Statement by the Ambassadors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council *

Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board unequivocally declare that the announced referendum in Republika Srpska (RS) on the authorities of the High Representative and the BiH judiciary would represent a fundamental violation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP).

Matters of state judicial institutions fall within the constitutional responsibilities of the state and do not fall under the constitutional responsibilities of the Entities, while the status and powers of the High Representative are matters arising under the GFAP and international law and similarly do not fall within the purview of the RS. The RSNA cannot adopt legal acts on these matters, by referendum or otherwise. The announced referendum represents a direct challenge to Annex 4 and Annex 10 of the GFAP. In addition, the RS constitutional framework and the RS Law on Referendum and Citizens' Initiative envisage that the RS National Assembly (RSNA) may announce referenda only on issues falling within its competence.

Ambassadors of the PIC remind all authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) that their obligations under the GFAP apply to the entirety of the said Agreement and all its Annexes, and that the authorities cannot selectively apply its provisions.

Entity authorities should focus on delivering the commitments they have made to citizens and the international community on a reform agenda, rather than seeking to distract citizens with

a referendum on an issue where the RS authorities do not have responsibility. In this context, they should concentrate on solving real socioeconomic problems which ordinary people, especially the young, face on a daily basis.

Legal avenues do exist to address problems within the State-level judicial system. The proper avenue for such initiatives is through the competent state-level institutions.

The Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board reiterate their full support for the High Representative and remind the RS authorities of their obligation to comply fully with the GFAP, all its annexes, and decisions of the High Representative.

The Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board underline that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP.

* The Russian Federation is unable to join this statement.