

High Representative welcomes agreement on Succession of the SFRY

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomed the conclusion of an Agreement on Succession to the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) today in Vienna. The agreement, initialed by the five successor states, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Slovenia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, provided for the distribution of the rights, obligations, assets and liabilities of the SFRY among the States. He congratulated the five delegations and his Special Negotiator, Sir Arthur Watts, on achieving this historic Agreement. The High Representative mediated the final round of these crucial talks under his separate mandate for SFRY succession

He also expressed his appreciation to the Austrian government, in particular Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner, and the OSCE for hosting the talks.

Reaching agreement on succession has required hard work and sacrifices from all delegations. It constitutes a clear signal for Southeastern Europe that regional cooperation, and not costly, bloody war, will ensure peace and prosperity in the five countries that have succeeded to the Socialist Fed to the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. This comprehensive Agreement is of great importance to the global community, as regional stability in Southeastern Europe is in everyone's interests.

The High Representative reminded the five States that they must build on this achievement in order to ensure their full participation in the new Europe and stressed that only through

compromise and cooperation will it be possible to leave the tragic legacy of the past years behind and move forward into a peaceful and secure future.

At the London Conference of 1995, the Peace Implementation Council placed SFRY succession issues within the mandate of the High Representative. Carl Bildt, the then High Representative, subsequently appointed Sir Arthur Watts as the Special Negotiator for Succession Issues to forge a solution to these issues. The High Representative's responsibility for succession issues, which should come to a close with the signature of this Agreement, has no connection with his responsibility for ensuring the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia and Herzegovina.