

Communiqué of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board *



Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board met in Sarajevo on 22-23 May 2013, including with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The PIC Steering Board is deeply concerned about the lack of progress on the reform agenda, which has resulted in the country falling further behind the rest of the region, particularly in terms of EU integration. The PIC Steering Board called on political leaders and institutions to intensify their efforts to secure progress for BiH.

The PIC Steering Board expressed concern about the lack of progress on the 5+2 agenda and reinforced the need to complete the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for OHR closure. In line with its previous communiqués, the Steering Board called on the competent BiH authorities to take the necessary steps to resolve the outstanding issues. The PIC Steering Board expressed concern about the continued lack of progress.

Recalling once again that the BiH political leaders have indicated that European integration is a key priority, the PIC Steering Board regretted that political leaders were unable to reach a political solution to implement the Sejdic-Finci judgment in line with BiH's obligations as a member of the

Council of Europe and under the SAA / Interim Agreement. In this context, it called on the relevant authorities and political leaders to intensify their effort to accelerate the country's progress towards the EU.

The PIC Steering Board shared the High Representative's concerns about the readiness of authorities at all levels to disregard constitutional and legal provisions in the interests of political expediency. The PIC Steering Board also reminded the authorities of their constitutional obligation to implement all rulings of the Constitutional Courts.

The PIC Steering Board calls on the competent authorities to redouble their efforts to protect and advance the rule of law and to fight corruption and organized crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Steering Board also calls on all relevant levels of government to allocate sufficient resources from their own budgets to allow for processing of the war crime cases.

The PIC Steering Board discussed the deepening political and institutional crisis in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It called on all political parties and authorities to resolve the crisis by reaching a political solution that ensures the functioning of institutions and that respects the Constitution and the procedures established by law. In order to ensure the FBiH Constitutional Court's capacity to fulfil its constitutional role, the PIC Steering Board called for the Court's vacancies to be filled without unnecessary delay.

The PIC Steering Board deplored the utter failure of the political parties over the past two-and-a-half years to meet their obligations to implement the ruling of the BiH Constitutional Court on the electoral system for Mostar, a Dayton requirement. The PIC Steering Board recognized that this failure is primarily due to the inflexibility of the SDA and the HDZ BiH, who have failed to live up to the undertaking

that they made to the PIC Steering Board to seek an outcome based on a compromise in which no party would achieve all of its objectives. In light of the failure to date of the parties to present other workable solutions, the PIC Steering Board endorses the Framework Document as the most realistic basis available upon which the rulings of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose decisions are final and binding under Annex 4 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, can be implemented. With this in mind, the PIC SB calls on OHR to bring the facilitation process to a conclusion through talks based on the parameters set out in the Framework Document. The PIC Steering Board underscored that any party that fails to agree to a compromise solution on this basis will bear responsibility for failing to meet its obligations under the Peace Agreement.

The PIC Steering Board welcomed the initiative to engage local experts and the citizens of the Federation to participate in a domestic process to propose reforms to the Federation that would make the Federation more functional, cost-effective and responsive to the needs of citizens. It also called on responsible officials of the Federation to engage in this process to achieve these goals.

The PIC Steering Board raised its concern about the crisis surrounding the issuance of Citizens Identification Numbers resulting from the failure of the BiH institutions to resolve the matter as required by the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court to change some place names in the law. The unilateral action taken by the Brcko District and RS authorities to issue their own numbers is an unacceptable usurpation of state competences. This action may also call into question the integrity of documents – such as passports – issued on the basis of these ID numbers. The PIC Steering Board called on the competent BiH authorities to enact urgently a focused solution based on addressing the Constitutional Court ruling, that can be implemented

immediately in the interest of all BiH citizens and that maintains a single State-wide system.

The PIC Steering Board reaffirmed that genocide in Srebrenica, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the course of the conflict in BiH must not be forgotten or denied. Recalling its previous communiqué that Srebrenica and its victims have particular significance because of the genocide committed there, the PIC Steering Board called on citizens and political leaders to support reconciliation in Srebrenica, work in the interests of all residents of the municipality, facilitate the return of former residents, and promote sustainable economic development. In this spirit, the PIC Steering Board urged that a solution be found to address the sensitivities of the location of the Budak Church.

The NATO members of the PIC and Japan also called upon the relevant authorities to demonstrate the country's commitment to Euro-Atlantic integration by acting swiftly to complete the necessary steps to enable registration of prospective defence property, while fully respecting the Constitutional Court ruling. Far too much time has already been lost since BiH was offered the opportunity to engage fully in NATO's Membership Action Plan three years ago.

The PIC Steering Board strongly deplored efforts and divisive statements aimed at questioning the territorial integrity of the country, as well as undermining the key institutions of BiH and state-level competencies.

Recalling its earlier communiqués and declarations, the PIC Steering Board underlined its unequivocal commitment to BiH's territorial integrity and sovereignty. The PIC Steering Board 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 Steering Board reminded all parties

of their obligation to fully comply with the GFAP, all its annexes, and decisions of the High Representative. The PIC Steering Board underlined that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The PIC Steering Board supported regional cooperation and reconciliation as a fundamental tool to overcome differences and to establish harmonious relations between BiH and its neighbouring states. In particular, it welcomed the recent intensification of top-level dialogue between the governments of BiH and neighbouring countries and looks forward to further initiatives directed at reinforcing this trend.

The PIC Steering Board expressed its appreciation for the invaluable contribution made by Principal Deputy High Representative and Brcko District Supervisor Ambassador Roderick Moore, who will depart this summer. The PIC Steering Board thanked Ambassador Moore for his efforts to uphold the Dayton Peace Accords, particularly through his promotion of functioning institutions, leadership of efforts to resolve the situation in Mostar, and transforming the international presence in Brcko District.

The PIC Steering Board will hold its next meeting on 4-5 December 2013 in Sarajevo.

** The Russian Federation is unable to join this Communiqué.*