

# Judicial Reform Seminar

Yesterday and today, at Bjelasnica, ABA/CEELI, a project of the American Bar Association, financed by USAID to promote legal and judicial reform in BiH, and IRZ, the German Foundation for International Legal Assistance, in co-operation with the Independent Judicial Commission, organised a seminar attended by around 70 judges and legal professionals from throughout BiH. Federation Justice Minister Zvonko Mijan and Mr Nikola Kovacevic representing the Republika Srpska Ministry of Justice welcomed the participants, who were invited to discuss the new draft laws on civil procedure and enforcement procedure.

The draft laws have been produced over a period of several months by Expert Working Groups, established by the Federation and RS Ministries of Justice, composed mainly of national experts but including representatives of the Independent Judicial Commission and ABA/CEELI. It is hoped that the final drafts, which are by and large identical for each Entity, will be presented to the Entity Governments by early August.

The texts under discussion drew from reforms that have already taken place in the District of Brcko and also incorporate best European standards and practices. They should provide a legal basis for greater efficiency in court procedure, with fewer delays and faster results. Improving the efficiency of the courts in general has been a major aim of the judicial reform strategy over the past 18 months, following widespread criticism of the court system for failing to deliver timely justice to the public. Reform of civil and enforcement procedure is also vital for economic development and the encouragement of local and foreign investment, since it will ensure that contracts are upheld and creditors are able to enforce their rights.

The seminar enabled judges, who will be ultimately responsible

for implementing the new laws, to provide their input to the drafting process, ensuring that the final text is workable and achieves its aims.