

STATEMENT BY THE AMBASSADORS OF THE STEERING BOARD OF THE PEACE IMPLEMENTATION COUNCIL

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The ICTY has made clear its view that the continued presence of international judges and prosecutors is essential in order for BiH to comply with its international legal obligations in respect of the ICTY. The Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board share this assessment and therefore welcome and give their full support to the High Representative's Decision(s) to extend the mandate of International Judges and Prosecutors working in the war crimes department of the Court of BiH.

Given the complexity of the crimes in question, we do not anticipate that BiH will have fulfilled its obligations to ensure justice in regard to war crimes by the time this renewed mandate expires. We therefore call upon the BiH authorities to ensure within this timeframe that BiH's judicial structures have the resources required to meet BiH's continued obligations without recourse to internationals serving in executive positions.

The PIC recognises that organised crime, corruption and terrorism remain serious problems confronting BiH society. We believe, though, that it is appropriate for the BiH judicial authorities to assume full executive responsibility for the prosecution of such crimes. International assistance remains essential to support the BiH authorities in this effort. We are prepared to support the continued presence of international judges and prosecutors to serve in an advisory capacity to local authorities and call upon BiH judicial authorities to invite them to remain. The Rule of Law remains a key criteria for the EU integration process. BiH should intensify its efforts in the area of judiciary reform and in combating organised crime and corruption.

The IC and the EU are ready to help and assist with funds and know-how, and will continue to strongly support the BiH Court and Prosecutor's Office, including by reinforcing the existing international advisory presence in the Special Department for Organised Crime. Accordingly, internationals including those currently working as judges and prosecutors could stay and be invited by BiH institutions to continue working as advisers.

[1] Turkey joins the above decision in connection with war crimes. Turkey, however, would have preferred an extension in executive capacity in connection with organised crime as well.