

New York Declaration

The three members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Joint Presidency accepted the invitation of the United Nations Security Council to appear before it on the eve of the fourth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords. They reaffirmed their commitment to the Dayton Peace Accords, noted the great progress that has been made toward the fulfillment of its goals, and pledged themselves to face squarely the challenges that remain.

The Presidency reaffirmed its commitment to the realisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign, fully integrated, and multiethnic state with two multi-ethnic entities, while respecting the uniqueness of its three equal constituent peoples. They condemned anti-Dayton forces advocating ethnic hatred and division, affirmed that such views have no place in the politics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and restated their opposition to all threats to the democratic process.

The Presidency agreed that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is as a part of Europe. They further agreed that this will require full integration into European institutions, and the creation of the type of strong, functioning common institutions found in other democratic, European countries.

To move forward toward achieving these goals, the three Presidents:

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1. Agreed to the establishment of a state border service on the basis of the attached principles and within the framework of the High Representative's efforts.
2. Announced the creation of a Permanent Secretariat for the Joint Presidency that will be responsible to the Presidency as a single institution representing the aspirations of all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Agreed that the Secretariat will be composed initially of at least five people from each constituent group, who will be co-located in a single building of the Presidency and who will be assigned on a full-time basis to, and work exclusively for, the Joint Presidency. The Secretariat will provide continuity for the work of the Presidency by developing working papers, ensuring that decisions of the Presidency are properly staffed and implemented, and serving as a liaison with the Council of Ministers. Agreed further to provide the Secretariat with sufficient resources and personnel to carry out its mandate by March 1.
3. Agreed that full funding of the state ministries is an essential prerequisite for a truly, functioning state government and agreed that it must be a top spending priority for the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stated that the structure of the Council of Ministers should be rectified in an accelerated fashion in accordance with the BiH Constituent Court decision and the Madrid and Declaration decisions. Agreed to secure the necessary resources for the full funding of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, and the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications by March 1.
4. Reaffirmed their support for the adoption of the Permanent Election Law, stressing the importance of the consistency of this law with internationally acceptable standards and the BiH constitution.
5. Expressed their intention to seek improved inter-entity military cooperation, including through creation of joint units to participate in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

6. Agreed that the return of displaced persons and refugees has not been sufficient “particularly in urban areas such as Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar” and that it must be the government’s highest priority if Bosnia and Herzegovina is to truly become a stable and prosperous state. Agreed to press the Federation and Republika Srpska to provide additional staffing, funding and proper facilities to their ministries for refugees in order that urban returns can be accelerated. Endorsed the harmonized property laws announced by the High Representative in October 1999 and committed themselves to advocate strongly for their expeditious implementation. Agreed to establish a joint commission of the entities with international representation that will meet regularly to establish refugee return priorities to urban areas and report regularly. In this vein, the commission will submit a report to the United Nations Security Council by March 1, 2000, reporting on progress.
7. Agreed that the state government will be responsible for serving as a central database and managing authority for BiH passports, and that the Presidents will propose to the BiH Parliament and strongly support the creation of single national passport carrying only the name BiH on its cover in both the Cyrillic and Latin scripts.
8. Acknowledged that corruption and the lack of transparency are serious problems that block Bosnia and Herzegovina’s economic development at all levels. Agreed to support aggressive steps to combat these problems, including full backing for the efforts of the High Representative and cooperation with the Stability Pact’s anti-corruption initiative.