

# **OHR clarifies its statement about Mostar's Universities**

Following the round table on 17 October 2000 with students from both of Mostar's universities, the OHR was disappointed to learn that a statement made by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, was misunderstood or misrepresented.

To clarify: the High Representative does not believe that Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be deprived of their Constitutional right to study in their own language and about their own culture.

The High Representative merely questioned whether the city of Mostar can sustain two public universities which have less than 10,000 students between them and which are currently competing for scarce resources. It is very difficult to finance the redundant facilities, faculties, departments, and services of the two universities. This difficulty results in high fees, too few computers, libraries deficient of basic books, etc.

What the High Representative stressed was that resources for higher education in Mostar should be pooled. He expressed the hope that cooperation between the two existing universities becomes the norm. The aim is to raise the level of both universities to European academic standards and to ensure their diplomas are recognized as proof of a solid education.