

# **OHR's Statement at the International Agency's Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka**

## **High Representative Enacts Legislation Harmonising Education Laws in Three Cantons with BiH Education Law**

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, yesterday issued Decisions rectifying the failures of Central Bosnia Canton, West Herzegovina Canton and Canton 10 to bring their primary and secondary education legislation into line with the State legislation.

With this Decision, the High Representative has addressed a situation which represented a challenge both to the Rule of Law and to the international obligations of BiH. Last year, the HDZ, together with all other parties, voted for the State Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education. This was a unanimous vote in the State Parliament. Yet since the end of last year, these cantons with HDZ education ministers have consistently failed to take action to harmonise their cantonal laws with the State legislation.

"This could not be tolerated further," the High Representative said when issuing these Decisions. "Necessary arrangements must be made in good time so that the children in these cantons are able to pursue a normal education, consistent with the best European practice before the start of the new school year. In addition, it must be made clear that flaunting the Rule of Law is simply no longer acceptable in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

With these Decisions, fines imposed on budgetary support to the HDZ in these three cantons will be lifted. Funds that have been withheld in the course of the sanction period will not be returned, but will be used for educational purposes in the relevant cantons.

## **Srebrenica Commission**

The HR has tasked the RS Srebrenica Commission with "emptying the cupboards" of all documents that may have been withheld until now. It is imperative that this task is completed, fully and satisfactorily. The High Representative has already informed the Commission that he will extend the deadline by a week beyond 17 July as long as the Commission demonstrates that these additional days will be used to full effect. He expects the Commission, with the full cooperation of all relevant authorities, to complete its work by then.