

Communiqué of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council



The Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) Political Directors met in Sarajevo on 7-8 June 2016 to review the process of implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), which remains the basis for a stable, secure, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The PIC SB reminded all parties of their obligation to comply fully with the GFAP, all its annexes, and decisions of the High Representative. It reaffirmed its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of BiH as a single, sovereign state comprising two entities. The PIC SB restated that entities have no right to secede from BiH and only exist legally by virtue of the BiH Constitution. The PIC SB reminded authorities in BiH that the BiH Constitution is an integral part of the GFAP and that the decisions of the BiH Constitutional Court are final and binding and must be implemented. The PIC SB reiterated its full support for the High Representative in ensuring complete respect for the GFAP and carrying out his mandate under Annex 10 and relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, which remains unchanged. It underlined that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP. The PIC SB emphasized the need to fully implement the 5+2 agenda, which remains necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

The PIC SB reviewed current developments in BiH since its last meeting in December 2015 and in particular noted the following:

The PIC SB underlined the significance of BiH's EU aspirations as expressed in the membership application for the EU. The PIC SB called upon the leadership of BiH to proceed with the required reforms – socioeconomic, rule of law, justice and public administration. These should be carried out in accordance with citizens' demands, in cooperation with institutions and civil society. These reforms would, inter alia, allow BiH to maintain momentum and to advance on its EU path, in line with the BiH leadership's Written Commitment to EU Integration.

The PIC SB welcomed the successful negotiations between the IMF and BiH authorities on an agreement, subject to approval by the IMF Executive Board, to launch an economic program to be supported by a 36-month, 550 million euro Extended Fund Facility, which is aimed at maintaining fiscal, economic and financial stability, spurring continued infrastructure development and job creation. It will also facilitate implementation of reforms considered by the EU to be necessary to assist BiH on its path to EU accession. The PIC SB called on the BiH authorities to honour their commitments to the IMF.

The PIC SB emphasized the importance of the official publication of the results of the census conducted in 2013 in BiH in accordance with the procedures and timeframe defined by law and international standards.

The PIC SB called on the competent authorities to urgently put in place a solution to the Public Broadcasting System (PBS), which ensures a single method of funding across BiH for the entire PBS system and which secures PBS' financial sustainability and independence. The PIC SB called on the competent authorities to finally complete the implementation of the PBS law, not least by establishing the PBS Corporation

that will enable the process of digitalization to proceed.

The PIC SB noted the announcement by the Central Election Commission on the holding of local elections in BiH on Sunday, 2 October. The PIC SB urged the authorities in BiH to provide full support to the Central Election Commission and recalled the important role played by civil society in monitoring the integrity of the election process. It urged all political parties and political leaders to focus their campaigns on local issues in a forward-looking, constructive, and responsible manner. The PIC SB encouraged the citizens of BiH to exercise their democratic right to participate in elections and influence the future of the country.

The PIC SB deplored the utter failure of the political parties over the past five-and-a-half years to meet their obligations to implement the ruling of the BiH Constitutional Court on the electoral system for Mostar, a Dayton requirement. The PIC SB called upon all parties, in particular SDA and HDZ BiH, to reach a compromise by the beginning of July to allow voters in Mostar to exercise their basic right to vote for the first time in eight years. It reaffirmed the core principle that Mostar must remain a single, coherent, multi-ethnic unit of local self-government, with some level of local authority/administration below that of the city. The PIC SB called upon political leaders to resolve the Mostar election issue independent of other issues, in order to fulfil their commitment to meeting international standards for democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The PIC SB stressed that education is of the utmost importance for reconciliation, sustainable peace and economic development. It called upon the authorities in BiH to advance decisively with education reform aimed at improving education standards to meet the demands of 21st century labour markets, based on principles of non-politicization, non-discrimination, non-segregation and inclusiveness. This should include both the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation BiH (FBiH)

providing appropriate classes for the National Group of Subjects and for the preparation of teachers for inclusive education in the context of social and cultural diversity. The PIC SB acknowledged the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court according to which the constituent peoples and Others have the constitutional right to name their own language and the RS Constitution does not interfere with that right. The PIC SB urged all levels of government to recognize this right equally for all constituent peoples and Others. In the FBiH, the cantonal constitutions should be brought in line with the FBiH Constitution with regards to the status of all constituent peoples and their languages, and the practice of “two schools under one roof” must be eliminated.

The PIC SB strongly urged all political, social and religious leaders in BiH to advance reconciliation, mutual understanding and tolerance and to refrain from negative and divisive policies, actions and rhetoric which can have a radicalising effect on individuals and communities, and which only divert energy from the urgent reforms needed to create economic opportunities for all, and provide young people hope for a future in BiH. In particular, it is wholly inappropriate for anyone, particularly leaders, to praise or celebrate war criminals.

The PIC SB voiced its concern over the threats of radicalism and terrorism in BiH. Welcoming both the BiH authorities’ efforts to counter radicalism and terrorism and the positive initiatives launched by the Islamic Community of BiH to this end, the PIC SB encouraged the relevant authorities in BiH at all levels to continue efforts to tackle these threats through improved coordination and full cooperation, both internally and with the international community.

The PIC SB assessed that pervasive corruption in BiH remains a serious problem impeding the country’s social, economic and political development. The PIC SB again called on BiH leaders and competent authorities to redouble their efforts to protect

and advance the rule of law and to prevent and fight corruption and organized crime in BiH. The PIC SB reiterated its full support for the development of independent, efficient, impartial, and professional judicial, prosecutorial, and law enforcement institutions throughout BiH. The PIC SB urged these institutions to investigate and prosecute corruption, especially at high levels, and implement court decisions at all levels, without further delay.

The NATO members of the PIC SB and Japan noted limited progress since the previous PIC SB meeting on the process of the registration of prospective defence property under the ownership of the BiH State. They expressed their full support to all competent authorities in the registration process, and urged them to intensify their efforts, with the aim to activate the NATO Membership Action Plan, in line with the 2009 formal request by the BiH Presidency and the 2006 Law on Defence. It called on the RS authorities to enable the registration of prospective defence property located on the territory of the RS. The NATO members of the PIC SB and Japan strongly urged the BiH Presidency to reach a decision on the Defence Review as a framework for strengthening and modernizing BiH's armed forces.*

The PIC SB will hold its next meeting in Sarajevo on 6-7 December 2016.

—

* The Russian Federation disagrees with this paragraph and will make a separate statement in this regard.