

Communiqué of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council



Emphasizing that the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) remains the basis for a stable, secure and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) reminds all parties of their obligation to comply fully with the GFAP, all its annexes, and decisions of the High Representative. It reaffirms its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of BiH as a single, sovereign state comprising two entities. The PIC SB restates that the entities have no right to secede from BiH and only exist legally by virtue of the BiH Constitution. The PIC SB reminds 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 reiterates 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 underlines that the International Community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP. The PIC SB emphasizes the need to fully implement the 5+2 Agenda, which remains necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

The Peace Implementation Council Steering Board (PIC SB) Political Directors met on 3 and 4 December 2024 in Sarajevo to assess developments relevant to the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).

The PIC SB congratulated the Central Election Commission (CEC) for the successful conduct of local elections in accordance with new legislation that enhanced transparency and integrity of electoral process, which is vital to democracy. It noted that the pilot projects for introduction of election technologies have given strong indications about the positive impact that the extended use of these technologies could have on the integrity of the electoral process. Noting the outstanding ODIHR recommendations and the efforts to subvert the electoral process, the PIC SB urges BiH authorities to support and assist the CEC in their activities to ensure the full implementation of the election law, well ahead of the 2026 general elections, including by providing the necessary financial means within the state budget, and to ensure that the electoral legislation fully complies with the remaining ODIHR, GRECO, and Venice Commission recommendations.

Following the European Council decision to open EU accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2024, the PIC SB expects all BiH institutions and political actors to focus on dialogue and to intensify efforts to deliver reforms in line with all relevant steps set out in the Commission's recommendations of 12 October 2022. Working together towards EU accession is key to live up to the aspirations of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be part of the European Union. This includes submitting the reform agenda under the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans.

The PIC SB welcomes the unanimous reauthorization of the EUFOR/Althea mandate by the UN Security Council on 1 November 2024. EUFOR/Althea is vital in supporting local authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

The PIC SB calls upon all relevant domestic stakeholders to engage urgently and constructively in a political dialogue that would result in the adoption of State Property legislation, as the only acceptable and sustainable resolution to the issue of State Property, a key element of the 5+2 Agenda. Delaying the resolution of this issue results in continued legal uncertainty and directly undermines investments vital to economic development of the country and the wellbeing of all its citizens.

The PIC SB strongly condemns flagrant attacks by the Republika Srpska (RS) ruling coalition against the GFAP and the constitutional and legal order of BiH including ongoing secessionist actions. All political and legal steps by RS authorities in the wake of the so-called pan-Serb assembly declaration must comply with the GFAP. Any actions that challenge the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of BiH or undermine the functionality of the institutions must be countered promptly through the constitutional legal framework. The PIC SB reiterated that the international community retains the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP.

The PIC SB strongly condemns the continued pressures on the judiciary and attempts to limit judicial independence, impartiality, and integrity. Undermining the organization or functioning of the BiH Constitutional Court, including by not respecting its decisions, is incompatible with the BiH Constitution and international standards. The PIC SB calls on the RSNA to comply with its obligation under the BiH Constitution and immediately fill the two vacant judicial positions in the BiH Constitutional Court. The PIC SB further calls upon the Federation Parliament to swiftly appoint judges to vacant positions in the Federation Constitutional Court and proceed with the upcoming appointment to the BiH Constitutional Court in line with the BiH Constitution. The PIC SB recalls that appointments to judicial structures should

be non-political and based primarily on merits, and judicial officials should strive to work independently and professionally in the interest of justice for everyone in BiH.

The PIC SB expects the authorities of BiH to swiftly adopt a state budget for 2025 that will support efficient and unhindered functioning of state institutions, including those relevant to Euro-Atlantic integration processes. To this end, the PIC SB calls for the budget to take into account the need to adequately resource State institutions.

The PIC SB welcomed presentations by Dr. Irena Hadžiabdić, President of the BiH Central Election Commission, Mr. Mirko Kuprešaković, Director of the BiH Border Police, Mr. Edin Forto, BiH Minister of Communications and Transport, and Dr. Dubravka Bošnjak, BiH Minister of Civil Affairs. The PIC SB highlighted the crucial role of the Border Police in safeguarding public security and of the CEC in conducting democratic elections. The PIC SB deplored the long running deprivation of revenue for the BiH public broadcasting system negatively affecting its sustainability and functionality, as well as the financially untenable situation of the seven cultural institutions of special significance for BiH due to disputes over their status. The PIC SB reminded all authorities in BiH of their legal obligation to assist efforts to resolve these issues and to ensure sufficient financing and resourcing for their activities. The PIC SB expects relevant authorities, in particular, the BiH Council of Ministers, to propose legislation regulating, among others, management and financing of these institutions.

The PIC SB encourages all parties to promote an environment conducive to reconciliation, which can only be built upon truth, peace, and justice. The PIC SB urges all public officials in BiH to end genocide denial and work together to build trust and understanding. Education is a critical element in this regard, and it must be put in the service of overcoming divisions, building trust and strengthening social

cohesion. These are prerequisites for lasting peace, stability and progress.

The PIC SB extended its full support to the High Representative and reminded that actions undermining the institution are in direct violation of Annex 10 to the GFAP, which mandates full cooperation of the parties to the Agreement with the High Representative.

The PIC SB will hold its next regular meeting on 3-4 June 2025.