

Statement of the Contact Group, London, 16/9/97

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The Contact Group, meeting in London on 16 September, welcomed the successful holding of the municipal elections in Bosnia. It congratulated the OSCE and its mission staff in Bosnia for their effective supervision of the elections under the leadership of Robert Frowick, the OHR, led by Carlos Westendorp as well as SFOR and IPTF for ensuring the success of the elections.

The Contact Group agreed that all parties must respect the results and allow elected representatives to undertake their duties. It reaffirmed its full support for the Implementation Plan for Elected Officials prepared by the OSCE and OHR. The Contact Group will strongly support efforts on the ground to implement the results of the elections. Measures will be taken against those who seek to block such implementation.

The Contact Group reiterated its recommendation in favour of an appropriate authorisation of the OSCE mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina so that the OSCE could supervise elections to the Republika Srpska Assembly, and any other elections to be held in Republika Srpska in accordance with constitutional provisions.

The Contact Group agreed that recent progress on Sintra objectives including on civil aviation and telecommunications is welcome. But the Contact Group continues to look for rapid progress in areas like the citizenship and passport laws, and agreements with the IMF and on the common flag. The Contact Group has already indicated that it will support those parties which are fully implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement and take measures against those who are not.

The lack of transparency and accountability in Bosnian governance is a matter of grave concern for the Contact Group. The Bosnian authorities must take firm action to improve the standards of accountability in Bosnian public life. The Contact Group welcomed a paper by the High Representative with recommendations for action. The OHR will co-ordinate international efforts to help the Bosnian authorities tackle these problems with the full backing of Contact Group members and will submit a progress report to the PIC Steering Board by the end of November.

Croatia and the FRY should use all means at their disposal to encourage the installation of those elected at the municipal elections. The Contact Group regretted that neither Croatia nor the FRY have yet lived up fully to the international commitments they have undertaken., including the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Contact Group reaffirms its determination to press ahead with the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and to this end to hold all of the parties to the Sintra deadlines. Decisive action will continue to be taken when these requirements are not met. The Contact Group continues to consider reform of the police and a free, democratic and pluralistic media to be essential requirements in this process.

Office of the High Representative