Steering Board Meeting in Sarajevo

The Steering Board met in Sarajevo on 6 October, to review developments since the last meeting on 8 September. In particular the meeting focused on the General Elections held on September 11 and 12, and their outcome.

It was generally agreed that the elections saw a positive reduction in the influence of hardline parties; gains by moderate candidates and a reinforced trend towards pluralism were noted. The prospect of more productive engagement in the central institutions of government and in particular in the BiH Presidency was welcomed.

Steering Board members underlined their willingness to work with all elected officials who have declared loyalty to the Dayton agreement and willingness to work with the International Community. They also reaffirmed their support to the High Representative to use the powers given to him at Bonn.

Steering Board members stressed that a priority for the new political leadership would be to accelerate minority returns in the coming months. A key element of this would be the adoption of the related property legislation in the Republika Srpska, which must happen without delay.

The Steering Board also highlighted the importance of police restructuring and judicial reform in both entities, with significant progress expected by the end of this year. The need for continuing progress on media reform was also emphasised.

Finally, the Steering Board stated its intention to recommend to the Madrid Peace Implementation Council (PIC) on 15/16 December, the extension of the OHR mandate at least until

December 31 1999.

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