



Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

9774th meeting

Friday, 1 November 2024, 3.05 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Dame Barbara Woodward	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Ecuador	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Guyana	Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
	Japan	Mr. Mikanagi
	Malta	Ms. Gatt
	Mozambique	Mr. Fernandes
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Sangjin Kim
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Mr. George
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Switzerland	Mr. Hauri
	United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to participate in this meeting.

I request the Protocol Officer to escort His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to his seat at the Council table.

Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2024/788, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Algeria, China, Ecuador, France, Guyana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2757 (2024).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to welcome the first day of the British presidency of the Security Council.

Since 2004, the European Union (EU) has played a fundamental role in the stability and security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region through the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It does so on behalf of the international community, in accordance with the Dayton-Paris accord and upon decision of the Security Council. The operation, in which France is fully engaged, has shown that it plays an essential role in ensuring a secure environment, reassuring the population and deterring potential destabilizing actors, in a context that is nevertheless marked by persistent political tensions and worrisome provocations. We therefore welcome the unanimous adoption today by the Council of resolution 2757 (2024), which renews its mandate for a period of 12 months.

With regard to the civilian component, France reiterates that it supports the mandate of the High Representative. France expresses its full solidarity with Bosnia and Herzegovina following the severe flooding and landslides that hit the country on 3 October. France welcomes the holding of local elections on 6 October despite those dramatic events. It notes that, according to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe observation mission, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, these elections were competitive and managed effectively, despite a number of observed shortcomings.

France, as a witness to the Dayton-Paris accords, firmly supports the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We remain very concerned by the initiatives by the Republika Srpska authorities, which threaten the unity, constitutional order, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, principles at the heart of the Dayton-Paris agreements.

France is convinced that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, like that of the entire Western Balkans region, lies in the European Union. The decision taken by the European Council to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on 21 March was a clear signal in that regard. Bosnia and Herzegovina has a unique opportunity to move forward on its path to European Union accession. France calls on the Bosnian authorities to work together to implement the eight key measures and move forward on the appointment

of a chief negotiator, in order to advance Bosnia and Herzegovina in its European Union accession process, for the benefit of all its citizens.

Mr. Montalvo Sosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Madam President, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November, and I assure you of my delegation's full support. Since you have already congratulated Switzerland on behalf of the Council for its excellent presidency during the month of October, I will not add anything further.

I welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Denis Bećirović, as well as the delegations of Croatia, Serbia and the European Union, to today's meeting.

I also thank the delegation of France for its efforts in facilitating the adoption of resolution 2757 (2024), which renews the authorization of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which continues to play a key role in maintaining the stability and security of the country.

The progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina since the end of the devastating conflict almost 30 years ago is commendable. The country's progress in building an environment of peace and development, achieved with the support of the international community — and above all thanks to the resilience of the Bosnian people — deserves to be preserved. The comprehensive implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is essential to that end and to ensure the strengthening of an inclusive and democratic system that represents all its citizens. For that reason, certain positions that challenge the authority of State institutions and the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement remain worrisome.

Ecuador reiterates its call on all political stakeholders to abandon any rhetoric or action that fuels divisions or separatist aspirations. Respect for the country's constitutional, legal and institutional framework is the cornerstone for achieving peace, stability and progress. Ecuador welcomes the fact that the recent local elections have been held in an atmosphere of peace and transparency. It also recognizes the efforts of the Bosnian authorities to improve electoral integrity, although there is still a need to increase women's full, equal and meaningful participation in political life. Similarly, it is important

to continue to address the spread of hate speech, which threatens to undermine trust among communities and hinders efforts for national unity.

In the area of European integration, Ecuador believes that the prospect of accession is a valuable goal for Bosnia and Herzegovina and therefore urges national leaders to responsibly honour the necessary commitments to ensure the future of European integration in their country.

Ecuador again calls on the international community to continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its mission to consolidate peace and sustainable development and to create a prosperous future for the next generations. Women and young people play a critical role in that effort. We encourage the authorities to step up efforts for the full implementation of the commitments, conditions and objectives established in the 5+2 agenda, which will allow the completion of the international monitoring process. In the nearly two years that Ecuador has exercised the responsibility of being a member of the Council, Ecuador has reaffirmed its firm support for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with international law and the Dayton Peace Agreement. I reiterate that support today.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): I want to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I can express our full support and constructive collaboration during the month of November. I want to congratulate Switzerland for a very capable and smooth presidency in the month of October.

I would like to welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Denis Bećirović, to the Chamber. I also want to welcome the representatives of Croatia and Serbia.

At the outset, I would like to express our unwavering solidarity and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Slovenia was among the first countries to dispatch a team of rescuers through the European Union (EU) Civil Protection Mechanism after the flooding and landslides last month. We remember with gratitude that Bosnia and Herzegovina showed equal support for our country last year.

Today I would like to speak about commitments, highlighting the following three points.

First, I would like to highlight the Security Council's unanimous approval for extending the authorization of the European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea), underscoring our joint commitment to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. EUFOR-Althea's presence remains an important source of reassurance for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It supports the ongoing journey towards lasting peace, unity and integration into the EU.

Secondly, Slovenia remains unequivocally committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective. The EU has clearly recognized that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is with the European Union, which is the wish and resolve of the great majority of citizens of all ethnic groups. Only the steadfast commitment of all political stakeholders to European integration and local ownership of the reform processes can bring about progress for achieving that strategic goal. Slovenia urges political leaders to intensify efforts in key reform areas, including by submitting a comprehensive reform agenda under the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans. We also encourage active civic participation and engagement from other parts of society. Strengthening broad internal dialogue will not only support the reform process but also enhance public trust in democratic institutions.

Thirdly and lastly, Slovenia expects all political actors to commit to upholding Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order. Ensuring those principles is essential for fostering stability, democratic resilience and mutual trust. In other words, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be respected and upheld. Secessionist rhetoric and challenges to Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional order from the Republika Srpska pose a threat to the principles I mentioned earlier and could endanger the country's path to EU membership. Slovenia urges all relevant stakeholders to refrain from such acts and to demonstrate tolerance and engage actively in inter-ethnic dialogue towards reconciliation. As a positive development, Slovenia welcomes the preliminary findings of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights election observation mission, which indicated that the local elections held on 6 October were competitive and efficiently managed.

In conclusion, let me refer to the recently adopted Pact for the Future (General Assembly resolution 79/1), which reaffirms our shared commitment to sustainable development, peace and prosperity for future generations. The Declaration on Future Generations contained in annex II of the Pact should inspire Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue advancing reforms that strengthen democratic governance, the justice system and economic resilience. By championing those principles, Bosnia and Herzegovina can build a stronger and resilient future that leads to membership of the EU. In turn, the initiation of EU accession talks represents an opportunity for economic growth, enabling all citizens, especially young people, to envision a prosperous future within their own country.

Last but not least, I would like to welcome the report submitted by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and thank him and his Office for their work and endeavours.

Mr. Hauri (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First of all, allow me to express my appreciation for the warm wishes extended to Switzerland and our team, and to assure you, Madam President, of our full support for you and your team during your country's presidency of the Security Council.

I welcome the participation of the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in today's meeting and express Switzerland's condolences following this month's devastating flooding. I also welcome the delegations of the European Union, Serbia and Croatia to today's meeting.

Switzerland welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2757 (2024) renewing the authorization for the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea). We thank France for its efforts as penholder. EUFOR-Althea remains an essential pillar of stability, preserving security not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in the region. We are honoured to have facilitated the renewal of the authorization last year. True to its long-standing commitment, Switzerland will continue to contribute to the mission by deploying military personnel and specialized experts.

We also thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina for his report and reiterate our support for his Office. The completion of the 5+2 agenda, which

is the condition for the closure of the Office, remains our declared objective. We note with regret the lack of substantial progress in that respect.

Switzerland welcomes the peaceful and orderly conduct of this month's local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which demonstrated respect for fundamental freedoms. The participation of all parties underlines the commitment to democratic principles. However, we remain concerned by the persistent underrepresentation of women in public and political life and call for redoubled efforts to increase their presence in political processes.

We call on all political actors to seize this opportunity and electoral momentum to invest in the well-being of the entire population of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A common path, based on trust, is essential to forging a united and inclusive society that promotes cooperation, prosperity and security for all. To that end, it is incumbent on the country's leaders to demonstrate political will and pursue essential reforms. That is a fundamental step towards Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the European Union.

However, trends towards hate speech, the distortion of history and the glorification of war crimes worry us, as they undermine trust and are detrimental to all societies. Such rhetoric prevents progress towards a peaceful, multi-ethnic society. Inter-ethnic reconciliation is necessary to create a climate of mutual respect and understanding between different communities. Addressing past atrocities and preventing genocide denial are essential to ensuring lasting peace and a stable future. Switzerland also rejects any secessionist rhetoric or actions, such as those emanating from the Republika Srpska in recent months, which undermine the country's unity, constitutional integrity and rule of law.

This is the final mandated meeting on Bosnia and Herzegovina under Switzerland's current term on the Council. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Switzerland's unwavering support for the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We remain committed to supporting peace and security, prosperity and good governance in the country and the region.

The year 2025 will mark 30 years since the Dayton Accords. Switzerland therefore invites the international community and stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to seize this opportunity to promote

a shared and promising vision, particularly for the younger generations, who embody the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett (Guyana): Please allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, and your team on the United Kingdom's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for November. I also wish to commend Switzerland for its successful presidency during the month of October.

I acknowledge the contribution of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina in executing its mandate in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement and take note of the contents of the report submitted on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also welcome the participation in today's meeting of His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Stavros Lambrinidis, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, and the representatives of Serbia and Croatia.

At the outset, Guyana extends condolences to the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the severe floods and landslides in central and southern Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 and 4 October. We express our solidarity with those whose lives have been affected by that tragedy and commend the swift coordination efforts at the national, regional and international levels, which saved many lives and avoided further damage to vital infrastructure in the affected areas.

Permit me to also congratulate the local authorities and the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the peaceful conduct of local elections in October. We note from the report of the joint observation mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights that the elections were efficiently prepared, with fundamental freedoms respected. Regrettably, we also noted that there continues to be a persistently low level of women's participation in political life. We urge that more concrete measures be taken to address that troubling trend and to enhance women's political participation and leadership in the country.

Guyana notes the positive developments, notably the March 2024 decision of the European Council to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is an important priority for the citizens of the country and a critical step in their pursuit of socioeconomic development. They each stand to

benefit tremendously from the free flow of goods, services and people in the region, which will no doubt contribute to the economic growth and stability of the country and the wider Balkan region.

We encourage continued collaboration to achieve that goal, as agreed by the two entities — the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska.

In that vein, we welcome today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2757 (2024). The resolution renewed the authorization of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which continues to play an important stabilizing role in the country and region.

While noting the positive developments, we remain concerned about the reported continued divisive rhetoric that threatens the political stability and, ultimately, the security of the country. Guyana urges the political leaders to prioritize the interests of all citizens and underscores the importance of upholding the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We further encourage all relevant stakeholders to act in accordance with those provisions.

The report of the Office of the High Representative highlights the inequalities faced by women, particularly in the labour market and in the education and political sectors. We believe that the inclusion and participation of women in all sectors and at the highest levels significantly contributes to the development of a country. Their perspectives can lead to sustainable solutions, notably in building peace and resolving conflict. In that regard, we welcome the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda by local ministries and relevant authorities with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund. We also commend the implementation of programmes geared towards the empowerment of youth. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved unless all members of a society are empowered to participate in peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts.

In conclusion, Guyana reaffirms its commitment to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and reiterates its call to all actors, at all levels, to continue their efforts to ensure that the peace and security of Bosnia and Herzegovina is achieved with full respect for its sovereignty.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): We very much look forward to working with you, Madam

President, during your Security Council presidency. I would also like to thank Switzerland for the successful conclusion of its presidency.

The United States welcomes the Security Council's reauthorization of the mandate of the European Union (EU) military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea). Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability is crucial to preventing regional conflict. The United States remains committed to the principles of the Dayton Peace Accords and the joint goal of an inclusive, multi-ethnic, democratic, peaceful and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rooted in the Dayton Peace Accords, EUFOR-Althea remains critical in supporting the sovereignty, territorial integrity and multi-ethnic character of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We thank the EU for its contributions to and leadership of EUFOR-Althea.

We have been alarmed by recent rhetoric and actions undermining Dayton, as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability, constitutional structure and territorial integrity. We must continue to protect Bosnia and Herzegovina's State-level institutions from actors who seek to weaken them. Threats of secession, unilateral withdrawal and the establishment of parallel institutions are dangerous and unacceptable. They distract from the important electoral, economic and rule of law reforms under way.

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces additional challenges, including stagnation and rampant corruption. We urge local authorities to set aside personal and ethnic agendas in order to focus on issues of mutual concern. Corruption only exacerbates the challenge of ethno-nationalism. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina plays a crucial role in strengthening institutions and promoting reforms as central to the security of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of ethnicity. The United States fully supports High Representative Christian Schmidt in his ability to exercise all necessary authority, including the Bonn powers, until the 5+2 agenda has been fulfilled. We also fully support Bosnia and Herzegovina's path to EU membership. The Bonn powers complement the EU accession process and facilitate reform efforts along the EU path. The United States will continue to use all tools in its toolbox, including sanctions, to push back against those who seek to undermine the Dayton Agreement, and we encourage others to do the same.

In conclusion, now as ever, the United States supports Bosnia and Herzegovina as it works to secure the future that all its citizens deserve. Every member of the Council should support Bosnia and Herzegovina in achieving the same.

Mr. Sangjin Kim (Republic of Korea): I also join others in commending Switzerland on its excellent leadership of the Security Council last month and congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency for the month of November. We promise you, Madam President, our full support.

My delegation welcomes Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the participation of the delegations of the European Union, Serbia and Croatia at today's meeting. We also welcome the renewal of the authorization of the European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea). It has proven to be vital in maintaining stability in the region and will continue to receive our support.

As the thirtieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement approaches, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made many positive strides thanks to that historic accord and the efforts of its people to honour the spirit of reconciliation that was forged in 1995. The revised electoral laws put into practice for the first time in last month's local elections are just one example of the developments achieved. After Bosnia and Herzegovina was granted status EU candidate status in December 2022, the European Union decided to initiate accession negotiations with the country last March. Indeed, it is a welcome development and a milestone in its history, but disruptive forces still remain a threat to Bosnia and Herzegovina's unity. In order to justify the EU's faith in the region's progress, it must continue the positive steps it has taken and reinforce the political and economic reforms that it has put into place to date.

With that in mind, we would like to focus on a few key points.

First, we reiterate our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is the bedrock of the Dayton Agreement and essential to maintaining long-term peace and stability in the region. The still-fragile State institutions continue to be threatened and the authority of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Constitutional Court to be routinely challenged if not openly defied. Such actions threaten not only the effectiveness of those

bodies but also the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. While there have been many positive developments, a number of challenges still remain, such as constitutional reform and an increase in the level of women's political participation. We expect Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue to expedite the required political and economic reforms towards a peaceful and prosperous future.

Secondly, for national unity to prevail in the country, it is vital that all parties move in unison towards the common goal of implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement. While we are well aware that for many the trauma of the recent past remains a present-day reality, there is no other way forward than through dialogue, compromise and reconciliation. We appeal to all parties to avoid all actions and rhetoric that contradict the statehood, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to advance their sincere efforts to chart a positive future. Inflammatory political speech and the denial of past atrocities must be condemned and marginalized by those in positions of authority.

Thirdly, we would like to reiterate our support for the mandate of EUFOR-Althea. We also support the valuable efforts of the High Representative to ensure the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and lay the groundwork for a strong democracy.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea urges all parties to focus on working towards a positive future that will benefit every citizen and endow future generations with a peaceful and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Gatt (Malta): I would like to begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and I thank Switzerland for steering our work in October. I welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the meeting and look forward to listening to his assessment.

At the outset, Malta welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea), and we thank France for its efforts as penholder to ensure a smooth process. We recognize the importance of EUFOR-Althea and its role in maintaining a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We remain fully committed to its presence in the country and support the work it carries out. We also welcome the peaceful atmosphere in which the recent local

elections were held and commend the efficient run-up to the elections, as well as the extensive participation from across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, women remain underrepresented in public and political life. Malta also positively notes the sustained overall stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina during recent months and the consistently calm security situation in the country. However, Malta remains concerned about the lack of progress in relation to the political situation. Secessionist rhetoric and actions are still rife and pose serious obstacles to economic and social development, and also put the stable but fragile security situation at risk.

We are deeply concerned about any legislative initiatives that run counter to the constitutional order of the country and its path towards EU membership and we call for restraint in adopting and implementing such measures. In that context, we reiterate our call on all members of the country's leadership to refrain from nationalistic and inflammatory rhetoric and divisive actions, as they would seriously threaten peace and stability in the country and potentially in the wider region. We reiterate our position on the importance of sustained stability in the Western Balkans, which is interlinked with the overall prosperity of the region.

Malta strongly believes that Bosnia and Herzegovina's future lies within the EU and will continue to support its commitment towards achieving its goal of EU membership. That is a unifying factor among both the citizens and political class of the country, and all efforts should be directed towards reaching that objective. We encourage the implementation of the necessary reforms and the strengthening of the country's constitutional, electoral and judicial frameworks, which will ensure meaningful progress towards EU accession. Those reforms must adhere to the principles of inclusivity and the rule of law. Ensuring the adequate representation of women in all Government institutions and fostering an inclusive public administration are paramount. However, the absence of common ground at the political level is hampering the implementation of crucial reforms and risks culminating in a political crisis that could potentially destabilize the situation in the country and the region. We strongly encourage all parties to work together to enact coherent legislation through coordinated institutions. That is the only way to achieve meaningful reforms and address future challenges. A genuine commitment from all parties to reconciliation and building stronger cohesion is urgently

needed. All parties should strive for compromise solutions that are beneficial for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of ethnicity. That calls for a commitment to confidence-building measures that are aimed at boosting mutual understanding and fostering increased cooperation.

Malta reaffirms its unwavering support for the Dayton Peace Agreement. Next year will mark 30 years since the signing of the Agreement. We urge all parties within Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully and scrupulously respect and uphold the principles enshrined within it, including the power-sharing framework, and work in a constructive manner within the agreed parameters. We also reiterate our support for the mission and mandate of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and his Office and its role in overseeing the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Finally, I would like to express Malta's continued strong support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's unity and territorial integrity. We also urge for political responsibility and sensible leadership in the country with a view to achieving cooperation based on respect for all members of society and with a clear view towards EU accession. Serious efforts are needed to engage in a constructive and inclusive dialogue that guarantees peaceful coexistence and a prospective and prosperous future for all citizens in the region.

Mr. George (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Madam President, for convening this debate, and congratulate the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I assure you of Sierra Leone's full support. I also congratulate the delegation of Switzerland for its successful presidency during the month of October. I welcome the participation in this meeting of the delegations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and the European Union (EU).

Sierra Leone takes this opportunity to express its sympathy for the loss of lives and property as a result of the flooding and landslides in five central municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in early October. As the impacts of climate change heighten, it is imperative that we curtail human activities that threaten our collective well-being and a stable and sustainable future.

We welcome the adoption of resolution 2757 (2024), which renews the authorization of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose

presence is critical to sustaining stabilization efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are optimistic that today's vote is indicative of the Council's determination to ensure the continued security and safety of the region. Our delegation notes the detailed report for the period 16 April to 15 October submitted by Mr. Christian Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, through the Secretary-General. We commend the High Representative for the progress achieved during that period. We recognize the importance of his efforts, particularly with regard to the successful conduct of elections and the vital impact of the reform elements introduced, ensuring compliance with transparency and integrity standards, regulating the participation of persons convicted of crimes under international criminal law, the use of technology, and the curbing of divisive and hateful campaign rhetoric.

The significance of building trust in the electoral system — and by extension in the Office of the High Representative — cannot be overemphasized. Moreover, the successful local elections demonstrated that with coordination and cooperation among Bosnia and Herzegovina's stakeholders, much can be achieved. We therefore reaffirm our support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and its internationally recognized borders and strongly condemn all actions that seek to undermine not only the current governance structure but also the progress made in the implementation of the existing peace agreement and adherence with conditions for EU integration.

Sierra Leone is mindful, however, that the efforts of the High Representative and some arms of Government are being impaired by certain actors, leading to a stagnation in the EU accession process and a lag in the implementation of the 5+2 agenda, which has had a cascading effect on other avenues for Bosnia and Herzegovina's advancement, including agreement on the draft reform agenda. It is unfortunate that Bosnia and Herzegovina missed the opportunity to benefit from the growth plan for the Western Balkans, which would have stimulated the country's decelerating economic growth.

In the light of everything I just mentioned, first, Sierra Leone renews its call in this Chamber for collaborative leadership, strong institutions of Government that uphold the rule of law and protect human rights, and national development within the scope of regional integration. While we commend the efforts of the European Union and the wider international community, Sierra Leone is convinced that

collaboration among the leadership of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska is the cornerstone for the country's stability and development. The reports of parallel structures and discriminatory policies being promulgated along with secessionist rhetoric, particularly in the Republika Srpska, are deeply concerning. We strongly urge the Republika Srpska authorities to cease all actions that undermine the integrity of the unified State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and compound any existing political and ethnic divides. We urge that all efforts be directed towards State-building in good faith and participation in decision-making, with effective public administration and good governance and in a manner that strengthens the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole.

Secondly, we believe that the Constitution, as the country's highest legal authority, must reflect its highest aspirations. Acknowledging Bosnia and Herzegovina's multi-ethnic and multicultural characteristics, we call for the rule of law to be upheld and for the protection of the full and equal rights of all its people. Superficial attempts at reform and the selective application of judicial decisions erode the legitimacy and effectiveness of institutions of Government, which are the foundations of peace, justice and sustainable development. The same holds true for the Constitutional Court, concerning which we call for full representation in the appointment of judges, including international judges, whose wealth of knowledge and experience can contribute richly towards advancing Bosnia and Herzegovina's jurisprudence.

Thirdly and lastly, we welcome the efforts of the Presidency, the Council of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and urge that the actions of their respective entities be aligned with national development aspirations, including as provided for in the Dayton Peace Agreement. It is critical that State-level institutions receive the necessary funding and support for their operations, particularly as they relate to public infrastructure, utility and service delivery. Sierra Leone is hopeful that the upcoming review of the country's accession status into the European Union, with a view to advancing the negotiations, presents an opportunity for the authorities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska to renew their commitment towards taking the necessary steps for integration into the EU and to refrain from inflexible positions during negotiations.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone commends the efforts of the Peacebuilding Fund in advancing the women and peace and security and the youth and peace and security agendas and welcomes the operationalization of the Peacebuilding Steering Committee to sustain peacebuilding initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend the dedication of the European Union and the international community towards the stabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and continue to urge constructive cooperation in the best interests of all its people.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to start by congratulating the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and to assure you, Madam President, and your colleagues of the Chinese delegation's full support. I also congratulate Switzerland on its successful conclusion of the presidency last month. I welcome His Excellency Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the representatives of Serbia, Croatia, and the European Union, at today's meeting.

An important country in the Balkans region, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been ravaged by war, and its people yearn for peace and tranquillity. Inclusive reconciliation and harmonious coexistence among all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina will help the country maintain peace and stability, achieve sustainable social and economic development and accelerate its integration in the European Union, meeting the shared expectations of countries in the region and the international community.

China welcomes the smooth conduct of the recent local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which showcased inclusiveness and restraint among all ethnic groups, thereby creating a positive and favourable atmosphere for next year's general elections. At the same time, we note with concern that, for some time now, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been marked by occasional words and deeds that aggravate ethnic rivalries and undermine national unity, the national reconciliation process has encountered serious challenges and political divisions have become ever more glaring, rendering the situation ever more complex. We call on all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina to actively engage in dialogue, enhance mutual trust and work together to maintain the country's political and social stability, with a view to promoting national development and people's well-being. We call on the international community

to adopt a fair, balanced and prudent approach on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina, fully heed the views and concerns of the three communities in the country and refrain from taking sides, imposing solutions, interfering in its internal affairs or even imposing unilateral sanctions.

China's position on the High Representative system and the appointment of the High Representative remains unchanged. We are concerned about the controversies that have arisen in recent years over the appointment of the High Representative and the use of the Bonn powers. Since the beginning of this year, Mr. Christian Schmidt has frequently used the Bonn powers to amend the laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina, giving rise to tensions and divisions within the country, as well as controversies. I would like to reiterate that the affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina should ultimately be decided and managed by the people of the country themselves. Both the High Representative system and the Bonn powers are special arrangements for a special era. As such, they cannot be considered long-term, let alone permanent.

China's position on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina is consistent and clear. We respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independent choice of its people for the future of the country. We encourage all ethnic communities to actively engage in constructive dialogue and work towards national inclusiveness and reconciliation. We continue to hope that all parties will put the interest of the country and the people first and work together to maintain the political stability of the country.

China appreciates the constructive roles played by Serbia, Croatia and other countries in the region in maintaining the security and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. China will remain committed to developing friendly relations with the people of all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to playing a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month and assure you of the full support of the delegation of Algeria. I also congratulate Switzerland on its successful presidency of the Council

during the past month. I welcome as well the presence at this meeting of Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the representatives of Serbia, Croatia and the European Union.

I would like first and foremost to emphasize Algeria's clear and consistent position on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is based on respect for the country's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law.

We also welcome the unanimous adoption by the Council of resolution 2757 (2024), which renews the authorization for the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a period of 12 months.

We express our satisfaction with regard to the holding of local elections on 6 October, despite the challenges faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina following the catastrophic floods in the country, which resulted in significant human and material losses. That important democratic event for all the constituents of the country could strengthen the participation of all in the decision-making process. It also could enable the country to reach an effective political landscape that would allow it to advance along the path of stability and development.

We are totally convinced that democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina will also contribute to achieving solutions that are owned by various country components and bring together the divergent and sometimes conflicting points of view. In that context, Algeria reiterates its full support for State-owned solutions to the issues the country is facing. At the same time, Algeria calls for refraining from any actions or behaviours that could jeopardize the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country in which Bosnians, Croatians and Serbians live side by side in harmony and under sovereign, unified institutions.

My delegation would like to focus on the following points.

First, Algeria considers the Dayton Peace Agreement the only consensual basis containing provisions vital to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call on everyone to respect its letter and spirit and adhere to its provisions with a view to bringing the country to safety.

Secondly, it is natural for various political actors in the country to have different opinions and assessments,

but those differences and political tensions should not deviate from the path of democracy or threaten the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly and lastly, it is clear that political divisions and differences of opinion among the country's stakeholders could prolong the current phase and delay the process of reconciliation and progress that everyone aspires to.

Therefore, it is important for everyone to be guided by a constructive and inclusive dialogue and to take into account the different points of view to enrich the fruitful discussion and not to choose discrimination and self-absorption which often lead to political deadlock. Only through constructive and good-faith dialogue, as well as inclusive and genuine negotiations, will it be possible to overcome political differences and bridge the gap among the divergent views in order to move forward towards a better future.

Mr. Fernandes (Mozambique): We wish to extend our warmest congratulations to the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. We pledge our full support and cooperation. We also commend Switzerland for its exemplary stewardship of the Council during its October presidency.

We acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the representatives of Serbia and Croatia in this meeting.

At the outset, Mozambique expresses its profound condolences regarding the recent loss of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina and extends its sympathies to those affected by the disappearance of people and by the devastation of the damage caused to infrastructure by floods and landslides in the central and southern regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We note with great concern the inflammatory rhetoric by leaders across the political spectrum that risks exacerbating tensions and potentially catalysing the escalation of inter-ethnic violence. This development serves as a sobering reminder that maintaining peace is an ongoing effort that requires constant vigilance and unwavering commitment.

We are of the view that the current situation requires continued collaborative action at the local, national and international levels to overcome the challenges emanating from the country's complex

historical legacy, diverse demographic composition and current political landscape. We commend the dialogue for peace session's approach of extending beyond urban centres and actively involving all citizens, particularly women and youth, as doing so constitutes an essential foundation for sustainable peace. Their perspectives and contributions are invaluable in forging more inclusive and enduring solutions.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Accords, marked a crucial and decisive milestone in ending the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, we emphasize that true peace extends beyond legal agreements, requiring the cultivation of a culture of peace and tolerance, bridging ethnic divisions and embedding those principles in the fabric of society. While legal frameworks can set the stage, it is social cohesion that sustains lasting harmony. It is in that regard that we wish to echo the voices of Council members in congratulating Bosnia and Herzegovina for the successful conduct of its local elections. That constitutes a milestone for reconciliation and stability.

While recognizing that there remain persistent challenges to ensuring that justice and reconciliation materialize fully, we welcome the parties' current engagement in diligent and constructive dialogue towards achieving comprehensive peace and reconciliation. Community ownership of the reconciliation process is critical for genuine healing, mutual understanding, integration and harmony within diversity. We underscore that sustained support from the international community remains essential to fostering peace, multi-ethnic coexistence and sustainable and inclusive development in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Building such a society demands consistent dedication from all parties' stakeholders.

Mr. Mikanagi (Japan): At the outset, I would like to join other Council members in expressing our heartfelt appreciation and congratulations to the Swiss delegation for its dedicated and successful work during a challenging month of October. I also would like to congratulate the United Kingdom for its successful assumption of the presidency in November. Japan assures the delegation of the United Kingdom of its full support.

We are pleased that the Security Council has once again unanimously adopted the resolution to authorize the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and

Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) (resolution 2757 (2024), and that in doing so the Council has sent a clear message in support of the mission's important role in maintaining peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Dayton Peace Agreement. We also thank all contributing States for their commitment to that essential mission.

I also welcome the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and the European Union (EU) to this meeting.

As a member of the Peace Implementation Council, Japan has worked with Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve post-conflict development and maintain peace and stability. In terms of specific projects, Japan has provided assistance in a wide range of fields, including anti-personnel mine action, medical care and health care. Japan has maintained unwavering support for the work of the High Representatives. We commend the ongoing efforts by High Representative Christian Schmidt to promote stability in the country. We welcome the fact that, as stated in his recent report, the local election was successfully conducted in a calm and peaceful manner last October.

Japan continues to support the socioeconomic development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its integration into the EU. We echo the concerns indicated in the report by the High Representative about the escalation of separatist statements and actions by one entity, Republika Srpska, and the undermining of the functions of the State institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Dayton Peace Agreement. We also perceive the lack of progress, both on implementing the 5+2 agenda and on making adequate reforms towards EU integration. Japan strongly urges all political parties and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage in constructive dialogue to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement; unite to build the nation, upholding democracy, human rights and the rule of law; and accelerate the EU accession process. That message from Japan has been consistent and sent directly to the leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Japan has contributed to nation-building and national reconciliation efforts since the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As one of the top donors to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), we take this opportunity to welcome the steady progress of the PBF's projects, which aim to promote mutual understanding while advancing the women and peace and security agenda

and the youth, peace and security agenda and combating historical revisionism. We strongly support all actions that help the efforts of people on the ground.

Japan once again expresses its strong commitment to working with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the path to peace, stability and prosperity, both for itself and for the Western Balkans as a whole.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Let me begin by congratulating the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, I wish it every success in November. And allow me to thank Switzerland for its presidency in October.

We would like to express our condolences to Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with those who died in the natural disaster that has befallen them, resulting in the loss of life. We would also like to express our condolences to Serbia in relation to today's tragic events in Novi Sad. National mourning has been declared in Serbia for tomorrow.

We supported the adoption of the resolution extending the mandate of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) for a further 12-month period (resolution 2757 (2024)). We start from the assumption that that Operation EUFOR-Althea is not a participant in internal Bosnian processes. The European forces should not interfere in the political affairs of a sovereign State, and they must carry out the tasks entrusted to them by the international community in such a manner so as not to inflict harm on the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and not to provoke an exacerbation of the situation.

The Security Council, which has the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in its purview under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, is considering it now for the third time in a year. That speaks to the pressing state of affairs on the ground vis-à-vis the mandate of the Security Council. Despite the absence at present of direct threats to peace and security in the country, the destructive situation fomented by Western actors around the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Accords, has a great deal of destabilizing potential that could lead to the escalation of inter-ethnic strife and could disrupt the fragile stability in the Balkans.

We have repeatedly drawn the attention of Security Council members to the erosion of key Dayton principles ensuring the equality of the three constituent

peoples and the two entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with broad constitutional powers. Those actions, including those inspired from outside, have undermined the role of the presidency in the country as the supreme voice of the consensus position of the multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovinian society on key issues for the State. They have formed a parallel, extraconstitutional, unlawful and anti-democratic scheme for the adoption and implementation of decisions on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina by representatives of only one of the peoples. This flagrant violation of the Dayton Agreement is taking place at the behest of Western countries, which consider themselves the guarantors of the 1995 peace agreement, endorsed by resolution 1031 (1995).

The most glaring example was the General Assembly's consideration, on 23 May (see A/78/PV.82), of the flawed text of resolution 78/282, on the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. The resolution was not supported by even half of the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina or by half of the United Nations Member States. As we said during the Security Council meeting on 15 May (see S/PV.9626), the draft resolution would not provide any reconciliation to the country and cannot do so, even in principle. The main thing — the consensus of the country's peoples — is missing, not to mention the legal inadequacy of that initiative. However, that did not stop the Western guardians, led by Germany, from trying to push through their provocative draft in the General Assembly at any cost.

The motives behind those attempts to undermine Dayton through fait accompli policies are well-known. That is being done in order to centralize Bosnia and Herzegovina and turn it into a unitary State fully controlled by the West. The postulates endorsed by the Security Council are being replaced by NATO values, which are cunningly being presented as a panacea for all problems. It is unbecoming, and it is ridiculous to hear this sort of thing from NATO countries after the havoc they wreaked in the Balkans in 1995 and 1999, dropping depleted uranium bombs on civilians and civilian objects. Of course, they are doing all they can to conceal those facts. That is evidenced by the fact that in March they twice put to a vote Russia's request for a Security Council meeting to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia.

All these feverish actions by Western countries have nothing to do with the interests of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The preliminary results of the 6 October municipal elections indicate that the overwhelming majority of the country's citizens fully support the Dayton system for ensuring their national interests, which is the cornerstone of the architecture of regional and European security. The international community has no right to ignore that sovereign choice. We call on our colleagues in the Security Council to support it as well.

On the other hand, if anything does need changing, it is the Office of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is a relic of the past. Not only is the Office failing to facilitate independent dialogue among the three peoples, but — through its totally inappropriate interference in the internal affairs of independent Bosnia and Herzegovina — it is also inflicting colossal damage to the process of post-conflict settlement, wiping out all progress made by the international community to that end. The Office has long exhausted its functions and has become an instrument of colonial policies. It must therefore be shut down as soon as possible. It is no surprise that criticism of the so-called High Representative has been growing recently, even in the sectors of Bosnian society that previously, with the permissiveness of Western countries, saw him as a conduit for their interests. Council members need to send a clear message that the Office's stance is categorically unacceptable and that there is no alternative to intra-Bosnian dialogue. There can be no doubt that the future of the country's peoples is exclusively in their own hands.

In that connection, we also propose a critical approach to the biased and one-sided assessments of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Office of the High Representative and German citizen Mr. Schmidt, who usurped the post of the High Representative. The pseudo-High Representative's detachment from reality is evident in his so-called "report", solely aimed at creating a false impression about the state of affairs in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to shift responsibility for the crisis onto those who are actually defending the Dayton principles. A simple and sober analysis suffices to understand the real picture, including the fact that there are no threats emanating from Republika Srpska. What deserves the Council's attention is the anti-democratic measures being taken against political opponents, who, for more than a year now have been facing a blatantly

fabricated trial on completely absurd charges. I will not even talk here about the imposition by the United States and the United Kingdom of unlawful unilateral sanctions against the leadership of Republika Srpska in order to exert political pressure on them. The absurd nature of those steps is obvious. A primer for Security Council members could be the material prepared by the Government of Republika Srpska, containing objective information on the situation on the ground, which was circulated yesterday in the Council.

Next year, the Dayton Peace Agreement will mark its thirtieth anniversary. At this important milestone, it is essential that the priorities of the international community in the Bosnia and Herzegovina remain the comprehensive strengthening of the Dayton architecture, promoting the principles of equal rights for the three constituent peoples and the two entities, getting rid of the Office of the High Representative and ensuring that the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina have the right to independent development.

For its part, Russia, as one of the guarantor States of 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, stands ready for constructive cooperation in order to ensure a genuine post-conflict settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

The United Kingdom welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) today, and I join others in thanking France for its efforts as penholder on the text. EUFOR-Althea's presence continues to play a vital role in safeguarding peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also express my thanks to High Representative Christian Schmidt for his latest report (S/2024/777), and I welcome His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to today's meeting.

I would like to use my remarks today to make three points.

First, the United Kingdom fully supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations to make progress towards greater European integration. Pursuing a reform path will help to achieve that goal and will boost stability and prosperity. We encourage continued progress on key steps that will unlock long-term benefits for all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens.

Secondly, Bosnia and Herzegovina must avoid actions that undermine that progress. We remain deeply concerned about secessionist rhetoric and actions from the Republika Srpska entity designed to undermine the unity and function of the State. One such example is the proposed agreement on peaceful disassociation. We are also concerned about elements of the all-Serb declaration, which, in our view, do not align with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And we regret the reported rise in genocide denial and glorification of war criminals. This has no place in a modern, inclusive and multi-ethnic society.

Thirdly, this mixed picture reinforces the ongoing vital role of the High Representative, who is tasked with upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement. The international community must enable an environment in which Bosnia and Herzegovina can make progress on reforms and advance its European ambitions. As such, we must continue to promote domestic responsibility and accountability. We particularly welcomed the High Representative's recent changes to election law, which contributed to the more positive atmosphere in which the recent local elections were held.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina is and must remain a single, sovereign and multi-ethnic country. The United Kingdom encourages all politicians to put aside their differences and show the political courage to work together towards a more stable and prosperous future for all citizens.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Denis Bećirović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Bećirović: At the beginning of my address, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you, Madam President, a successful presidency of the Security Council.

It is my duty to implement the foreign policy of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is founded upon our Constitution, laws and other State documents. Our foreign policy goals are to join NATO and the European Union. Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken significant steps towards Euro-Atlantic and European integration. However, without the externally initiated obstructions and blockades facing our country, our

progress could have been even greater. All the wars in the long history of Bosnia and Herzegovina were caused by the aggression of other countries, which was the case from 1992 to the end of 1995. That has also been confirmed by United Nations courts. Therefore, the essential problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina is related to external attempts to weaken, divide and ultimately destroy our country.

In May, the General Assembly adopted resolution 78/282 on the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. After the final judgments of the highest United Nations courts on the genocide against Bosniaks, it was also very important for the General Assembly to have adopted that resolution. We must not forget that the genocide against the Bosniaks was the culmination of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, the leadership of the Republic of Serbia does not respect the judgments of United Nations courts or General Assembly resolution 78/282. I would like to point out that Serbia is the only country in the world to have violated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Serbia's destructive policy is pursued by the authorities of the Republika Srpska entity. Recently, they introduced content into the primary school curriculum that glorifies the convicted war criminals Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić. They are not heroes — they are war criminals convicted of genocide, crimes against humanity and other war crimes.

The authorities of the Republika Srpska entity are endangering the foundations of the Dayton Peace Agreement. They are publicly advocating the unilateral destruction of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the revival of the criminal project of a greater Serbia, the destruction of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and violations of international and national law. Those are not just my personal observations. On 20 June 2024, the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board unanimously concluded that the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska entity is carrying out flagrant attacks against the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, attacks against the constitutional and legal order of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and is undermining the State and its authorities and multi-ethnic character. Those who witnessed the Dayton Peace Agreement and are actively engaged in the Peace Implementation Council,

and the United Nations must be put on red alert with regard to the threats to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

It is very important that the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board adopted a clear interpretation of the three important elements for ensuring peace and stability. Sovereignty resides in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single State, the territorial integrity of which is guaranteed by, among other instruments, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Entities within Bosnia and Herzegovina are not States. They exist solely by virtue of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and do not have a separate sovereignty of their own. The international community retains the necessary instruments to ensure the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The leadership of the Republic of Serbia is aggressively interfering in the internal affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and those of some other countries in the region. One piece of evidence that supports my claim is the declaration adopted by the so-called All-Serb Assembly in Belgrade on 8 June. In addition to its adoption by the so-called All-Serb Assembly, the declaration was also adopted in the Parliament of Serbia and the Parliament of the Republika Srpska entity. The so-called All-Serb Assembly cannot have supremacy over the State bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and does not have the authority to declare the military neutrality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Recently, one of the Deputy Prime Ministers of the Government of the Republic of Serbia openly admitted that the process of unification of Serbia and the Republika Srpska has started. That is dangerous and absolutely unacceptable.

It is time to tell the truth here in the Security Council about Serbia's real intention. The essential goal of the leadership of Serbia is the gradual *Anschluss* of the Republika Srpska entity to Serbia. They are trying to achieve that goal by abusing the parallel relationship. Let me remind Council members that the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina clearly states that parallel relationships with neighbouring countries can be established in accordance with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The declaration by the so-called All-Serb Assembly is contrary to the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For that reason and numerous others, the High Representative is obliged to abolish that anti-Dayton declaration, which

is not just a declarative act but a dangerous programme document for a greater State. Unfortunately, the High Representative has not yet done so. I call on the international community, especially the European Union, to clearly condemn the revival of the project of a greater Serbia. It concerns not only Bosnia and Herzegovina but also the entirety of Europe. Let us put a timely end to the revival of the dangerous concept of "One people, one assembly". It is especially unacceptable that the leadership of Serbia does not respect international law and the final and binding judgments of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the State property of Bosnia and Herzegovina. State property is an inseparable part of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Dayton, the infamous President of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, tried to divide the State property of Bosnia and Herzegovina between the entities. Milošević did not achieve that goal during the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina or during the negotiations in Dayton. Therefore, the international community must not allow that war objective to be achieved during peacetime.

I consider it important that the Security Council adopted a decision to extend the authorization of the mandate of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) (resolution 2757 (2024)). The presence of EUFOR-Althea is important for the preservation of peace and stability, not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but also in the region. In addition, NATO's message that NATO will not allow a security vacuum in Bosnia and Herzegovina is very important. Let us not forget that NATO's mandate in Bosnia and Herzegovina is precisely defined by annex I-A to the Dayton Agreement.

The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is linked to the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. Bosnia and Herzegovina is obliged to ensure the individual rights of its citizens and not only the collective rights of its people. It is time for retrograde forces to stop obstructing the implementation of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. Pressure on the European Court of Human Rights as a result of the latest judgments in the *Kovačević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case is unacceptable. We must eliminate every form of discrimination against citizens, including discrimination based on ethnicity and place of residence.

It is our obligation to harmonize the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina with international law and generally accepted democratic principles and practices. In that process, it is necessary to strengthen the democratic and multi-ethnic State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms as part of its international obligations under the Dayton Peace Agreement, thereby assuming responsibility for the protection of human rights according to the highest European standards. Bosnia and Herzegovina does not need the selective application of that Convention. The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina prescribes direct application of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, prioritizing it over any other law.

Bosnia and Herzegovina needs democratic solutions to overcome current challenges. In that regard, I believe that we should focus on the consistent and comprehensive implementation of all aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the harmonization of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the requirements of the European Court of Human Rights, and the acceptance of the European Union acquis. My country needs a political system that will ensure equal rights and a better future for all citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to especially emphasize that it is very important for my homeland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, to ensure the necessary preconditions that will guarantee the security of all citizens. Unfortunately, we are witnessing an enormous proliferation of offensive weapons in neighbouring countries. After the genocide, crimes against humankind and joint criminal enterprises of the 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina should be allowed to have the necessary defence capacities, in accordance with international and national law. That is a joint obligation of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: At the outset, Madam President, I would like to warmly congratulate you on your first day at the helm of the Security Council. I wish you every success. I also congratulate Switzerland on its excellent presidency.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate

countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and the Republic of Moldova, as well as San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union is pleased that the mandate of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) has been renewed by a unanimous decision of the Council (resolution 2757 (2024)). EUFOR-Althea continues to play a key role in supporting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain a safe and secure environment for all citizens.

The EU stands in solidarity with Bosnia and Herzegovina following the devastating floods and landslides on 3 October. The EU has provided emergency assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, with the participation of 10 member States and others as well as through EUFOR-Althea, and we are ready to provide further assistance if necessary.

The European Union welcomes the fact that according to the preliminary findings and conclusions of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights election observation mission, the local elections held on 6 October in Bosnia and Herzegovina were competitive and efficiently managed, while noting that there were insufficient efforts to generate public engagement.

The EU leaders' decision to open EU accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina in March was a milestone. The European Union expects all political actors to focus on dialogue and the key priorities and to intensify efforts to deliver reforms in line with the established EU expectations. Working together towards EU accession is key to living up to the aspirations of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be part of the European Union family, including by submitting the reform agenda under the Reform and Growth Facility for the Western Balkans. The European Union remains seriously concerned about legislation and initiatives in the Republika Srpska entity that run counter to the path to EU membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the use of secessionist rhetoric and the questioning of the constitutional order of the country. The European Union emphasizes that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, including Constitutional Court decisions, and international personality of Bosnia and Herzegovina need to be respected. Any action against those principles will lead inevitably to serious consequences.

The European Union urges all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to refrain from and renounce provocative divisive rhetoric and actions, including those that question the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the country, and to end the glorification of convicted war criminals and genocide denial and instead to actively promote reconciliation.

(spoke in French)

The European Union reaffirms the importance of continued cooperation among international actors and expresses its support for the mission and mandate of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and his Office.

(spoke in English)

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective as a single, united and sovereign country. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens lies within the European Union.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Mart (Serbia): I congratulate you, Madam President, and the United Kingdom on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of November. I would also like to thank Switzerland for its presidency of the Council in the month of October.

The stability of the region and overall cooperation with neighbours are among Serbia's key foreign policy priorities. In that regard, my country attaches special attention to planning and implementing the common projects through which we seek to build a true perspective for a better future. In terms of cooperation, Bosnia and Herzegovina is among Serbia's most valuable partners.

The Dayton Peace Agreement is of exceptional and lasting importance. It is the foundation on which everything has been achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina to date. It is also the lasting basis on which to build peace and stability and the starting point of efforts to reach the goal of genuine reconciliation and mutual understanding. However, reconciliation requires focus and application rather than voices and messages reminiscent of the past. Regrettably, the objectives to which we once signed up serve only to multiply problems between Bosnia and Herzegovina's entities and among its constituent peoples, and needless to say they also affect the political atmosphere in the region. Unilateral acts often taken by certain political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina and

the lack of effort on their part to achieve prior consensus and wider regional agreement on important issues that may be contentious are dangerous practices that lead to new divisions and widen the split among the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia is committed to overall cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina and with its entities. Cooperation and activities leading to reconciliation should always be borne in mind by all politicians in the region at all levels of Government. That is the only way forward towards achieving the progress expected by all of us in the region. Special mention in that context should be made of my country's continued and consistent respect for the principles of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of States. Respect for those principles and our mutual respect are of lasting value in relations between neighbours, and Serbia unreservedly supports the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the stability of that country.

We consider that dialogue and agreement on the ongoing and long-standing issues on which there exist differences between Bosnia and Herzegovina's entities and among its constituent peoples are the best way to ensure their solution. However, disregard for the principle of consensus and the selective use of the country's common institutions do not help to build confidence between those entities and among those peoples. Practice has shown that progress in overcoming differences is achievable only if solutions are acceptable, and therefore implementable. By the same token, that is also the right way to achieve progress in the process of building mutual confidence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My country believes that it is in Bosnia and Herzegovina's best interests for all its laws to be in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement. At the same time, we support a genuine and open dialogue within Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we are convinced that it is possible to create conditions for reaching an agreement and solutions that are acceptable for all. The policy of taking one-sided acts that are fraught with negative messages and attempts to impose positions and create divisions and problems is not a part of the quest to respond to the lasting interests of all Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens. Serbia is committed to genuine reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to which it has made, and continues to make, a visible contribution through its responsible policy and its consistent respect for the Dayton Peace Agreement.

As a country whose membership of the European Union is one of its foreign policy priorities, Serbia supports Bosnia and Herzegovina along its path towards European Union membership and salutes each and every success it achieves in the process of European integration. We recommit to sharing experiences and assistance on that path. To that end, we stand ready to develop ever-more comprehensive cooperation — in particular economic cooperation — with our neighbour Bosnia and Herzegovina, in all areas of interest to the two countries. Especially important in that respect is the modernization of road and rail corridors. Large infrastructure projects, such as the Belgrade to Sarajevo motorway, are open to participation by third countries as well.

We also believe that there is room for the promotion of our overall relations in all areas of common interest. My country supports the development of relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, just as it supports its territorial integrity. We consider, however, that the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement should be fully honoured and the interests of Republika Srpska respected. After all, those are the basic conditions for stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region as a whole.

Before I conclude, allow me to say a few words in the light of some of the hallucinatory remarks made by one of the speakers who preceded me.

First, the initiation and adoption in May of General Assembly resolution 78/282, entitled “International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica”, was a dry run for consensus disregard at the country level in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a rejection of dialogue and a selective use of the common institutions of that country. The initiative, which was embarked upon unilaterally by one Bosniak side, without internal consensus in Bosnia and Herzegovina and contrary to its Constitution and laws as well as the Dayton Peace Agreement, was — as we witnessed — harmful to the process of reconciliation, confidence-building and prosperity and set that process back considerably. I recall that all of Serbia’s efforts are aimed at achieving consensus and meaningful results, namely, showing respect, remembering the victims and ensuring that horrendous crimes are never repeated and that efforts are continued in the places where crimes were committed in order to bring about reconciliation and build a common future.

Secondly, as has been the case so far, it is Serbia’s undisguised intention to develop transparent relations with Republika Srpska under the Dayton Peace

Agreement. The cooperation, as defined by the Agreement on Special Parallel Relations between the Republic of Serbia and Republika Srpska, is aimed at promoting the social, democratic and economic development of Serbia and Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina as a whole and our region. The All-Serbian Sabor that was held in Belgrade on 8 June should be understood and construed accordingly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Šimonović (Croatia): Allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November. I also welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Bećirović.

I take this opportunity to express my condolences to, and solidarity with, Bosnia and Herzegovina as it overcomes the consequences of the recent flood.

First of all, we would like to welcome the extension of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since it still has an important role in supporting stability and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina for the sixty-sixth report, and we take note of his assessment that local elections were successfully conducted without serious incidents. We regret that, during the reporting period, there was no major progress in the area of European integration, especially bearing in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina had implemented a number of important reforms in the previous period. We hope that, following the local elections, the country will refocus on its reform and European agenda. We sincerely believe that European integration offers the best development opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens.

We fully agree with the conclusion of the High Representative that the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and European integration are complementary and mutually reinforcing. While Bosnia and Herzegovina will need to undergo substantial transformation to become a successful European Union (EU) member State, the Dayton Peace Agreement remains a cornerstone of its constitutional order and political stability. Any in-depth changes to that will require appropriate democratic legitimization and the support of all three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Work on constitutional and electoral reform should be continued and completed as a matter of priority. We are convinced that only full respect for the principles of equality among constituent peoples and all citizens' right to non-discrimination can bring about lasting political stability to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Croatia, as its immediate EU neighbour, looks forward to the next steps by Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to the European Union. Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have jointly established a strong European partnership aimed at strengthening Bosnia and Herzegovina's administrative capacities, thereby ensuring a coherent, steadfast and successful process of accession negotiations, as well as an irreversible path to full membership of the European Union.

The President: The representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia have asked for the floor to make further statements. In the interest of time, I shall give the floor to each once.

I now give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Lagumdžija (Bosnia and Herzegovina): For the record, I am not commenting on the Serbian representative's brutal, unacceptable and untruthful attacks and accusations against President Bećirović and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But I would like to underline a few facts as a quick response to some of the points, one again relating to the denial of the Srebrenica genocide and another to the declaration adopted by the All-Serb Assembly.

He mentioned the future that we would create if we worked together on reconciliation, the protection of human rights and upholding international law. There appears to be selective amnesia about the activities of the same Serbia just few months ago. They were in the forefront of the shameful campaign demonizing the resolution calling for an international day for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide (General Assembly resolution 78/282). The judgement of the International Court of Justice was based on the very same international law that the Serbian defence once bluntly denied, when the victims of the Serbian genocide were belittled and denied by the institutional machinery employed in denial of legally established facts, with the aim of scaring the international community about new conflicts in the Balkans. They should never forget that never again will their flagrant disregard for international law — and

not just on that occasion — speak as loudly as their commitment to upholding it. The Republic of Serbia is the only State in history to have violated the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, and they have limited historical, political, moral or civilized leeway to preach to others about that particular aspect.

With regard to the declaration, I just want to say, for record, that I have here the declaration that we are talking about. I warmly suggest to our colleagues from Serbia that they might circulate it so that everyone can see just how clear the violation of the Dayton Peace Accord is. I will not repeat the words of President Bećirović, but it is very clear that this represents the road map to the project for a greater Serbia of the previous century, whose main authors in that attempt three decades ago were sentenced for war crimes at the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, including the genocide at Srebrenica. This is the road map for the destruction of the Dayton Peace Accord. This is the road map for the implementation of exclusive national territories within Europe, instead of us integrating into the European Union, by proponents, as I said, who were already judged by international courts established in this building and by the court of history.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Mart (Serbia): I will be very brief. I think that the inflammatory language that we heard is disrespectful of the Council. Serbia is oriented towards the future. This is somebody who is using every opportunity to attack the leadership of Serbia and using words such *Anschluss*, and others. We know what that means. But it is not good for the future of our region. I want to repeat again that Serbia respects the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina. We want the rights of all nations and peoples living there to be respected, but they are not in fact being respected. Representatives of other sides should be representing all three nations, not just one. That is a very dangerous thing for our future. As I said, their inflammatory language attacking the leadership of Serbia, completely without evidence, is completely unacceptable. Serbia is committed. President Vučić has been in New York four times this year to explain and show why Serbia is dedicated to peace and stability and why we want to work on peace and stability, because that is the only way that can be done. We cannot go back. And I am sorry to say, all these arguments are quite false.

The meeting rose at 4.55 p.m.