

PRESS RELEASE

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Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union
on Brcko

The European Union welcomes the High Representative's announcement on 15 March 1998 on the decision on Brcko by the Arbitral Tribunal to maintain the status quo under the present international supervision arrangements and to defer the final arbitration award to early 1999. The EU commends the efforts of the Presiding Arbitrator, Mr Roberts Owen, to pursue a just and fair solution, with co-ordinated support from the international community.

By maintaining the status quo under international supervision for the present, the decision should reassure the parties of fair and equal treatment while maintaining the impetus for accelerated implementation of Dayton/Paris provisions notably on refugee return. The EU expects the parties to remain engaged in dialogue to meet their obligations under the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement.

Specifically, the EU calls on all parties to implement unreservedly the Arbitral Tribunal's decision. The EU expects all those concerned to use the interval of time given to them to uphold their commitments to implement all aspects of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement, including allowing refugees and displaced persons to return to their pre-war homes. To this end, the EU is firmly committed to continuing its support for reconstruction and reconciliation.

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The EU will continue to support the efforts of the High Representative and his Deputy, the Supervisor for Brcko, to build a just and pluralist society and to uphold the Brcko decision.

The European Union remains fully committed to the objectives agreed at the Bonn Peace Implementation Council last December for implementation of the Dayton/Paris Peace Agreement this year and beyond. The Arbitral Tribunal's decision pursues our shared objective of permanent peace, reconciliation and stability in Bosnia.
