

## **The Inaugural Session of the Commission on Inter-Entity Legal Cooperation**

The Inaugural Session of the Commission on Inter-Entity Legal Cooperation took place yesterday, 4 June 1998, in the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo. The Commission was established by the Presidency in view of the conclusions reached by the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn last December and consists of representatives of the Presidency, both Entity Governments, the Supreme Courts of both Entities and OHR. Ambassador Schumacher chaired this first meeting and emphasized the importance of the Commission's work for the improvement of the quality of criminal, administrative and civil proceedings and, as a result, the rights of the citizens in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After outlining its work for the next two months, the Commission issued the attached Joint Statement, addressing immediate steps to be taken by 30 June 1998. Among others, the statement asks for legislation to ensure the mutual recognition of public documents as well as the unrestricted practice of lawyers from both Entities in all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ambassador Schumacher expressed his conviction that the High Representative would use his powers under the Bonn Document in case the necessary legislative measures to implement these suggestions were not taken until the 30 of July 1998.

Although satisfied with the results of this first session, Ambassador Schumacher expressed his concern about the absence of any representative of the Government of Republika Srpska as well as the Croat and Bosniak representative of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both the Government of Republika Srpska and the Presidency had been informed about the session in good time and had confirmed their attendance. He criticized this negligent and indifferent attitude as not being in the interest of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and unhelpful to resolve these important and urgent humanitarian and human rights related issues.

The next session of the Commission was scheduled for 29 June 1998 at the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo.