

OHR welcomes Mostar School Agreement

The Office of the High Representative warmly welcomes the agreement on the future joint use of school buildings in Mostar, which was signed yesterday by Cantonal, City and municipal authorities in Mostar.

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Dr. Matei Hoffmann, considers this to be, among others, the result of a concerted and focused effort of the OHR and other international organisations to set the stage for a rational, modern education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This has led to the growing realisation in BiH that the segregation of the current education system prevents reconciliation, has resulted in low educational standards and hinders Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration with Europe.

The Mostar agreement will contribute to better understanding among pupils, more tolerance and higher standards of education throughout the region.

Ambassador Hoffmann sees the Mostar agreement as part of successful negotiations that have also led to the restoration of multi-ethnic schools in Stolac and Vares.

The agreement on the joint use of the Gimnazija building in Mostar is particularly significant as it was long overdue and is another step towards the unification of Mostar. The OHR hopes that the Gimnazija will again become a centre of excellence and dialogue.

The OHR expects the Federation Parliament to adopt the proposals on the use of funds provided by OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) so they can be released. The funds will be used for the further reconstruction of the

Gimnazija building as well as a number of other school facilities throughout the country.

The OHR also expects the full implementation in Mostar and elsewhere as from September 2000 of all measures stipulated in the Education Declaration and Agreement signed by the Entity Education Ministers on 10 May 2000 at the OHR in Sarajevo.