Meeting with Representatives of the Croat People

The High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, together with the Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board, today met with representatives of Croats living in Bosnia and Herzegovina and various political parties. The purpose of the meeting was to listen carefully to representatives of the Croat people from all parts of the country and from across the political spectrum as well as from civil society, in order to come to a better understanding of their wishes and concerns.

The High Representative, together with the Ambassadors of the PIC Steering Board, once again re-affirmed their commitment to the Croats as a constituent people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and an integral part of the country's tradition and a key partner in shaping its future.

However, more than dialogue is required. In order to begin to tackle the existential problems which face the Croat people, the High Representative today announced that a series of Peoples' Forums will be held.

The Peoples' Forums will focus exclusively on issues of direct concern to the citizens of this country, bringing together representatives from different sectors of society. Topics which will be covered include health care, pensions, issues of security, education and culture. A focus of these discussions will be the question how existing institutions can best address the difficulties facing ordinary citizens in their daily lives. Only a Federation in which citizens' concerns are addressed will keep the loyalty of its citizens, Croats, Bosniaks or Others.

The first such Forum will focus on the overall performance of Federation institutions as well as on issues of health care. A

date and full agenda for the first Peoples’ Forum will be announced shortly. All parties and social partners will be asked to participate in the dialogue to identify concrete problems and find common solutions.