

Communiqué of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council

The Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) political directors met in Sarajevo on 9-10 December 2014 to reaffirm their vision of – and strong commitment to – a stable, democratic and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) with better functioning institutions.

The PIC SB underlined its unequivocal commitment to the preservation of BiH's territorial integrity and sovereignty in accordance with International Law.

Referring to the general elections held in October 2014, the PIC SB welcomed the preliminary assessment of OSCE ODIHR and CoE/PACE that the elections were generally in conformity with international standards for democratic elections, noting however that a significant number of citizens still remain deprived of the right to stand for election.

During the meeting with the BiH Presidency, the PIC SB called on the incoming authorities to address urgently the economic and social challenges facing BiH and to create new economic opportunities, especially for the youth of BiH, as citizens have demanded.

The PIC SB called for the formation of governments at all levels as a matter of utmost urgency, so that the important challenges that lie ahead of BiH and the concerns of its citizens can finally be met.

The PIC SB underlined its support for BiH's continued progress on its Euro-Atlantic path and, in particular, urged the institutions in BiH and elected leaders to break out of the stalemate blocking the country's EU integration path and to

implement the most pressing economic reforms as defined in the Compact for Growth and Jobs. In this context, the PIC SB strongly supports the reinvigorated approach and on-going efforts in relation to the current EU initiative, which aims to revitalize the reform process in BiH and the country's progress towards the EU whilst maintaining the requirements and conditions of accession to the European Union.[1]

Furthermore, the PIC Steering Board calls upon the authorities in BiH to:

1. Accelerate considerably the response to the floods and extend assistance to those who remain particularly vulnerable. In addition, to build resilience and preventative measures, including within a regional approach, in line with the conclusions of the international donors conference held in Brussels in July 2014, and in coordination with the international community;
2. Improve the electoral process, in particular with regard to reviews of constituency boundaries and the allocation of mandates to reflect changing voter registration, polling station committee performance, and regulation of campaign financing;
3. Respect and implement decisions of the BiH Constitutional Court as they are final and binding, in particular the ruling on Mostar, ensuring that Mostar remains a single, coherent, multi-ethnic unit of local self-government, with some level of local authority/administration below that of the city;
4. Prosecute cases of high level corruption; effectively process war crimes in line with domestic strategies by prioritizing the most complex and serious cases, focusing on quality rather than the number of indictments; maintain rules to prevent conflict of interest in judicial appointments by the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council;

5. Advance decisively with education reform aiming at improving education standards, based on principles of non-discrimination, non-segregation and inclusiveness;
6. Refrain from negative rhetoric, which only diverts energy from the urgent reforms needed to create economic opportunities for all.

The NATO members of the PIC SB and Japan also called upon the authorities in BiH to register prospective defence property upon the request of the BiH Public Attorney under the ownership of the BiH state, as required by the BiH Law on Defence and fully in line with the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court, as a prerequisite for activating the NATO Membership Action Plan.

The PIC SB reiterated its full support for the High Representative, who will continue to ensure full respect for the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and carry out his mandate under Annex 10 and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, which remains unchanged. 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 underlined that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement.

In this context, the PIC SB reminded the BiH authorities to ensure that the High Representative and his Office have access to officials, institutions and documents in a timely fashion. Under Annex 10 of the GFAP, all authorities in BiH are obliged to fully cooperate with the High Representative as well as with the international organizations and agencies as provided for in Article IX of the GFAP.

The PIC SB emphasised the need to fully implement the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for OHR's closure.

The PIC SB will hold its next meeting in Sarajevo on 26-27 May 2015.

[1] The Russian Federation is of the opinion that Euro-Atlantic integration is not the sole perspective for BiH and does not support this paragraph.