Statement to the Media

Both Klaus Kinkel and HR Carlos Westendorp emphasised in their concluding speeches at the PIC yesterday that there was a clear consensus on the part of the International Community that those who supported and enabled the Dayton Peace process would be rewarded.

The Bonn PIC was hailed as a turning point in the Peace process. The High Representative's existing mandate was strengthened to enable binding arbitration. The PIC member countries made clear that the High Representative would be expected to use these powers against the deadlines set out in the conclusions, and that they would back him up in the exercise of these powers.

The High Representative stated that we are close to reaching the critical mass which will enable long-term peace and reconciliation, and that never again would the International Community presence in Bosnia be as strong as it is now. The importance of availing of the renewal of commitment and resources delivered by Bonn was paramount, if donor country support is to remain. This would place a greater burden on the OHR and on the International Community, but the High Representative stated he was willing to take up this challenge in the pursuit of more rapid progress.

In particular, Both Minister Kinkel and the High Representative placed emphasis on using the strengthened mandate in the following areas: promoting an independent media; co-operating with the Hague Tribunal; facilitating refugee returns; re-structuring the police, and ensuring human rights are respected.

Both regretted the decision by the Serb and Bosnian Delegations to walk out of the proceedings while the tensions in Kosovo were under discussion. However the High

Representative stressed that this had no effect on the wider results of the conference and the agreements of significance which were reached. The conclusions of the conference are not in any way compromised by this incident.