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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 26 September 2002**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 26 September 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	• Letter sent by the HR to approx. 1,5 million households in BiH. • HR meeting with Javier Solana. • PDHR visits in Sarajevo.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Head of mission visits Central Counting Centre. • Continuing efforts to get Roma to vote. • PLIP Agencies launch new strategic direction. • Reminder of the youth conference.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• Update on certification of police officers.
d. IJC	Sanela Tunovic	• Office of the Disciplinary Prosecutor begins operating • Open competition for posts in the court of FBIH. • Extension of the programme for the return of judges and prosecutors to minority areas.

e. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	• Trial of Slobodan Milosevic continues today. • The motion to have SFOR Commander General Sylvester subpoenaed in the Krajisnik trial is withdrawn.
d. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	• No statement.

2. Twenty-two members of the media and three television crews attended the conference.

3. There were no questions and answers.

C. Barraud
Lt. Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Patrik Volf – OHR

Good morning everybody and welcome to our press conference. I have just one item and two announcements.

Firstly, I would like to draw your attention to a letter sent by the High Representative Paddy Ashdown, to roughly 1,5 million households in Bosnia and Herzegovina, today. The first copies reached their destinations yesterday, and the rest will be delivered in the coming days. Examples of the letter are outside.

The High Representative in his letter encourages the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to exercise their right to vote in the upcoming elections, he has said that the greatest danger to these elections is a low turn out in voters. These elections, for many reasons, are of crucial importance.

They are the first ones organised by Bosnia and Herzegovina itself; people are electing their representatives for a full

term this time, four years. They will pave the way for further reform and Bosnia and Herzegovina's way into Europe

I quote from the letter. "In the heat of an election campaign it is easy to forget the enormous progress Bosnia and Herzegovina has made in recent years. But, there is so much still to do. Whether or not your next government succeeds in delivering jobs, in tackling corruption and building a more prosperous country, depends on how you vote in these elections. It is easy to get frustrated with elections. But, they do matter and these elections matter more than ever. In the past, you have voted for governments for a year, or two years at the most. This time you will be choosing leaders for the next four years. The fate of your children and your grandchildren will be decided during that time. Those elected on, 5 October, will decide whether Bosnia and Herzegovina reforms and joins Europe, or whether it stays as it is, as the rest of Europe passes it by. The choice that we face is clear. Reform or fail. In reality, though, that choice is yours. It is your right to choose who governs this country, exercise that right. Choose the future you want for yourself and for your children and then go out and vote for it. If you want reform, vote for reformers. This country has a long way to travel but, the journey begins with a short trip to the polling station next Saturday." As I said, copies of the letter can be found outside.

Secondly, as you know the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana is today, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the High Representative Paddy Ashdown, is currently on the way with him. Mr Solana is visiting the country to underline the European Union's commitment to the country's post-war recovery and to Bosnia and Herzegovina's future as a stable and unified state fully integrated into Europe.

Commenting on his visit, Mr Solana said, yesterday, "The European Union role in Bosnia and Herzegovina is growing,

Paddy Ashdown, is the first European Union Special Representative and as of next year the European Union will take over from IPTF. The 5 October, elections will determine whether Bosnia and Herzegovina undertakes the reforms necessary to move closer to Europe, or stagnates and falls further behind its neighbours. It is up to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to choose their leaders. The European Union asks only two things of them, that they use their vote; and that they vote for the reforms that will deliver a better future for Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of Europe."

Mr Solana and Paddy Ashdown, have met with Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija, this morning, as we speak, they are visiting the KLAS factory. Both of them will hold a joint press conference at 14:15, at the Office of the High Representative. All of you, as always are cordially invited. A media advisory about the visit is also to be found outside.

My last announcement is that, the Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays will visit the Sarajevo Economic Regional Development Agency, tomorrow afternoon.

After attending a session of Sarajevo Economic Regional Development Agency's steering board. The Principle Deputy High Representative, will make a statement to the press itemising the core economic laws that have been passed since the beginning of the summer and those, which have failed to make it through parliamentary procedure, at State and Entity level.

Ambassador Hays will highlight the issues of job creation and economic reform and he will take journalists questions, his statement will begin at 15:15. We will be issuing a media advisory later in the day. Thank you, that is all from my side.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning everyone. It seems a very secure environment

here today, I have a few announcements for you, today.

This morning, the Head of the OSCE Mission Ambassador Beecroft, visited the central counting centre for the upcoming elections. Ambassador Beecroft, who is one of three international members of the Election Commission, observed the preparations for the ballot counting in the 5 October, elections, meet with the staff and toured the facilities.

Secondly, the OSCE is continuing its efforts to get Roma out to vote. The mission has produced posters and leaflets about the upcoming elections in Romani and Bosnian languages, encouraging Roma to vote and informing them on the procedure. This follows earlier efforts to encourage them to register. Furthermore, the mission plans to establish four Romani Election Monitoring Teams to monitor Roma participation in the Bosnia and Herzegovina general elections, based on special guidance on monitoring participation of minorities in elections. The Mission developed this project in close partnership with the Council of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ODIHR.

Thirdly I have a reminder, on the 12 September, as you may all remember, the Property Law Implementation Plan Agencies launched the New Strategic Direction. It requires housing authorities to solve claims in chronological order, except in cases foreseen by the law, and to respect legal deadlines to enforce decisions even if local authorities do not provide alternative accommodation. Only in this manner will it be possible to solve the 110,000 pending property cases within a reasonable time and that is by the end of 2003.

People will not be evicted without alternative accommodation if the authorities do their job; that is to provide that. The International Community has consistently identified different sources and means of alternative accommodation, for instance unclaimed apartments, state owned hotels, military barracks, other collective residential facilities and lump sum

payments. Some local authorities have not acted promptly on those suggestions and have continued to delay evictions using their own failure to provide alternative accommodation as an excuse. After 15 October, this situation will no longer be tolerated. There are more than 110,00 people still waiting. Seven years after the peace agreement and 10 years after the start of the war to repossess their property because some authorities have failed to provide alternative accommodation to the temporary occupants still occupying other peoples houses, even after all legal deadlines to vacate the property have expired. The OSCE urges the local authorities to act swiftly to secure all necessary alternative accommodation by 15 October.

Lastly, we want to remind you of a youth conference mixing rock, sports events and politics in Visegrad this weekend. The conference is organised by six youth councils in the Upper Drina region and the organisers expect to get more than, 2,000 youths from the area to participate. There will be two rock concerts, street basketball, and political debates that focus on the 5 October, elections, employment issues and integration on a regional and international level. The six youth councils organising the conference were formed with the support of the OSCE, they have been established in Cajnice, Visegrad, Rudo, Gorazde, Rogatica, and Foca/Srbinje.

Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani, Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission, will open the conference in Vilina Vla in Visegrad, tomorrow at 19:00. You are cordially invited to attend the whole of the conference, we have a media advisory outside regarding that. Thank you.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. I have one announcement for you that concerns certification of police officers.

You may recall that in August, I had given you details on

aspects of that process, namely the housing situation of police officers as well as on diplomas. Today, I would like to give new data on these two aspects, that is compliance with property laws legislation and verification of diplomas.

Regarding compliance with property law legislation, UNMIBH had called on all police officers, who had not done so to clarify their housing situation. At the end of August, that was still about, 1,400 police officers. As of today, there are 266 police officers left who still have not regularised their housing situation. These police officers are either illegal or double occupants or they have not provided any or sufficient documentation on their housing situation, of these 266 police officers. 207 police officers are from the Republika Srpska, 51 are from the Federation and 9 from Brcko, State Border Service or court police.

The verification of diplomas of police officers has continued as well and the diplomas of 12,850 police officers have been verified and found to be in order. About 3,800 cases are still under intense scrutiny and include the verification of diplomas abroad and further checking of diplomas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This figure also includes cases where school registries do not exist anymore, have been destroyed or disappeared during the war. The verification in these cases is more complicated and will require additional time. In this entire process, UNMIBH is very closely co-operating with the Ministries of Interiors and with educational representatives.

UNMIBH is very pleased to see the Ministries of Interiors taking ownership of this process. You may recall that, 355 police officers were found to have fraudulent diplomas. After these cases were referred back to the respective Ministry of Interior, local authorities launched a number of legal, as well as, disciplinary proceedings against these police officers. This is a very positive development and shows that there is broad agreement that Bosnia-Herzegovina should only employ police officers who meet all requirements towards their

education, performance and integrity.

As Urdur, has already said, we have a very secure environment here. We have a number of police cadets as well as the two Directors of the Police Academies. We will have a special press conference after the regular one. I would like you to stay, we will have presentations from both the Directors and you may also ask questions. Thank you.

Sanela Tunovic – IJC

Good morning. On behalf of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils, this morning I have three announcements for you.

The first one is on the Office of Disciplinary Prosecutor for the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that began operating this week.

The Disciplinary Prosecutor will be responsible for bringing disciplinary actions before the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Councils. He will also oversee investigation of complaints. This Office will receive all complaints against judges and prosecutors that may be made by any person or organisation. Upon receipt, the complaints will be kept in a register and where appropriate, assigned for investigation.

The Office of Disciplinary Prosecutor has the authority to request all relevant documentation and interview witnesses in order to investigate fully allegations of misconduct. When an investigation has been completed, the Disciplinary Prosecutor will review the file and determine, after careful and close examination, whether there is an evidentiary basis for the initiation of disciplinary proceedings before the councils.

The Disciplinary Prosecutor can reject complaints that contain inadequate allegations or that lack a sufficient evidentiary basis to warrant disciplinary action. The International

Disciplinary Prosecutors office is lead by Mr. David Upcher, who has been appointed as the International Disciplinary Prosecutor.

The second announcement is related to the open competition for appointments to posts for judges and prosecutors in the following. The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prosecutors Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Supreme Court, the Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina Prosecutors Office, the Republika Srpska Constitutional Court, the Republika Srpska Supreme Court and the Office of the Republika Srpska Prosecutor. These vacancies will be closed on 4 October 2002.

The High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council announced these vacancies on 22 August, and the exact number of posts to be filled will be decided by the respective High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. Further announcements of other judicial and prosecutorial posts on other levels, will be made over the coming months.

The last announcement is from the International Organisation for Immigration. The International Organisation for Immigration in close co-operation with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Government, the Independent Judicial Commission and the Office of the High Representative, extend the programme for the return of judges and prosecutors to minority areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to assist up to 200 qualified judges and prosecutors return to minority areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

International Organisation for Immigration will support the integration of these professionals across the two Bosnia and Herzegovina Entities. Only judges and prosecutors that have been directly appointed the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, will be eligible for this kind of assistance. A full press release on this will be issued, early next week. Thank you

Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

Good morning. I have two brief items for you.

Firstly, as you all know, the trial of Slobodan Milosevic, continued today. With opening statements of the prosecution, the accused was still giving his opening statement.

The prosecution will continue after today, with witnesses who will be testifying within the Croatian indictment. The Trial Chamber has allowed them to present, 177 witnesses out of which, 71 will testify within the Croatian indictment and 106 within the Bosnian indictment.

The prosecution has been given until the 16 May, to conclude its case and then the accused will have a chance to present his defence. Both public broadcasters are showing the trial live. We do not know how long that it will continue for.

For anybody who wants to cover this trial regularly, we are at you disposal, we can provide you with regular information and background on the trial or the people who are taking part in the trial, their biographies and anything else you may wish.

Secondly, the defence of the accused Momcilo Krajisnik, who lodged a motion to have General Sylvester, the Commander of SFOR, subpoenaed following his letter in which, he recommended that, Momcilo Krajisnik, is not released provisionally, have withdrawn their motion. So, they have withdrawn the motion to have General Sylvester subpoenaed and they informed the Trial Chamber of that, yesterday. That is all.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No statement from SFOR today.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Thank you very much, too all of you on the podium. Can I ask you for your questions please? Thank you, have a nice day.