

Meeting on the Implementation of the May 10 Education Agreement in the Federation

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Dr. Matei Hoffmann, welcomes the measures agreed today by the Cantonal Education Ministers with regard to the concrete implementation of the May 10 Education Agreement, as well as the constructive spirit in which the meeting was conducted.

The meeting, held at the OHR, was opened by Ambassador Hoffmann and co-chaired by OHR's Senior Education Advisor Claude Kieffer, Federation Education Minister Fahrudin Rizvanbegovic and his Deputy Ivo Miro Jovic.

The Cantonal Ministers agreed to the following:

- The next phase of the textbook review is to be completed by 31 December 2000.
2. Pedagogical Institutes will be tasked with the development of "curricular modules" for culture, language and literature to be integrated in the curricula of Bosnia and Herzegovina's other two constituent peoples by September 2000.
3. All pupils will be taught about all major religions practiced in BiH as from September 2000; the relevant Ministries, Pedagogical Institutes and religious communities will be involved in the development of the necessary curricula and course materials.
4. Courses in Human Rights and Civic education will gradually replace the current subject of civic defence/social studies. There will be pilot courses, and available expertise and materials will be used.
5. The relevant Ministries will publish data on returnee pupils and teachers on a regular basis, and teachers

will be hired according to the changing ethnic composition of the local populations as returns increase.

6. An information campaign will be carried out in order to inform teachers, administrators and parents of all the changes that will affect the existing education systems.
7. Mutual recognition of school certificates and records will be formalised in the Federation; the problem of the recognition of European higher education diplomas will be dealt with by the recently established Higher Education Board.
8. Textbooks imported from Croatia will be phased out within a period of two years.

All these measures provide the necessary framework to solve the existing school crisis and prevent future problems.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Hoffmann said that education was high on the agenda of the International Community and that the latest Peace Implementation Council meeting in Brussels showed the International Community's growing impatience with Bosnia and Herzegovina's slow progress in many crucial areas, including education reform. He emphasised that the provisions of the Declaration and Agreement signed by the Entity Ministers of Education on 10 May 2000 were non negotiable and appealed to the Cantonal Ministers of Education to focus on the modalities of implementation. Ambassador Hoffmann is pleased that the Ministers acknowledged the importance of the issue and heeded his appeal.

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