

Statement of the Contact Group, Rome, 17/10/97

Contact Group Meeting

Chairman's Conclusions

The Contact Group continues to work for the implementation of the Peace Agreement under the guidance of the decisions taken by Ministers of the PIC Steering Board Countries at Sintra.

The Contact Group looks to the High Representative to implement agreed policy on the ground and supports him in carrying out this responsibility.

On the question of the regulation of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Contact Group is working urgently for a Bosnia and Herzegovina – wide system which meets normal European democratic standards.

In the short term, the Contact Group requires a number of immediate steps in Republika Srpska:

- the SRT governing board must be restructured, with a new General Manager;
- during the campaign for the RS Assembly elections, there should be fair, regulated access to the media by RS political parties supervised by the OHR to ensure proper practice;
- rules of conduct should be drawn up for journalists and for the management of the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To this end, the Contact Group strongly encourages the authorities in Republika Srpska to respond constructively to the High Representative's letter of 7 October.

Moreover, the Contact Group welcomed the holding of Republika Srpska Assembly elections on November 23 under OSCE supervision and calls on all parties to cooperate with the international community to ensure a peaceful and democratic environment for these elections. The Contact Group also request the OSCE to undertake the supervision of other elections to be held in RS at a later date, in accordance with constitutional provisions.

Office of the High Representative