

# **Independent Judicial Commission Signs Memorandum of Understanding on Appointment Procedures in the Judiciary**

The Director of the Independent Judicial Commission, Rakeľ Surlien today in Banja Luka signed a Memorandum of Understanding on appointment procedures concerning the judiciary of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representatives of the Ministries of Justice of both the Republika Srpska and the Federation, as well as of the Judges' and Prosecutors' Commissions and Councils were also signatories to the agreement. The MoU is seen as an important first step in strengthening the independence of the judiciary.

With the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, the transparency of the appointment process for posts in the judiciary and in prosecutorial offices will be enhanced so as to ensure that competition is open to all legal professionals from Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of their ethnic origin, place of residence or gender. The memorandum introduces a new element in the hiring process whereby all short-listed candidates must now be interviewed by the relevant commission, in this way helping to make sure that the selection process is fair.

Application forms will be in the three languages of the constituent peoples of the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and will be available at the Ministries of Justice and the courts. Vacant posts will be advertised in all official gazettes and in the country's four main newspapers.

After today's signing, the terms of the memorandum will be sent to the various commissions for adoption. On adoption they will be put into immediate effect.

In Banja Luka, all the signatories to the Memorandum of Understanding agreed that it ushers in a new period of cooperation. The independence of the judiciary is an indispensable pre-condition for Bosnia and Herzegovina to be accepted into the Council of Europe, and this document represents a milestone along that road.