

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

## **ITA Law**

The ITA law needs to be passed by the end of the year if BiH is to meet conditions for further European integration. The BiH Parliament let down citizens of BiH when they failed to pass this law yesterday.

OHR therefore calls on the members of the Harmonisation Commission of the BiH Parliament to rectify this failure and to forge a consensus on the law so that it can be enacted by both houses of Parliament on 29 December.

We understand that the Harmonisation Commission of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly will meet again next week to come up with a consolidated text on the ITA Law. There have been amendments that would make the law less effective and more expensive to implement. That's the last thing BiH needs. This law, enacted without damaging amendments, is crucial for the wellbeing of the people of BiH. It is a core piece of legislation that will help curb corruption and fraud, will stimulate the economy and will make BiH's indirect tax system compatible with that of the rest of Europe. It's a requirement of the EC's Feasibility study and it must be enacted now if the target date of introducing VAT by the start of 2006 is to be met.

## **Christmas**

The High Representative extends season's greetings to all of those who are celebrating Hanukkah or are about to celebrate Christmas.