Statement on decision of OSCE to defer municipal elections

STATEMENT

by the High Representative, Carl Bildt

Vienna, 6 March 1997

I welcome the announcement today by the Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE to defer the municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina until September 1997.
I as well as my Steering Board have consistently stressed the quality aspects of the local elections.

This new time-frame should give time for these very important elections to be thoroughly prepared.

Municipal elections will be of critical importance for the future development of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Following last year’s general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council set clear objectives for the municipal elections, drawing on the experience gained in 1996.

The Steering Board agreed that it was essential to ensure higher standards for the municipal elections; that there must be complete and effective international supervision of every stage of the process; and that there must be proper preparation for the decisive post-election phase, including structures for re-runs and for the installation of the elected officials.

Recent developments in Belgrade have served to underline once again the importance of developing an effective strategy on the post-elections issues. This must naturally be part of any OSCE plan for the election period leading up to and including the installation of those elected.

The international community must make every effort to ensure that the elections are properly prepared and that those who will be elected can take up office. These objectives constitute a daunting challenge and will require a major commitment of financial resources and expertise.

We, in the Office of the High Representative, will continue to support the OSCE which is playing the leading role in the election process.

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Vienna, 6 March 1994