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# EC to recognise Bosnia and lift Serbia sanctions

by David Buchan in Luxembourg

THE European Community yesterday decided to recognise Bosnia's independence and conditionally ended trade sanctions against Serbia, in a twin move designed to underline seven-handed EC mediation.

The Twelve will delay until today their diplomatic recognition of Bosnia, so that the US can join in the move. Washington is also now likely to recognise Croatia and Slovenia, as the EC did in mid-January.

Mr Joao de Deus Pinheiro, the Portuguese minister of Foreign Affairs, who holds the EC presidency, reported a consensus among the EC counterparts that "we would not give arguments (by withholding recognition) to radicals who are against independence".

He was largely referring to the Serb third of Bosnia's 4.5m population who boycotted last month's referendum, in which a very large majority among Bosnia's Moslems and Croats voted for independence.

Recognising Bosnia should, on balance, reduce the scope for interference from neighbouring Serbia and pacify

majority Moslem-Croat sentiment in the violence-torn republic, EC ministers hope.

At the same time, the Twelve reached a classic compromise on Serbian sanctions. Mr Pinheiro said the Belgrade government of President Slobodan Milosevic had proved "much more constructive" towards EC-sponsored peace efforts recently. The EC will therefore restore to Serbia the EC tariff and quota preferences which the five other republics got back at the turn of this year, as France and Greece, Belgrade's main sympathisers within the EC, have urged.

But to ease the deep distrust of Serbia and the Serb-led federal army, notably in Germany, the EC has set pre-conditions. These are that Serbia endorse the principle of the EC peace conference on non-violability of frontiers; open airspace over Croatia and Slovenia to flights by the United Nations peace-keeping force and others; and repeal Serbian legislation purporting to apply to Serb enclaves in Croatia. Serbia has only come close to fulfilling the first of these conditions.

The briefing of Lord Carrington,

chairman of the Yugoslav peace conference, to ministers yesterday was instrumental to both decisions. While he opposed the German-led recognition of Croatia three months ago as undermining his peace efforts, Lord Carrington told ministers that such was the instability in Bosnia that there was nothing to be gained from further delay in putting last month's referendum verdict into effect.

Macedonia's quest for recognition is still stuck on the nomenclature dispute with Greece. Mr Pinheiro said he hoped soon to be able to announce a formula easing Greece's worries about recognising Macedonia under that name.

Lobbying for Macedonia yesterday in the corridors of the Luxembourg council building was Mr Robert Macfarlane, President Reagan's national security adviser who resigned over the Iran-Contra affair. He said that Macedonia, whose name in itself hardly constituted claims on Greece, was ready to sign non-aggression pacts with its neighbours, once it was independent and able to do so.

## Chaos grips Sarajevo as snipers fire on protesters

By a Special Correspondent in Sarajevo

CHAOS gripped Sarajevo in the central Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina yesterday as street battles raged and snipers fired on peace demonstrators. The snipers killed at least five protesters and wounded dozens, according to one report.

Serb guerrillas fought street battles and artillery duels with police and volunteer units loyal to Moslem and Croat leaders.

Tens of thousands of peace demonstrators were gathered outside parliament when suspected Serb snipers opened fire. The demonstrators were demanding an end to the fighting, the sacking of the republic's nationalist coalition government and new elections. "We came here as peacemakers," one demonstrator told a Sarajevo television reporter. "If we came to fight, we would have brought our weapons. Now we have nothing but our bare hands."

Leaders of Bosnia-Herzegovina said the republic's prime minister, Jure Pelivan, has resigned. The Bosnian state presidency also announced a curfew from 10pm in Sarajevo, agreed to hold parliamentary elections and called for a ceasefire.

As the fighting between the republic's three main national groups escalated, the European Community decided to recognise Bosnia's independence and conditionally ended trade sanctions against Serbia. The Community will delay until today its diplomatic recognition of Bosnia, so the US can join the move. Washington is also now likely to recognise Croatia and Slovenia, as the EC did in mid-January.

EC foreign ministers believe that recognising Bosnia should, on balance, reduce the scope for interference from neighbouring Serbia and pacify majority Moslem-Croat sentiment in the violence-torn republic.

Mr Alija Izetbegovic, Bosnia-Herzegovina's president, claimed yesterday the bloodshed was the result of an effort by Serbs to seize territory, destabilise the

republic and thwart its recognition as an independent state.

Exploding mortar shells fell on Sarajevo's historic, mainly Moslem-populated bazaar area and outlying areas east of the capital. People around the city of 700,000 braved sniper fire to watch artillery shells exploding in the mountains above.

Several thousand demonstrators stormed the Holiday Inn hotel, breaking windows and searching for gunmen. Hand grenades exploded inside the building, which Serb militiamen have been using as a base.

At least nine people have died and about 100 have been wounded in fighting in Sarajevo since the latest outbreak of violence began on Sunday morning. The latest fighting, the worst in Bosnia-Herzegovina since the second world war, ironically reached a pitch on the anniversary, yesterday, of Sarajevo's liberation in 1945 from the Nazis.