

Contact Group Statement, Brussels, 15 May 1997

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The Contact Group met in Brussels on May 15, 1997 to prepare the PIC Steering Board ministerial meeting in Sintra on 30 May, 1997. The High Representative, Carl Bildt presented proposals for the agenda to be discussed at Sintra.

The Contact Group reaffirmed its commitment to the full implementation of the Peace Agreement and expressed serious concern at the lack of determination by the parties to honour their own commitments, in particular those referred to in the London Conclusions of December 1996 and in UN Security Council Resolution 1088. Among the areas where parties have not demonstrated sufficient cooperation were the following:

- Establishment of functioning central institutions as defined in the Peace Agreement.
- Ensuring freedom of movement, freedom of communication and freedom of the press.
- Respect for human rights, the rule of law and the right of all refugees and displaced persons to return freely to their homes of origin.
- Cooperation with the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague.
- Adoption and implementation of economic laws and regulations which are needed for the functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single state (i.a. common currency, customs regulations).
- Developing democratic, restructured police forces fully supporting the rule of law.

On the basis of recommendations submitted by the High Representative, the Contact Group prepared points for discussion and decision by ministers at the Sintra PIC ministerial. These decisions will be based on the principle of conditionality in dealing with the Bosnian parties, in particular in cases of consistent violations of the Peace Agreement. The Contact Group stressed that the international community expects and demands in exchange for its high level of support to Bosnia and Herzegovina that all parties will accept their primary responsibility for the implementation and will fully abide by their signed commitments to the Peace Agreement.