

Administration and Management Reform of BiH Court System gets Underway

The Head of the Independent Judicial Commission (IJC), Judge Rakel Surlien, is pleased to announce the start of a new judicial reform project. Funded by the Norwegian government and under the auspices of the IJC, the project will focus on administration and management in BiH courts. It has the full support of both Entity Ministers of Justice.

The project, which will cost approximately 250,000 KM (125,000 Euro), is aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the judicial system and improving the administration of justice and delivery of services to the public. Particular emphasis will be put on ensuring that the court system can respond adequately and in a timely manner to public needs and expectations, through the introduction of new case management techniques and more effective administrative practices.

The first phase, to be conducted by a team of five international and local experts, will last for three months and consist of an initial assessment of the current situation in the courts and recommendations for improvement. The team is led by Judge Anne Austbo, president of one of the largest first instance courts in Norway.

Five courts have been selected to participate in this phase of the project: the Banja Luka Basic Court, the Srpsko Sarajevo District Court, the Zenica Cantonal Court, and the Konjic and Ljubuski Municipal Courts. They were chosen for their diversity in size and function. The project team made its first visit to Zenica Cantonal Court yesterday and will visit

the Konjic Municipal Court today.

The IJC hopes that the recommendations of the team will be implemented in a second phase of the project that would start at the end of this year. All courts in BiH will be able to benefit from the solutions proposed by the team.

Judge Austbo, noted that well functioning courts are essential for judicial reform. "In Europe, we have seen many developments in court management techniques in recent years that have been very beneficial to the effective operation of the justice system. I hope that we can give BiH the benefit of that experience."

The project complements the other activities of the IJC aimed at increasing the quality and efficiency of the judicial system, especially the reform of the procedural laws that govern the conduct of trials.