

# High Representative Welcomes Signing of Succession Agreement in Vienna

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, speaking today at the signing of the Agreement on Succession Issues of the Former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY), welcomed the treaty as a historic step towards greater regional cooperation. The agreement, signed by the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as the Vice President of the FYROM, in the presence of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, provides for the distribution of the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the SFRY among the States.

The High Representative congratulated the five States, and the Special Negotiator, Sir Arthur Watts, on achieving this Agreement. He specifically expressed his appreciation to the Austrian government for providing support for the final round of negotiations.

Reaching agreement on succession is a clear signal that Southeastern Europe is entering a period of regional cooperation and – albeit at a pace that is still much too slow – recovery and consolidation. The agreement is a step forward in this recovery process. Closing a painful chapter has been made possible through mutually advantageous exchange. In this respect the succession talks offer a model for the negotiated settlement of outstanding issues in the former Yugoslavia and beyond.

The High Representative noted that the signing of the agreement concludes his mandate on SFRY succession, assigned to his predecessor Carl Bildt at the London Conference of

1995. The mandate has been successfully concluded because the parties to the settlement have assumed responsibility and have moved forward constructively for the benefit of their own citizens.