



## PRESS RELEASE

### PARLIAMENTARY INTERNS GRADUATE

July 31, 2003

SARAJEVO- Last night, forty-eight student-interns graduated from their work placements at the Parliament of Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) and the Parliament of the Federation of BiH. The Parliamentary Interns have completed six-month assignments as assistants to the parliaments' committees, party clubs and administration.

The internship program operates as a partnership between BiH universities, the parliaments and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI).

Representatives of the parliaments were in attendance at the graduation ceremony last night to congratulate the interns. In addition to the forty-eight interns who graduated last night, thirty interns graduated from the previous cycles, bringing the total graduates from the parliamentary internship program to seventy-eight.

"We feel putting students in parliament is a win-win program for BiH. These young people gain valuable work experience and a better understanding of democracy, while at the same time they actually help improve the work of parliament," said Francesca Binda, NDI Country Director.

Interns are final-year students of Law, Economics, Political Science and Philosophy. Through their work, interns meet many new people, including MPs. While interns learn from MPs, MPs, in turn, benefit from the students. Interns do comparative research on proposed laws, draft amendments, translate documents and do administrative tasks.

Besides this important work, these energetic young people liven up Parliament. Their presence helps to dissolve the barrier between elected representatives and the voters.

In 2001 NDI started an internship program for the Parliament of the Federation of BiH. In 2003, NDI started intern programs at the state-level, Parliament of BiH as well as the Republika Srpska National Assembly. NDI is now developing joint projects for the interns. NDI hopes parliamentary internships will become a permanent fixture in BiH

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**For more information on NDI's internship program in Bosnia-Hercegovina, please contact Paul Labun in Sarajevo at 387-33-214-664. For information on NDI's Bosnia-Hercegovina program, please contact Francesca Binda in Sarajevo at 387-33-214-665 or William Hayden in Washington, D.C., at 202-728-5662.**

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