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| **OSCE Head of Mission: The Way Children Are Educated Affects the Long-Term Stability of a Country**  **Sarajevo, 4 September 2007 –** “Soft” areas of security, such as the way children are educated, can over the long term pose just as great a threat to a country’s stability as “people with guns,” Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, said in remarks to the guests at a reception in honour of the 13th World Congress of Comparative Education Societies and International Pedagogues held at the National Museum on Monday evening, September 3.  Ambassador Davidson went on to elaborate about the dangers to the stability of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina posed by its current methods of education. Over the past twelve years, through the teaching of different histories, geographies and languages, schools had become the means to separate the three so-called constitutive people from one another, Davidson said.  “It is as if the three peoples now inhabit three different countries”, he noted. For example, Bosniac, Croat and Serb students still continued to “sit in classrooms populated only by members of the same ethnic group.”  This meant that children did not develop an allegiance to the country as a whole, but rather only an allegiance to the particular people or “nation” to which they belonged.  The feeling of alienation produced by this way of education did not bode well for the future, Davidson continued.   The OSCE Mission to BiH had therefore developed two priorities for its efforts to assist in the reform of education.   The first was the creation of a body that would establish and enforce a common set of standards for educational achievement throughout BiH.  The secondly the introduction of a curriculum that was similar country-wide.  Together, these constituted part of the incremental process of “changing the politics, perceptions and ultimately the structures of education in this country.” Both offered the best chance for dealing with the phenomenon of “two schools under one roof” and the “national group of subjects.”   Ambassador Davidson concluded by noting that schools had to overcome the notion of “nation” as constituting “constitutive peoples” rather than “nation” implying a country as a whole, as in the United Nations.  The current view seemed more reflective of the comment once made by American political scientist Karl Wolfgang Deutsch that a nation was “a group of people united by a mistaken view about the past and a hatred of their neighbours.”  The full text of Ambassador Douglas Davidson’s remarks can be found [here](http://www.oscebih.org/public/default.asp?d=6&article=show&id=2100). |
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