Communique by the PIC Steering Board

Communique by the Foreign Ministers of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council

The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina met with the Peace Implementation Council (PlC) Steering Board members at the ministerial level on September 22nd 1999.

The Steering Board welcomed the new High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch to his position; the High Representative stressed his commitment to carry out the civilian aspects of the Dayton/Paris Peace Accords and subsequent PlC declarations.

The Steering Board welcomed and endorsed the High Representative's outline of his concept of "ownership" – the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina becoming the owners of their progress in implementation of the Dayton/Paris Accords and the eventual entry of Bosnia-Herzegovina into European institutions. The Steering Board noted that political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina are accountable for leading and not impeding the transformation of their country from war and ethnic strife to pluralism and a modern civic society. They noted that this requires a truly independent media and the strengthening of the Rule of Law.

The Steering Board also welcomed the High Representative's decision to focus his efforts on key strategic areas:

- Economic reform, with a special emphasis on fighting corruption; to allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to reach levels of transparency and prosperity that meet European standards.
- The continued return of displaced persons and refugees.

- The development of common institutions that will ensure Bosnia and Herzegovina functions as a modern state, accountable to its citizens.

The Steering Board and the High Representative expect that a new Permanent Election Law will be in place by February 2000. The Steering Board also placed emphasis on and support for the implementation of the Brcko Final Award.

The Steering Board and the High Representative agreed that the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe offers a broad regional framework for further progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regional context, the Steering Board Ministers and the High Representative endorsed the September l7th, 1999, statement by Political Directors concerning the forthcoming elections in Croatia, and their potential effect on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Steering Board expressed its full confidence in the new High Representative, noting that he possesses all powers granted by the Dayton/Paris Accords and subsequent PlC declarations. The Steering Board encouraged the High Representative to continue to coordinate the activities of other International Agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Steering Board welcomed the High Representative’s plans to submit a budget proposal for the year 2000 that reflects his key priorities without an increase in resources.