BiH must properly fund Municipal Elections

The Ambassadors of the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board today commended the BiH Election Commission for beginning preparations for the Municipal Elections and called on all responsible bodies in BiH – from the municipal level to the state institutions – to provide the necessary organisational and financial assistance to allow for the smooth conduct of the Municipal Elections next year. The 2004 Municipal Elections will be the first elections completely organized and financed by domestic means.

The organization of the 2002 General Elections was a great success for the democratic institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These were the first elections organised and run by the BiH authorities themselves; they performed that role with commendable competence and professionalism. The 2004 Municipal Elections will build on the success of the 2002 elections, demonstrating that Bosnia and Herzegovina is firmly on the way to becoming a democratic country capable of standing on its own feet.

The Ambassadors of the Steering Board drew particular attention to the need for the relevant BiH authorities to make adequate financial provision for the elections. Organising and running free and fair elections costs money. They therefore called upon all relevant levels of government to take full account of the estimated cost of the Elections in their draft 2004 budget submissions, currently under preparation.

Next year's Municipal Elections are just under a year away. If they are to be held successfully, then they will require the active and sustained support of all the authorities involved, from now right up until Polling Day.