

# **BiH and Croatia Start Negotiations on Trade Agreement**

Yesterday, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia started official negotiations on a Trade Agreement between the two countries.

The OHR welcomes the beginning of these negotiations and hopes that they will be successful.

The negotiations took place in Zagreb. The delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina included Minister of Foreign Trade and Economy Mirsad Kurtovic, who had been nominated by Presidency Member Alija Izetbegovic, and Vice-Chair of the Council of Ministers Neven Tomic, who had been nominated by Presidency Member Ante Jelavic. The third member of the delegation, RS Minister for Foreign Economic Relations Savo Loncar, nominated by President Zivko Radisic, was prevented from attending the meeting due to a session of the RS Government. Deputy High Representative for Economic Matters Didier Fau accompanied the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The delegation of Croatia was chaired by Minister of Economy Nenad Porges and included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two delegations conducted preliminary discussions on the procedure and basic principles of the Trade Agreement. They also explored the possibility of a free trade zone between the two countries. The OHR would consider the establishment of a free trade zone an important element for the economic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the whole region.

Minister Porges expressed his hope that the negotiations could

be finalized in June of this year.