Introduction

At the invitation and under the chairmanship of the OHR, United States Government and European Commission, key international organisations, members of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council and members of the BiH government met in Sarajevo on 3 February 1998 for the Sarajevo Return Conference. Participants discussed the status and role of Sarajevo as a model of co-existence and tolerance for the rest of the country, in particular in relation to the return of pre-war residents. It was agreed that Sarajevo should lead the country by example by taking concrete steps to enable substantial minority return in 1998, as proof of its determination to act as a model for reconciliation, multiethnicity, freedom of movement and the unconditional right to return throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A number of concrete measures were agreed (see the full text of the Declaration) and and implementation of these measures was then reviewed during subsequent months (see Sarajevo Declaration Quarterly Implementation Review). Further assistance for Sarajevo was conditioned upon fulfillment of the benchmarks set out in this Declaration and on adequate progress toward meeting the 1998 goal of at least 20,000 minority returns.