

# **Press Conference Following the Meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace implementation Council**

**High Representative Valentin Inzko**

**OHR, 30 November 2012**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for coming.

The PIC *Communiqué* lays out the conclusions of the meeting that has just ended – but I wanted to speak to you directly in order to give you a broader sense of the discussions we had.

The discussions we have had over the last two days – with the BiH authorities and among the PIC Steering Board delegations – have been extensive and thorough. But if I had to summarize the outcome of our deliberations with one unanimous message to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina it would be this: There is no excuse for further delay.

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As you know, the initial session of our meeting took place at the Common Institutions Building, where the Chair of the Council of Ministers Bevanda, and his deputies, Finance Minister Špirić and Foreign Minister Lagumdžija, talked with the Steering Board.

This was an important and productive meeting, because Chairman Bevanda and his deputies committed themselves to tackling the economic and social problems the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina face with. In addition, we heard very clear commitments from the leadership of the Council of Ministers to facilitate speedy progress on issues stemming from the EU Road Map and on defence property, a key condition for progress towards NATO and also one of the objectives from the 5+2 agenda.

It's too early to say that we have turned a new page. But with reshuffling efforts finally concluded at state level, we expect to see progress now. The International Community is ready to provide assistance to the authorities in BiH where it is needed and where it is appropriate.

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Principal Deputy High Representative Rod Moore briefed the PIC on the situation regarding Mostar.

The SB is firmly united in its support of the ongoing talks being facilitated by OHR. Among other matters, there is a consensus within the SB regarding these four issues:

1. We want local parties to reach a compromise that will be adopted in local institutions.
2. In order for a compromise to be reached, all parties – without exception – will have to make concessions. No party will achieve all of its objectives.
3. This compromise must respect the rulings of the Constitutional Court of BiH, allow elections to be held in Mostar as early as possible, and ensure safeguards for the constituent peoples living there.
4. Mostar will not be divided along ethnic lines. The SB would like to see more integration, not less.

Allow me to say the following: OHR is committed to working with the parties to see if we can help bring about such a compromise. We can help try to identify points of agreement, potential obstacles, and potential opportunities. But, in the end, the parties themselves will have to show the flexibility, will, and leadership to take the tough decisions that will bring about a compromise. If they don't, they will have to explain to the people of Mostar why

this was not possible.

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The PIC also considered the situation in Srebrenica. What is clear is that the existing institutional machinery is capable of addressing outstanding issues following the municipal election.

When the election results are certified I will travel to Srebrenica to talk to stakeholders. What we need now are fresh initiatives to kick-start economic, political, and social recovery in the municipality in the interests of all.

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Furthermore, the PIC also reflected on recent political events in the BiH Federation. It urged the authorities to uphold the Constitution and the procedures established by law.

A constructive approach of all parties is, clearly, of essential importance.

The PIC Steering Boards called all the competent authorities to fill in vacant seats in the Constitutional Court of the BiH Federation without any delay by which they would facilitate the full capacity work of the Court in order to meet its role set in the Constitution.

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During its two-day talks the PIC Steering Board also reflected on recent political developments and potential obstacles in the period ahead, including challenges to the Peace Agreement and the Rule of Law.

In this regard, I would highlight the clear, unanimous and unequivocal commitment of the PIC Steering Board to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The PIC also made it clear that all the parties must fully comply with the Dayton Agreement and that the competencies of the BiH state cannot be unilaterally undermined.

Turning to the rule of law, there was discussion about the fact that during the reshuffling efforts over the past months there has been much readiness among the parties to set aside the rule of law as to achieve narrow party interests. Let me reiterate that it is not the concern of the international community who is in power, but we do expect that, in line with democratic norms, all parties respect constitutions and laws.

Speaking of the law, I would like to take this opportunity to specially thank the international judges and prosecutors in the BiH court and prosecutor's office, whose mandates will soon come to an end, for their invaluable contribution to those institutions. I also want to express my deep admiration for the ongoing work of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian professionals in these institutions. These institutions, and their independence, have our full support.

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The discussions we have had over the last two days – with the BiH authorities and among the PIC delegations – have been thorough, practical and productive.

The International Community believes that the way forward is to renew focus on the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

The unfortunate reality is that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not making the progress that its citizens and the International Community want it to make – but there are grounds to believe that progress can be fostered in the coming months in a more satisfactory way.

The International Community will continue to assist BiH stakeholders to turn the *possibility* of progress into *real* progress. However, the domestic institutions must take the ultimate responsibility for moving the country forward.

Now I am going to answer a few questions.