

OHR disappointed with lack of agreement on implementation of May 10th education agreement

This week, the Entity Education Ministers held a meeting called for by the Senior Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Dr. Matei Hoffmann, at the OHR to discuss further steps in educational reform.

The meeting, attended by Federation Education Minister Fahrudin Rizvanbegovic, his Deputy, Ivo Miro Jovic and the RS Education Minister, Nenad Suzic was to conclude the detailed short term measures required by the Education Agreement signed on May 10th, 2000 by the Entity Education Ministers.

Agreement was reached on the second phase of the Textbook Review which will remove offensive material from new textbooks and revisit textbooks reviewed previously, and on the Supplemental Annexes to be appended to the textbooks imported from Zagreb and Belgrade. These textbook changes should be implemented by the Ministers before the end of the year. Disappointingly, no common position could be reached on the teaching of the second, cyrillic or latinic, alphabet, and the curricular modules for language, literature, culture and religion which are in effect confidence, mutual understanding and knowledge building measures for the pupils of the three constituent peoples of BiH, and especially for returnee children.

In a separate meeting on the same day, again chaired by Ambassador Hoffmann, the issue of BIHARNET – a vital Internet academic network linking all BiH Universities with the European Research Network – was discussed with the Education Ministers and University Rectors. It was stressed that a network shared by the Entities was the only viable solution for the Universities of BiH. A working group will be convened shortly by OHR to look into pending organisational and operational issues that will enable the development of BIHARNET.

The OHR expects positive results to be achieved soon on the unresolved curriculum issues, which had already been broadly agreed in May and will enable all children in BiH to learn about the culture of all three constituent peoples in BiH. In this way will the genuine interests of the younger generation of BiH, on whose shoulders the future of this country rests, be safeguarded. No efforts should be spared to attain this goal.