

# Communiqué of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board\*



The Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) political directors met in Sarajevo on 21-22 May 2014 to underline their unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) territorial integrity and sovereignty. The PIC SB has heard the public protests and calls by BiH citizens throughout the country to improve the social and economic situation. This new civic engagement is a welcome development, as long as it is carried out through peaceful and legal means. The PIC SB strongly urged the institutions in BiH and elected leaders to reach out to the citizens, engage with the civil society and provide responsible and immediate answers to their legitimate concerns. The PIC SB welcomed the broadening of the EU agenda and engagement towards BiH, and in particular the imminent launch on the ground of a Compact for Growth. It also emphasized that it is the collective responsibility of all BiH political leaders to engage responsibly during the remainder of the current mandate and to address the outstanding urgent and necessary reforms, especially those needed for BiH to advance on its European path.

In view of the upcoming elections, the PIC SB urged all candidates and political parties to conduct the election campaign in a responsible manner based on concrete policy issues and free of attempts to incite ethnic division and fear. In this context, the institutions and political parties

must refrain from actions which would undermine the legal and constitutional order in the country. The PIC SB underlined that the citizens of BiH, through their participation at elections, will play a crucial role in determining the future direction of the country. Following elections, those elected should form the relevant institutions swiftly and urgently adopt necessary reforms.

The PIC SB reiterated that the entrenchment of rule of law stands out as a priority area. Corruption, especially at high levels, must be investigated and prosecuted, war criminals brought to justice, and court decisions at all levels must be implemented without delay. While the functionality of judicial institutions at all levels should continue to be improved, including through the BiH-EU Structured Dialogue on Justice, the PIC SB expressed particular concern about ongoing attempts to undermine the authority of the state-level judicial institutions.

The PIC SB re-emphasized that the entities must respect and fully implement previously agreed reforms, including at the state-level. The PIC SB called upon the authorities in BiH at all relevant levels to find a state-level solution to the issue of residence, in line with European best practices, while respecting the freedom of movement and rights of returnees. Regulations of the same at other levels of governance should be rescinded and all parties should refrain from blocking state-level institutions, thus ending the unnecessary politicization of this important matter.

The PIC SB reinforced the need to complete the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for OHR's closure.

The PIC SB expressed its continuing dismay at the ongoing failure of the relevant political parties and institutions to meet their obligations to implement the ruling of the BiH Constitutional Court on the electoral system for Mostar. The PIC Steering Board underscored that local elections in Mostar

should be held no later than October 2014. It underscored the core principle, reaffirmed by the parties in 2012, that Mostar must remain a single, coherent, multi-ethnic unit of local self-government, with some level of local authority/administration below that of the city.

The PIC SB called upon the relevant authorities to demonstrate the country's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration by acting swiftly to complete the necessary steps to enable registration of prospective defence property, while fully respecting the BiH Constitutional Court ruling. Far too much time has already been lost since BiH was offered the opportunity to engage fully in NATO's Membership Action Plan four years ago.

Recalling its earlier communiqués and declarations, the PIC SB underlined its unequivocal commitment to BiH's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The PIC SB reiterated its full support for the High Representative, who will continue to ensure full respect for the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and carry out his mandate under Annex 10 and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, which remains unchanged. The PIC SB reminded all parties of their obligation to comply fully with the GFAP, all its annexes, and decisions of the High Representative. It underlined that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement.

In this context, the PIC SB reminded the BiH authorities to ensure that the High Representative and his Office have access to officials, institutions and documents in a timely fashion. Under Annex 10 of the GFAP, all authorities in BiH are obliged to fully cooperate with the High Representative as well as with the international organizations and agencies as provided for in Article IX of the GFAP.

The PIC SB will hold its next meeting in Sarajevo on 9-10 December 2014.

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\* The Russian Federation does not agree with this text in its entirety.