Memorandum of Understanding concerning Water Issues

On Thursday, 4 June the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management & Forestry of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Management & Forestry of the Republika Srpska signed an important Memorandum of Understanding concerning Water Issues.

Under the terms of the document, the Entities will form a Joint Commission for Water Management Issues. The Commission will consult on all issues relating to water management, including international water treaties, international projects such as the Danube Programme and the Mediterranean Programme, and harmonisation of water quality standards and related legislation. Four members will be appointed by the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and four members by the Government of Republika Srpska.

Mr. Ahmed Smajic, Federation Minister of Agriculture, Water Management & Forestry, defined the historic nature of the event when he stated that water-related issues transcend geographic delineations. Mr. Mihajlo Stevanovic, Assistant Minister of Agriculture, Water Management & Forestry for the Republika Srpska observed that cooperation by the Entities on water issues is the starting point towards economic self-sustainability. Stuart Thompson, OHR Environmental Law expert agrees. “In order to achieve this self-sustainability, there first must be a stable economic basis. To enjoy a stable economy, there must first be an adequately functioning infrastructure. And water is the key institutional building block.”

Carlos Westendorp, the High Representative, expressed his satisfaction, not only with the ability of each of the Entities, but especially their willingness to cooperate in

protecting the water resources of Bosnia and Hercegovina. “Today we all stand witness to that success, which can serve as an example for other areas of future cooperation as well.”