



Communiqué of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council

The Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) Political Directors met in Sarajevo on 5-6 June, 2018 to review the process of implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), which remains the basis for a stable, secure, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). 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 reaffirmed its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of BiH as a single, sovereign state comprising two entities. The PIC SB restated that the entities have no right to secede from BiH and only exist legally by virtue of the BiH Constitution. The PIC SB reminded authorities in BiH that the BiH Constitution is an integral part of the GFAP and that the decisions of the BiH Constitutional Court are final and binding and must be implemented. The PIC SB reiterated its full support for the High Representative in ensuring complete respect for the GFAP and carrying out his mandate under Annex 10 and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, which remains unchanged. It underlined that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP. The PIC SB emphasized the need to fully implement the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

The PIC SB noted that progress on political and economic reforms had slowed almost to a standstill since its last meeting, with minor exceptions. While BiH has submitted its response to the EU's membership questionnaire, adopted a set of excise laws and there have been efforts to improve regional cooperation, the implementation of reforms has almost stopped, particularly at the State and Federation BiH levels. There has been backsliding on rule of law, and serious concerns about the independence of the media and increasingly divisive rhetoric remain. FBiH political parties continued to refuse to compromise over essential changes to the BiH Election Law. The disproportionate purchases of long-barrelled weapons by some law enforcement agencies has raised concern.^[1]

The PIC SB encouraged the BiH political and institutional leaders at the relevant levels of authority to:

- Refrain from divisive, nationalist rhetoric in the pre-election period and beyond. Ensure the peaceful conduct of free and fair elections.
- Implement urgently the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the so-called "Ljubic case" concerning the Federation House of Peoples, to enable the smooth implementation of the Election results and the formation of legislative and executive authorities at all levels. Implement without further delay the BiH Constitutional Court decision on Mostar.
- Extend support to the BiH Central Election Commission in organising the 2018 General Elections and refrain from any political pressure on this body.
- Implement steps to ensure elections are credible, in part by ensuring that voter rolls are accurate and by increasing the transparency of polling station committees.
- Implement the Sejdic/Finci and related decisions of the European Court of Human Rights after the elections and government formation.
- Uphold the rule of law, in particular by strengthening the institutions responsible for the fight against corruption at all levels of governance in BiH. Refrain from challenging and undermining the state and entity level judicial institutions, and implement their decisions.
- Implement the BiH Constitutional Court decision on the Criminal Procedure Code in a way that enables the judicial and prosecutorial institutions of BiH to effectively tackle serious crimes, as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

- Implement the BiH Constitutional Court decision on the Law on the Intelligence Security Agency of BiH, as a matter of urgency, preserving BiH capabilities to continue cooperation as a reliable partner in intelligence and security cooperation.
- Engage constructively and responsibly towards effective implementation of all those reforms crucial to improve the lives of BiH citizens in order to advance, inter alia, BiH's European perspective. Strong political commitment by the leaders of BiH is required for implementing further socio-economic reforms and strengthening the rule of law and public administration in line with European standards, also as stemming from relevant aspects of the Sofia Declaration of the recent EU Western Balkans Summit.
- Improve cooperation between all levels of government in order to ensure, inter alia, the country's smooth participation to the European Commission's Opinion preparation process and related inquiries.
- Continue to enhance regional cooperation in different formats, aimed at contributing to sustainable reconciliation, increased mutual understanding, fostering new opportunities for economic development and broadened cultural ties and promoting regional stability.
- Acknowledging the BiH state's constitutional authority over "immigration, refugee and asylum policy and regulation", implement the BiH Council of Ministers' emergency action plan to address the humanitarian and security aspects of the increasing influx of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, it encourages improved interagency information sharing and cooperation.

The PIC SB will hold its next meeting in Sarajevo in December 2018.

[1] The Russian Federation does not agree with the final sentence of this paragraph.