



Communiqué of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board

Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board met in Sarajevo on 29-30 November 2012, including with the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the Council of Ministers. While welcoming the recent return to inter-party dialogue, the Steering Board expressed concern that concrete progress had stalled since its last meeting in May, resulting in Bosnia and Herzegovina falling behind the rest of the region, particularly in terms of progress on its European path. The PIC Steering Board called on political leaders to renew their commitment to achieving the progress necessary to secure a better future for BiH.

The PIC Steering Board took note of the recent efforts to ensure a functioning Council of Ministers and urged all political leaders to continue with cooperation and dialogue. The PIC Steering Board reminded political leaders and competent institutions of the need to preserve achieved reforms and to honour international commitments as they implement political agreements. The PIC Steering Board called on all authorities to ensure the proper functioning of institutions at state level and at all other levels. In particular, it emphasized that effective and efficient cooperation between the State level and the Entities and between the Entities is important for the overall functioning of the country.

The PIC Steering Board discussed recent political developments in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It called on authorities to respect the Constitution and the procedures established by law. A constructive approach by all parties is essential. To ensure the FBiH Constitutional Court's capacity to fulfil its constitutional role in this regard the PIC Steering Board urged the relevant authorities to fill the Court's vacancies without further delay.

Recalling the priority attached by the leaders of all parties in BiH to integration into the European Union, the Steering Board called on leaders and competent authorities in BiH to take the steps necessary to accelerate the country's progress towards the EU. In order to submit a credible membership application to the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina must have a satisfactory track record in implementing its obligations under the SAA/ Interim Agreement and, as a matter of urgency, implement the Sejdic-Finci judgment, consistent with its obligations under the ECHR.

The PIC Steering Board also reinforced the need to complete the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for OHR closure. In particular, the Steering Board called on the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to adopt the necessary acts to resolve the outstanding issue of state property in line with the Decision of the Constitutional Court of BiH of September 2012 and in the spirit of the March 9 Agreement. Defence property must also be resolved as part of the 5+2 agenda.

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 acts 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 over two years ago.

The PIC Steering Board reiterated its full support for an independent, efficient, impartial and professional judicial system throughout BiH. The PIC Steering Board welcomed the work carried out in the context of the EU-BiH Structured Dialogue on Justice and reminded the competent authorities that they have committed that all prospective legislative and institutional changes to the judicial system must be discussed in this framework.

The PIC Steering Board reaffirmed its commitment and support for the State level judicial bodies and called on the domestic authorities to provide full support to these bodies and safeguard the progress made thus far, including by delivering on the transition plans to which they committed earlier. The PIC Steering Board noted the contributions of the international judges, prosecutors and judicial advisors to the development of both the Court and Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina since their establishment.

Recalling the principles endorsed by the Steering Board Ambassadors in September, the PIC Steering Board called on the parties to implement the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling on Mostar and enable elections to be conducted there as soon as possible. The Steering Board expects every party to compromise in order to ensure that this matter is resolved quickly within domestic institutions. The Steering Board reaffirmed its full support for the ongoing process facilitated by OHR.

The PIC Steering Board reviewed the implementation of the decisions taken in May by the High Representative and the Brcko Supervisor concerning Brcko, noting the smooth closure of the Brcko Final Award office, successful conduct of elections and reinforced presence of the OSCE and EU. The PIC Steering Board reiterated its full commitment to the Final Award of the Brcko Arbitral Tribunal and encouraged the Brcko authorities and the political parties to work together in the interests of all.

The PIC Steering Board welcomed the broad participation in the 7 October elections, which were prepared and conducted in an overall satisfactory manner, and called for the expeditious completion of the electoral process. The PIC Steering Board stressed the importance of the independence of the Central Election Commission and called on all parties to ensure that the appropriate domestic institutions can complete their work promptly in a professional and objective manner, in accordance with the Election Law.

Recalling its previous communiqué, 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.

The PIC Steering Board deplored recent unjustified verbal attacks by local political leaders against the High Representative, OHR and other representatives of the international community and urged political leaders to focus on concrete positive change.^[1]

The PIC SB also 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 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 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 will hold its next meeting on 22-23 May 2013 in Sarajevo.

[1]The Russian Federation does not support this paragraph.