

# OHR Congratulates Inaugural Meeting of the Council of RTV FBiH

On 14 Dec 99, the 21 member Council of RTV FBiH met for the first time at OHR. The High Representative introduced the meeting with the following statement:

- I want to take this opportunity to welcome you here on the occasion of the inaugural meeting of the Council of Federation TV. Please be aware that the foundation of this new broadcasting network is vital to my overall restructuring strategy for public broadcasting in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- This strategy is based upon the development of two accountable, representative and self-sustaining entity broadcasters, supported by the strong central pillar of a nationwide Public Broadcasting Service. It is, in my view, entirely appropriate and necessary for the PBS and Federation TV to develop together and I am grateful for the work already undertaken by the Founding Board of the PBS. Mr Custovic from the Executive Committee of the PBS Founding Board has already placed his knowledge and experience to work in preparing this meeting and I have instructed the Board to assist you in your work wherever possible.
- I have appointed you all and I am glad that you have accepted the challenge. Accordingly, I should explain my expectations from this body. I wish you to create a new public Radio Television broadcasting service in the Federation.
  - It must be in accordance with the spirit of the Dayton Peace Agreement
  - It must in accordance with the laws and constitutions of Bosnia and Hercegovina and the

## Federation

- It must be in accordance with the best standards of European public broadcasting and the principals of the UN and European conventions on human rights
- It must be in accordance with the rules laid down by the Independent Media Commission of Bosnia and Hercegovina
- You must not allow it to become the servant of any narrow interest group, political, national or otherwise. It is a service owned by all the people of the Federation, funded by their taxes and you have a solemn duty to protect their interests and rights
- I do not underestimate the magnitude or the difficulty of the tasks that I have laid out for you. I am fully aware of the critical statements made by the nationalist political parties in regard to your appointment and I acknowledge the pressures you are likely to face. I have full confidence that this body can work together to create something new, to create a broadcaster of the highest standards and to create a service genuinely representative of both constituent peoples and the minorities who live in the Federation. I now give assurances to both the Bosniac and Croat constituent peoples that OHR will remain fully engaged in this process to ensure full equality – ravnopravnost, or jednakopravnost, in your respective languages – in accordance with the Federation constitution.
- Be under no illusion, I am determined to implement all decisions regarding the media restructuring process – I will not be derailed from this task by those who believe that broadcasters should serve and be accountable to the political elites. You will have my full support. Thank you once again and good luck with your task.

The Council elected Mr Kemal Hrustanovic as President of the Council and Mr Slavo Kukic as the Vice President.

The Council discussed the establishment of the new RTV service and discussed the priorities for the work of the Council in the New Year.

The High Representative congratulates the Council and looks forward to following their progress throughout next year.