

Communique by the PIC Steering Board

The PIC Steering Board met at the level of Political Directors with the High Representative in Stockholm, 21 June 2001. The Swedish EU Presidency kindly hosted the meeting.

The Steering Board reviewed the High Representatives proposals and heard representatives from UN and OSCE on the streamlining of current international civilian implementation structures in BiH. The Steering Board agrees that discussions regarding the streamlining process shall get under way now, that a phased approach would best facilitate the process, that it should follow a strictly functional approach and that the process would be fully transparent. It is held that the Peace Implementation Council, the Steering Board and OHR remain at the center of peace implementation. It is agreed that the current capacities, strengths, weaknesses and other relevant factors to the streamlining process need to be reviewed. The Steering Board members will further discuss concrete streamlining proposals, as applicable, within the European Union, the UN Security Council and the OSCE Permanent Council with a view to seek their approval for the streamlining process. The issue will then be further discussed at the next Steering Board meeting at the level of Political Directors. It is understood that the budgetary implications of streamlining must be clarified before any final decision.

The Steering Board commends the BiH Presidency on the signing of the "Bosnia and Herzegovina Defence Policy". The efforts by both the Standing Committee on Military Matters and the Defence Ministers Working Group required to complete this document are appreciated. The Steering Board recognises the authority of the SCMM on state defence matters and will refer to the Secretariat as the primary point of contact for its implementation. The Steering Board now looks forward to the Council of Ministers developing a BiH Security Policy.

The Steering Board commends the efforts undertaken by the local police to provide security for the laying of the cornerstone for the reconstruction of the Ferhadija Mosque, underlining that local police have the responsibility for the safety of all citizens and residents in BiH. The incidents surrounding this event clearly show the need for reconciliation and religious tolerance.

The Steering Board reminds the competent BiH institutions of their obligation to adopt promptly the election law, honouring their commitments to the EU Road Map and to the accession criteria of the Council of Europe.

The Steering Board supports the High Representative in his endeavours to facilitate the implementation of the "Constituent Peoples" decision of the BiH Constitutional Court in both entities so as to ensure that symmetry in substance and principle in the entity constitutions is achieved within realistic and prompt time limits.

The Steering Board welcomes the conclusion of an Agreement on Succession to the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in Vienna providing for the distribution of the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the SFRY among the successor States. The Steering Board reminds the five States that they must build on this achievement leaving the tragic legacy of the past years behind and ensuring their full participation in the new Europe. The Steering Board considers that the signing of the agreement on 29 June 2001 in Vienna will mark the successful conclusion of the High Representatives mandate with regard to succession issues.

The Steering Board endorses the recommendations of the Financial Experts meeting of 15 May 2001.

The Steering Board confirmed the extension of the tenure of the current High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, for another year and expresses its continued full support for his untiring efforts. The Steering Board notes that the EU Foreign Ministers are favorably inclined to the proposed candidature of Lord Ashdown to succeed him next year. The Steering Board warmly thanks Principal Deputy High Representative, Ralph Johnson, for his dedicated contribution to the peace implementation process during his two-year tenure at the Office of the High Representative.

Stockholm, 21 June 2001