

Announcement of the meeting of the Steering Board of the PIC in Sintra

STATEMENT

by the High Representative, Carl Bildt

Sarajevo, 22 May 1997

The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council will meet at Ministerial level in Sintra, in Portugal, on 30 May.

The last meeting of the Steering Board was in Paris November 14 last year. At that meeting, the broad principles for the consolidation period were agreed.

The Sintra meeting has been called by the High Representative in order to re-energize international attention to and efforts to assist the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was first discussed at the April meeting of the Steering Board in Istanbul. Agreement on time and venue was reached last week.

It will be an important meeting, both in setting out the international community's strategy for the months ahead, and in appointing a new High Representative to implement the strategy.

A Sintra Declaration will be adopted at the meeting, expressing the determination of the international community to press forward with implementation of the Peace Agreement, and calling on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully live up to their responsibilities.

There is a mounting concern in the international community that the common institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina are moving ahead much too slowly, not least with the crucial economic issues.

I have today urged the Co-Chairs and Vice-Chair of the Council of Ministers to finish work on their part of the economic part of the Quick Start Package before the Sintra meeting. To do so would send a good signal – to fail to do so would undoubtedly affect international confidence in the capacity of the common institutions to move ahead with peace implementation.

It is my hope that the Council of Ministers and the Presidency with their efforts in the next few days will make it possible for the Sintra meeting to call a Donors' Conference in late June. Failure to move forward on the Quick Start Package risks rapidly affecting the level of international economic assistance available during the next few years.

It is a good sign for Bosnia and Herzegovina that Foreign Ministers of the eleven members of the PIC Steering Board, including the nations represented in the Contact Group, are likely to be present at the meeting. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and British Secretary of State Robin Cook will be attending their first Steering Board in their new capacities.

The United Nations, NATO, OSCE and UNHCR have also been invited, in an observer capacity.

I have also invited the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as of the Federation and the Republika Srpska to the Sintra meeting. There will be consultations during the coming week with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the commitments of the Sintra Declaration, as well as on the nomination of a new High Representative.

The Council of Ministers and the Presidency have a strong responsibility to conclude their work in adopting the Quick Start Package of essential legislation necessary to make it possible to hold a donor conference on economic reconstruction. I see no reason why this should not be done in time for Sintra. If this does not occur, some members of the international community might start to reconsider the level of assistance they are willing to

pledge.

Consultations are continuing now on the appointment of my successor. I have overall responsibility as Chairman of the PIC Steering Board for pushing the process forward. In that connection I shall be in close touch with members of the Steering Board up until the meeting in Sintra. I will discuss the subject with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina next week.