

# **Inter-Religious Council will help draft Curriculum for New School Subject**

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, welcomes the results of his meeting with the Inter-Religious Council yesterday, at which the inclusion of the subject of “culture of religion” – as it is called presently – in the school curricula used in Bosnia and Herzegovina was discussed.

The four religious leaders – Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa ef. Ceric, Metropolitan Nikolaj, Kardinal Vinko Puljic and Jakob Finci, President of the Jewish Community in BiH – acknowledged the importance of this subject and expressed their desire to give their input to what should be taught under this subject. They will each nominate an educational expert who will forward their ideas and proposals to the Office of the High Representative, which will co-ordinate them. Ambassador Sonn stated that the international community would not complete the drafting process without consultation with the religious communities.

OHR considers the willingness of the religious communities to contribute to the subject “culture of religions” an important step toward the definition of the contents of the subject and the development of curricula in Bosnia and Herzegovina with common and shared elements. This will improve the constituent peoples’ understanding and respect of each other and promote tolerance, while in no way interfering with religious instruction in schools where it is taught.

Ambassador Sonn and the religious leaders agreed to speedily proceed on the development of the subject. The decisions on the exact designation of the new subject and all implementation details will be taken immediately afterwards in

close consultation with all concerned parties, including the Inter-Religious Council.

The introduction of the subject “culture of religions” in the curricula is part of the 10 May 2000 Education Agreement signed by the Entity Ministers of Education and later endorsed by the Cantonal Ministers of Education. It is not designed to replace religious instruction where it is taught, but meant to provide objective, non-discriminatory information to all pupils on the four major religions practised in BiH and their respective traditions.