

# **OHR announces school accord in Gornji Vakuf**

The Office of the High Representative notes that an agreement to rebuild the former Secondary School Centre “Jura Mikulic” in Gornji Vakuf was signed today. The agreement, brokered by the OHR’s Senior Education Advisor, Claude Kieffer, and the Special Envoy of the High representative in Bugojno, Ulrich Bucher, will provide sufficient schooling space for the education of all pupils, irrespective of their ethnic background.

The agreement is in accord with a decision of the Canton Government on use of schooling space in the Central Bosnia Canton and meets preconditions considered necessary for obtaining the support of potential donors (the absence of such an agreement meant that earlier donor support for reconstruction of the school was cancelled). A loan that will pay for some of the reconstruction costs has been secured from the OPEC Fund (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries).

The signatories, Central Bosnia Canton Minister of Education Fahrudin Karakas, his deputy, Vjekoslav Djikic, the directors of the two existing secondary schools, Josip Jurina and Vahid Sehic, and other local interested parties have agreed to provide unconditional support to the future reconstruction of the “Jura Mikulic” school building that, once reconstructed, will accommodate the two existing secondary schools in the area. The OHR looks forward to the concrete implementation of the Agreement, ensuring that the conditions for education of all pupils improve regardless of their ethnicity. Today’s agreement shows a willingness by the local authorities and interested parties in tackling real problems in the canton. The OHR hopes this agreement will stimulate reconciliation in Gornji Vakuf and the wider area.

But the OHR notes that this is only a small step in a vital area for the future of BiH and urges all officials, teachers and parents in the country to embrace an education system that meets modern European standards. BiH has no chance of integration with Europe without a modern education system, open to all pupils and students, regardless of background.