made this week by educational authorities. By addressing the issue of inappropriate school names and symbols and by defining and overseeing work on a common core curriculum, these Boards will help ensure one of the overriding objectives of the Education Reform Strategy—that children have greater access to all schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the start of the 2003/2004 school year.

Strengthening parliamentary oversight of government activities to back up audit findings, is the objective of a seminar held this week by the OSCE mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in co-operation with the Swedish National Audit Office. The seminar aims to ensure that government takes steps to correct deviations from good management of public funds and to prevent

mismanagement in the future.

This builds on the work carried out by the OSCE and the Swedish National Audit Office with Bosnia and Herzegovina parliaments during the previous parliamentary mandate. During the seminar, the Finance and Budget Committee representatives from all three parliaments will finalise a written guide for committees setting out the procedures for scrutinising the Audit Office reports. The role of the Supreme Audit Institutions and their relationship to parliament is also addressed.

Participants include representatives of the Finance and Budget Committees of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly, the Federation Parliament and the Republika Srpska National Assembly, as well as of the Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Federation Audit Offices. The Chair of the Finnish Parliament Budget and Finance Committee is leading the seminar.

Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

The EUPM Commissioner, Sven Frederiksen has been meeting with police and municipal authorities in several main locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the recent days, stressing the importance of bringing law enforcement forward towards European standard levels in this country. On Tuesday, the Commissioner was in Tuzla and Bijeljina, yesterday, he met with police chiefs in Brcko, Orasje and Dobojo, and today, the EUPM commissioner will be in Banja Luka.

These important visits render insight into the actual law enforcement situation in the co-locations, where EUPM officers are monitoring the performance of the Bosnia and Herzegovina police. The meetings also facilitate a direct contact between the EUPM Commissioner and the police chiefs, responsible for moving the Bosnia and Herzegovina police forward. After the latest series of visits, I can share with you some of the most

common assessments.

i) The security situation can be considered stable, although, there is still considerable room for improvement. Here, however, key issues of concern remain the security of returnees, and the fact that there are too many unexploded ordnance and weapons around in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

ii) In border areas, the cooperation between the SBS and the local police must be improved out in the field. The EUPM will be able to report on positive progress in this matter shortly.

iii) The local citizens are still, to some extent wary of their police forces and mutual trust must be established through outreach approaches. This is also a learning process for the citizens, who should seek more contact with the police if they have security problems. For example, making use of hotlines established for the benefit of the public will increase the information flow to the local police.

iv) In most places visited, the EUPM observed a cordial relationship between the police and the media. The EUPM will continue to monitor further development in these matters, that is, that the media receives information on investigations, that nevertheless does not jeopardise the pertaining cases, in a timely manner.

Apart from making assessment like these, the EUPM Commissioner conveyed a strong message to the police chiefs, he met, on political interference into law enforcement. This message is simple and clear, politics and operational police work should be held separate. The EUPM will monitor further progress regarding this particular issue, which is of course of utmost importance, in order to increase the trust of the local citizens in their police forces.

Today, Thursday 20 March, EUPM Commissioner, Sven Frederiksen, will discuss the security situation in Banja Luka PSC and the progress of the police. He will meet with the local police chief and the PSC police chief in Banja Luka and will also discuss the Rule of Law with Republika Srpska police director Mr. Njegus.

The EUPM Commissioner will meet with the media at the Banja Luka PSC at 12:40 today.

Majda Prljaca – UNHCR

No statement.

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

Good morning, I have one point for you today.

The operations currently taking place in Iraq in no way impact the SFOR mission here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our force composition, mandate and operations are unchanged. We remain one hundred percent committed to and focused on supporting the development and progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina by maintaining a safe and secure environment.

As part of our normal operations, we maintain a constant vigilant watch over the state of security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We identify threats to security and react accordingly. We will carry on in this manner and take all measures necessary to safeguard the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thank you.

Questions and Answers

Q: Forto Fenad – FENA

This question is for the EUPM: Can you give us any

information about what you are doing to catch the perpetrators in the Djindjic case?

A: Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

I have the same information as you. A couple of days back there were operations in Pale when police were searching for the perpetrators and there's been some activity at the Sarajevo Airport, where SPS has intensified efforts because there were rumours about them travelling through Sarajevo. That was a couple of day ago and now I expect that we will see maybe raids or see stories about these suspected suspects being in Republika Srpska in the next few days. But I have nothing concrete on the raid more than you have; they have not been found. I can tell you that just for coincidence that the suspects are being sought very wide regionally. So you maybe know come from Iceland and there was a report that's in my media yesterday they were looking for perpetrators landing in Rajlovic. So, I mean, everybody's looking.