

Ministerial Steering Board New York

Following the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) Steering Board Foreign Ministers in New York on 22 September 1999, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, expressed his gratitude for the unanimous endorsement he received for his new strategic approach.

The Board gave their strong support for his concept of "ownership," which emphasizes the fact that it is the leadership and authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are primarily responsible for the implementation of the Peace Agreement, and not the International Community. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina must take "ownership" of their own future.

The Board also expressed serious concern that the regional signatories to the Dayton/Paris Accords had not lived up to their obligations in its implementation. In this regard they referred specifically to Croatia and the FRY.

The High Representative also welcomed the Board's reaffirmation that Bosnia and Herzegovina lay at the centre of the International Community's overall approach to the region, and that the country's future integration into European Institutions lay within the framework established through the Stability Pact.

In this context the Steering Board also emphasized the need for the authorities in BiH to cooperate fully with the ICTY, for it was only by fulfilling their obligations under international law that they could expect to be included into the European family of nations.

The High Representative also undertook to pursue rigorously the Ministers' wish to tackle the "evil of corruption." The

Board agreed that this was principally a problem for the BiH authorities. However, the International Community would encourage public accountability and transparency and provide the framework for the necessary economic and institutional reform.

In this regard the Steering Board also stressed the importance of the media and in particular new information technologies, like the Internet, in advancing modern economic practice, education and public participation and interaction.

The High Representative looked forward to a continuing close cooperation with the Steering Board.