

**PRESS RELEASE**

Brussels, 10 July 1997

9642/97 (Presse 241)  
P. 78/97

**Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union  
on the situation in the Republika Srpska in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

The European Union continues to be profoundly concerned by the crisis in Republika Srpska. This is characterized by machinations in flagrant contradiction with the development of a normal democratic life and by unacceptable measures of intimidation and harassment. It impedes the continuation of the implementation of the peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The international community must therefore react to this situation.

The European Union reaffirms its full support for the efforts of the High Representative.

The European Union stresses the need for a rapid solution to the political deadlock and for ensuring respect for the office of the President of the Republika Srpska, whose decision to dissolve the RS Parliamentary Assembly was held to be in accordance with the constitution by the EU. It calls on all parties to work towards a political solution in a peaceful manner and through dialogue.

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It calls on the police to stop its measures of intimidation. Moreover, it is essential that all provisions dealing with the police, particularly the need to reorganize, reform and certify the police forces, are adopted. The approach of the IPTF (International Police Task Force) with regards to checkpoints should be continued. There should be full cooperation with the Deputy High Representative for Brcko and the IPTF.

The European Union expects the media in the RS to make their contribution towards reducing the crisis. It is imperative that they comply with their duty of objectivity, contrary to what has been the case up to now, and provide public opinion with an account of events taken as a whole and without distortions likely to favour certain currents of opinion.

The FRY authorities, as co-signatories of the peace agreements, must also face up to their responsibilities and act towards a political, democratic and peaceful solution to the crisis currently being experienced by the RS.

The European Union asks the parties once again to comply fully with the undertakings entered into at Dayton and in particular their obligation to hand over to the International Criminal Tribunal those persons indicted for war crimes. In this regard, it considers the action undertaken by the SFOR in Prijedor as perfectly legitimate. The fact that an influential figure indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for war crimes has failed to keep out of the political debate in the RS, in breach of the undertakings made on 18 July 1996, is unacceptable. As a person indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal, Mr Karadzic's place is in the Hague.

The European Union recalls that a stable RS which cooperates with the implementation of the peace process will benefit substantially from the material aid which the EU is making available for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Bosnia Herzegovina.