

## **Joint Statement by Republic of Croatia Prime Minister Ivica Racan and Principal Deputy High Representative Ralph Johnson**

The Office of the High Representative (OHR) welcomes the recent cooperation demonstrated by the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in resolving many issues of mutual interest between the two countries. In particular, these issues include upholding the Independent Media Commission's decision on illegal broadcasting, realignment of border control points in accordance with the Treaty on the State Border, opening of upgraded border crossings and cooperation in rendering assistance in natural disasters.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has affirmed that it will increase cooperation with the OHR in all areas, which are in accordance with recent Peace Implementation Conference conclusions, defined as the priorities in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia will jointly with Bosnia and Herzegovina and within the framework of inter-state cooperation, support the creation of the necessary conditions for self-sustainable economic growth in BiH and continue working towards further liberalization of trade and creation of a favorable investment environment. Additionally, the strengthening of the central institutions and appropriate development of private sector, financial sector and Rule of Law will also strongly be supported. The OHR also supports creating the necessary conditions for a self-sustainable economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina and looks forward to both countries cooperating more closely in this regard.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia has committed to provide for all of its refugees who wish to return to Croatia. At the same time, it is expected that the competent authorities in BiH will provide support to the return of refugees from the Republic of Croatia to BiH. The OHR also welcomes the decision taken today between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the BiH Council of Ministers to establish a joint commission at the state level, which will deal with refugee return issues. Joint projects within the scope of the Stability Pact are highly encouraged.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia will, with its declared transparent policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina and in cooperation with BiH authorities and the OHR, contribute to the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, prevent cross-border illegal traffic of people, goods and money, support the development of a market economy and democratic multi-ethnic society.