Statement by Ambassador Michael Steiner: Present State of Federation

The present state of the Federation gives reason for deep concern. The lack of wilingness on both sides to implement existing agreements and to respect mutually agreed deadlines has led to a disturbing deterioration in the relations between the Federation partners. This erodes the basis of the Federation itself.

In Mostar, decisions of EU Administrator Koschick have been challenged irresponsibly by representatives of local Croat authorities. In Sarajevo, unequivocal agreements reached at ministerial level have been publicly denied by subordinate Bosniak officials and have not been implemented. In the field of economic and customs integration, the agreed timetable has not been respected, with negative political and economic impact, as well as negative consequences in the field of freedom of movement. This is against the interests of all of the citizens as well as the constituent peoples of the Federation. Furthermore, the establishment of cantons and municipalities in accordance with the Federation constitution is still far from completion. This continues to be a source of friction and recrimination. Finally, also the return of displaced persons in the Federation to their home towns is showing little progress, with agreed pilot projects still not being implemented.

I appeal to the Federation partners: Do not allow a further deterioration in the relations within the Federation. Do not use the international community as a scapegoat for your own inaction. The Federation can only function when both partners demonstrate their full commitment to its existence and are prepared to implement all of its elements. This commitment

cannot be brought about from the outside.

I appeal to all those with responsability for the Federation and its population: Seize the initiative. Strengthen the foundations of the Federation. Demonstrate the necessary resolve and commitment. The Office of the High Representative stands ready to provide all necessary assistance to achieve this objective.