Communiqué by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council

The PIC Steering Board at the level of Political Directors met in Brussels on 30 November 1999 with the High Representative.

The Steering Board and the High Representative welcomed the commitments made by the BiH Presidency in the New York Declaration and in the agreed Principles on the Establishment of a State Border Service, issued at the occasion of the BiH Presidency' s appearance before the United Nations Security Council on 15 November 1999, as well as the commitments made at the Dayton Anniversary Conference to strengthen and promote the Dayton Peace Accords.

The Steering Board noted with satisfaction that the BiH Presidency has taken the first step to follow these commitments through by approving on 24 November 1999 the draft Law on the State Border Service and submitting it to the BiH Parliament for further action. The Steering Board and the High Representative agreed to make use of the momentum generated by the New York Declaration and to follow up and ensure the full implementation of these commitments.

The Steering Board lends its full support to the High Representative's Property Legislation Implementation Plan (PLIP) acknowledged to be the key factor for the safe return of refugees and displaced persons as well as for restoration of property rights in order to reverse the effects of war time ethnic cleansing.

The Steering Board noted the responsibility of the High Representative in exercise of the powers vested in him to ensure the implementation of the Peace Agreement throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Entities and to take

appropriate measures. The Steering Board fully endorses the action taken in closest coordination with OSCE, UNMiBH and SFOR against persons holding public office that have seriously and persistently obstructed the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

The Steering Board also welcomed the joint stance of the High Representative, IMC and SFOR to ensure freedom of the media and equal access to media for audiences from all three constituent peoples without political interference from either inside or outside Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Steering Board welcomed the High Representative' s intention to give high priority to economic issues with the aim of having BiH become a single economic space and developing the private sector in a framework of political and economic structural reforms. Any new legislation is to be screened in order to identify cost implications and funding requirements.

The Steering Board and the High Representative recalled the Statement on the Impact of the Croatian Elections on Bosnia and Herzegovina dated 17 September 1999. They agreed that the High Representative send a strong message to the Croatian leadership outlining areas of concern and requiring that all aspects of the forthcoming Croatian elections taking place in Bosnia and Herzegovina (especially voter registration) be conducted freely and fairly in full compliance with OSCE standards.