

# **Draft Defamation Law Presented in the Brcko District**

A draft Defamation Law for BiH's Brcko District was presented today to the councilors of the District's Assembly, members of the Government, the District's Court members, the Judicial Commission, and representatives of the media. The presentation was organized by OHR Brcko in co-operation with the District Assembly, and the Free Media Help Line. The Defamation Law regulates civil liability for defamation on the territory of the Brcko District of BiH.

Similar laws are already in place in both the FBiH and the RS where the application of these Laws ensures the principle of the freedom of expression whilst at the same time defining the measures that protect individuals from defamation. The draft Law applies European standards and relates to the essential role of the media in the democratic process, as watchdogs in their role of informing the public.

The right to freedom of expression is guaranteed by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Statute of the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina and constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society.

The Defamation Law will enter the Assembly procedure at the next Brcko District Assembly session, scheduled for 25 June 2003.