

# Education Round Table

Today, Wednesday 29 September, Principal Deputy High Representative Ralph Johnson chaired a round table discussion group on education issues at OHR. It was attended by a broad cross-section of individuals representing Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina society, including prominent representatives of political parties, religious leaders, intellectuals, trade unionists, NGOs and student organizations.

The purpose of the round table was to begin the process of reforming the present education system, which is largely based on ethnic segregation, and to carry forward the quest for a new system based on European standards.

OHR firmly believes that no child in BiH should be denied a quality education. Since children are the future of the country, all citizens are called upon to engage on this issue. The round table discussed standards of education in Europe, as well as the best means of implementing an education system which meets those standards while safeguarding the complex identities of BiH's three constituent peoples and its minorities.

The benchmarks of a quality education that would fulfil the needs of all children, regardless of their ethnic background, were also discussed. The participants concluded that there were many more elements of commonality than differences and that the reformed education system of the future should allow children to learn together and from one another within the framework of a joint curriculum which needs to be established.

It is also clear that the citizens of BiH must play a key role in shaping their children's future. This round table was the first in a series of such meetings designed to facilitate that process.