

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 1 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution [1031 \(1995\)](#), I hereby transmit the sixty-seventh report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering the period from 16 October 2024 to 15 April 2025 (see annex).^{*} It should be noted that not all members of the Security Council acknowledge the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I should be grateful if you could bring the report to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**

^{*} Circulated in the language of submission only and without formal editing in line with current liquidity management measures.



Annex

Letter dated 24 April 2025 from the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina addressed to the Secretary-General

Pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1031 of 15 December 1995, which requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Council reports from the High Representative in accordance with Annex 10 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Conclusions of the London Peace Implementation Conference of 8-9 December 1995, I herewith present to you the 67th Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would kindly ask for this report to be distributed to the United Nations Security Council members for their consideration.

This is my eighth regular report to the Secretary-General since assuming the post of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 August 2021. The present report covers the period from 16 October 2024 through 15 April 2025.

Should you or any Council member require any information beyond what is provided in the enclosed report or have any questions regarding its contents, I should be pleased to provide you with it.

(Signed) Christian **Schmidt**
High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina

Sixty-seventh report of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General

Summary

This report covers the period from 16 October 2024 through 15 April 2025.

The reporting period was marked by a significant rise of tensions, which inarguably amounts to an extraordinary crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 26 February 2025, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina rendered a first-instance verdict that sentenced President of the Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik to one year of imprisonment and banned him from political office for six years due to the criminal offence of failure to enforce the decision of the High Representative that ceased all activities for the enactment of a law seeking to proclaim the decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina inapplicable in the Republika Srpska.

After the verdict, the Republika Srpska authorities responded with unprecedented attacks on the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina by adopting legislation that effectively bans State-level judiciary and State law enforcement from operating on the Republika Srpska territory. These actions are intended to create a parallel and conflicting system between the State and the Entity institutions.

Subsequently, aligning with their regular public statements calling for “peaceful dissolution” and “peaceful disassociation” and repeated references to either “original Dayton” or “separation,” Republika Srpska President Dodik announced plans to submit a draft of a new Republika Srpska Constitution. This attempt to adopt a new Entity Constitution signifies a particularly dangerous step.

The divergences of views among the State-level coalition members ultimately culminated in Troika’s (SDP BiH-NiP-NS) decision to break up the Coalition with the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD). While the Republika Srpska opposition parties (PDP, SDS, ZPR) expressed readiness to participate in the State-level government and this move has partially materialized, government reshuffling proves to be more difficult, given the distribution of powers in the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Meanwhile, there was no breakthrough in the implementation of the 5+2 Agenda in the reporting period. There was no legislative work at the State level towards the resolution of the state and defense property issues, whilst the so-called State Property Disposal Ban as well as relevant decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and

Herzegovina are continuously violated. Considering all existing problems and challenges caused by the lack of relevant State-level legislation, I offered to the international community a proposal for a facilitation process aimed at developing and defining a sustainable resolution of the issue of State Property. In terms of fiscal sustainability, the Global Fiscal Balance and Policy Framework for the Period 2025-2027 was adopted, but certainty and adequacy in financing the institutions of the country has not been fully achieved.

Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration momentum following the European Union's decision in March 2024 to open accession negotiations did not prevail in the reporting period and the much-anticipated progress in the reform agenda was not forthcoming.

On a positive note, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted two Decisions confirming the results of the Local Elections of October 2024, thereby successfully completing the election process, with results timely certified and mandates awarded for the greatest extent possible. Finalization of the elections and appeals processes were delayed only in certain municipalities. The Final Report of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation Mission, which was released in February 2025, concluded that the legal framework overall provides a solid basis for the conduct of democratic elections, which was strengthened by my amendments to the Election Law that implemented many long-standing ODIHR recommendations.

As for the Brčko District, the local leadership managed to keep the focus on the reform agenda and avoided being mired in recent political developments, notably those following the first-instance verdict against Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik.

The financial sector appears stable and economic activity in the country continues its positive trend despite the current crisis. However, the demographic situation in the country is not improving. Considering the unmistakable environmental degradation and recurrent disasters, it is safe to conclude that daily life in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not become any easier than the previous reporting periods.

In these troubling times fueled by a complex geopolitical landscape notwithstanding, the international community has undeterredly continued to support Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Having said that, I take this opportunity to remind all political actors of their obligation to fully comply with the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and all its Annexes, which guarantee the inviolability of Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order.

I. Introduction

1. This is my eighth regular report submitted to the UN Security Council since I assumed the position of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in August 2021. My report is an impartial assessment of the implementation of the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace with information on developments and progress towards achieving previously established goals.
2. I am fulfilling the tasks set out in Annex 10 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP) as entrusted by the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council adopted pursuant to Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which repeatedly affirmed under Annex 10 of the Peace Agreement that the High Representative is the final authority in theater regarding the interpretation of the civilian implementation of the Peace Agreement, which includes the authority to make binding decisions as he judges necessary on issues as elaborated by the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn on 9 and 10 December 1997. Progress on the five objectives and two conditions, also known as the 5+2 Agenda, set in 2008 as the agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina to transition from international oversight, remains the obligation of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfill.
3. In my competence as the final authority in theater regarding interpretation of the Agreement on the Civilian Implementation of the Peace Settlement, I repeat that the territorial integrity of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a subject of international law must be preserved. Under the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two Entities, which exist legally by virtue of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Constitution, therefore, does not only protect the State institutions, decisions of which must be complied with, but also the Entities and the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Any change to the Constitution must be made in accordance with the amendment procedure prescribed therein.
4. In my previous reports, I continuously urged all parties in the country to fully comply with the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP), and to achieve progress on Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards its strategic foreign policy objective of European integration. Additionally, I consistently commended all honest efforts in fulfilling the conditions of the 5+2 Agenda, but I also dutifully condemned the gradual increase of attacks against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and the general welfare of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
5. In this reporting period, I have to report that Bosnia and Herzegovina is faced with what many domestic and international observers note as an extraordinary crisis since the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. This crisis is stemming from the actions set in motion by Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik following his first

instance guilty verdict rendered by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina against which his lawyers filed an appeal on 11 April 2025.

6. Attacks against the very foundations of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue unabated in the reporting period. The State-level coalition was seriously affected, and the reform dynamic stalled.
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina should urgently continue taking resolute action to finalize reforms in line with the European Union *acquis* and European standards, addressing all relevant steps. Bosnia and Herzegovina has actively engaged in implementing the new Growth Plan for the Western Balkans across the four pillars, but it should urgently finalize its Reform Agenda and submit to the European Commission for agreement.
8. In these troubling times, it is with gratitude that I note the international community's unwavering support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in an effort to fend off all recurrent threats.
9. I must emphasize, however, that time is of the essence against the current challenges facing Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, I call on all responsible authorities to uphold the law and honor their international obligations to protect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to support its progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

II. Political Update

A. General Political Environment

10. The reporting period is characterized by extraordinary attacks on the fundamentals of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP) since its inception, including on the constitutional order with explicit elements of secessionism being undertaken by the authorities of the Republika Srpska and its President Milorad Dodik. These attacks are posing a serious threat to the sustainability of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), including to the security and stability in the Country as well as in the Region, thereby bringing all relevant processes and reforms into question.
11. Adoption of laws by the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) banning the work of the State judicial institutions and law-enforcement agencies in the territory of the Republika Srpska Entity hint at *de facto* secession.
12. The ongoing attempt to adopt a new Constitution in the Republika Srpska, constitutes a particularly dangerous step in this direction.
13. Actions were set in motion by Republika Srpska President Dodik following the first instance verdict of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 26 February 2025, which found him guilty of the criminal offence of failure to enforce the decision of the High Representative that ceased all activities for the enactment of a law

seeking to proclaim the decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina inapplicable in the territory of the Republika Srpska Entity.

14. Protracted divergence of views among the State-level coalition members on fundamental pillars such as the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its role, the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), the international community and the High Representative, the European Union path, NATO integration, State Property, State Budget, other statehood matters as well as calls for reforming the Council of Ministers had long endangered the stability of the State level coalition and ultimately culminated in the Troika's (SDP BiH-NiP-NS) decision to break up the Coalition with the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) on 23 January 2025. The Troika's decision came after the abstention of SNSD during a vote in the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina on two European Union reforms regarding the Law on Border Control and the Law on Protection of Personal Data and was immediately followed by Troika's initiative to remove Deputy Speaker Nebojša Radmanović (SNSD) from his position in the Collegium. Troika subsequently moved to remove all SNSD-affiliated Collegium members in the House of Peoples and all SNSD-affiliated ministers and deputy ministers in the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
15. While the opposition parties Party of Democratic Progress (PDP), Serb Democratic Party (SDS), and For Justice and Order (ZPR) in the Republika Srpska have expressed readiness to participate in the State-level government, government reshuffling proves to be more difficult because the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) has the numerical power to block decisions in the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The same is also true for the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where SNSD Ministers could block decision-making processes because of the requirement of consensus in the Collegium.
16. The Croat Democratic Union (HDZ BiH), as the largest Croat political party, continues to prioritize amending the Election Law for Members of the Presidency over many other issues, including the functionality of the State and the implementation of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the Sejdić-Finci group of cases. In that respect, the insistence of HDZ on electoral reform as *conditio sine qua non* in the current political context is monodimensional and has held back some of the changes that are needed to help the country get out of the current political deadlock. Talks among parties about a settlement are beginning to start.
17. Bosnia and Herzegovina includes representatives of the world's four largest monotheistic religions: Islam, Orthodox Christianity, Roman Catholicism and Judaism. While, during the period covered by this report, the State's Interreligious Council did not function, nevertheless

relations between faith leaders were generally cordial, sometimes constructive. In one instance, during a dispute over the installation of crosses near a Bosniak memorial in Srebrenica Municipality, the leader of the local Islamic Community and municipal officials worked together to maintain dialogue and lower tensions.

Developments in the Republika Srpska

18. During the reporting period, Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik and his political allies continued their attacks on the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina and furthered their efforts at de facto secession of the Republika Srpska.
19. The Republika Srpska authorities continued to challenge the rulings of Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina with their celebration of the unconstitutional Republika Srpska Day on 9 January 2025. The United States, the United Kingdom, and the European Union highlighted the celebration's unconstitutionality.
20. On 17 January 2025, the United States Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control imposed sanctions against eight persons involved in the organization of the previous year's Republika Srpska Day celebration, notably Republika Srpska Minister of the Interior Siniša Karan, Chief of Staff in the Office of the Republika Srpska President Danijel Dragičević, and President of the Republika Srpska Constitutional Court Džerard Selman.
21. On 26 February 2025, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina rendered a first-instance verdict that sentenced Republika Srpska President Dodik to one year of imprisonment and banned him from political office for six years due to his actions to enact the legislation that sought to extract the Republika Srpska from the application of the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in violation of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the General Framework Agreement of Peace. Acting Director of the Republika Srpska Official Gazette Miloš Lukić, who had been accused of publishing the legislation in the Official Gazette despite my previous decision that annulled those laws, was acquitted.
22. After the verdict, the Republika Srpska authorities responded with unprecedented attacks on the country's constitutional order by adopting legislation that aimed to ban State-level judiciary and State law enforcement agencies from operating in the Republika Srpska territory.
23. At the special session of the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) held on 26 February 2025, the RSNA adopted Conclusions tilted "The dismantling of the Constitution of BiH, measures and tasks aimed at Protecting the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina" Later that day, the RSNA passed the "Decision on the Measures and Tasks Arising from Unconstitutional Decision and Actions of Non-

Constitutional Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” On 27 February 2025, RSNA adopted the *Law on Non-Application of the Law and Prohibition of the Activities of Extra-Constitutional Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the *Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Republika Srpska*, the *Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of the Republika Srpska* and the *Law on the Special Registry and Publicity of the Work of Non-Profit Organizations*. Following several requests for review of constitutionality of these RSNA acts and laws, at its extraordinary session held on 7 March 2025, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued temporary measures putting them out of force together with all acts undertaken for their implementation. In addition, the Court prohibited all authorities within the Republika Srpska and State officials from the Republika Srpska to act on the basis of these laws and acts. The Court concluded that the disputed *Law on Non-Application of Laws and Ban on Operation of Extra-Constitutional Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, generates a probable risk that authorized official persons that implement decisions of the State institutions would be prevented from exercising their duties which can lead to a conflict between these bodies and a potential escalation that would pose a threat to peace in the country and that there are sufficient reasons to indicate that the implementation of the contested legal acts would have serious and irrevocable harmful consequences reflected in the existence of a danger of undermining the constitutional order and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This decision by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina ensures adherence to the country’s constitutional framework and reaffirms the authority of State institutions. The constitutional structure of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina with strong administrative units (Entities) requires that all Entity-level competences do have directly their legal foundation in Annex 4 (Constitution) or have been consensually or by decision of the High Representative as final interpreter transferred to the State. There exists no unilateral competence to disrespect the derogation power of the State Constitution (Annex 4) and agreed transfer of competences to the State. In this frame, State law overrides principally Entity law. So, any attempt to overrule State law or State institutions has to be seen as a not legally justified action.

24. Aligning with his regular public statements calling for “peaceful dissolution” and “peaceful disassociation” and repeated references to either “original Dayton” or “separation,” and after on 28 February 2025, Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik announced plans to publish the draft of a new Republika Srpska Constitution for public discussion. On 12 March 2025, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted a Proposal to initiate the procedure of adoption of the new Constitution. The day after, the RSNA adopted the Draft Constitution. The RSNA adopted a conclusion providing that the adopted Draft Constitution shall be submitted for public debate for a period of 30 days. Under the existing Republika Srpska Constitution, adoption of

amendments to the constitution require approval of at least two thirds of the total number of the RSNA deputies and a majority of the members of the Council of Peoples in each caucus for the Constituent Peoples and Others. The involvement of the Republika Srpska Council of Peoples is a constitutional safeguard guaranteeing equality of all Constituent Peoples and Others in the decision-making process related to adoption of amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution.

25. The adoption of the draft text means to "constitutionalize" the policies of "original Dayton" which includes eliminating the Republika Srpska Council of Peoples and "all amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution made by the High Representative". It intends to present the Republika Srpska as a "sovereign state" *of the Serb people, as well as of all peoples and citizens residing within its territory*, that is entitled to self-determination and may enter into complex state unions of federal or confederal structure with neighbouring countries and other countries or group of countries. The Draft of the Entity Constitution includes that the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) and the Republika Srpska Government may suspend the application of any act, measure or activity of the authorities and institutions at the State level that have no grounds in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that the laws that are not an exclusive responsibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina or that do not arise from an agreement between the entities shall not produce any legal effect in Republika Srpska and furthermore that the laws adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be applicable in the territory of the Republika Srpska once they have been confirmed by the RSNA. In that context, it provides the RSNA with full legislative powers, abolishing the Republika Srpska Council of Peoples, including the vital national interest mechanism. It is additionally provided that the *"the elected or appointed representatives of Republika Srpska in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be required to represent the interests of Republika Srpska, in accordance with this Constitution and acts of the RSNA"*. Moreover, the draft constitution contends that the status of the territory of Brčko District cannot be changed without the explicit agreement of both Entities. This contradicts the Final Award of the Brčko Tribunal, which reserves for the Tribunal itself the potential to change the status of the territory of Brčko District, in the event of serious non-compliance by one or the other Entity. The Draft Constitution specifically provides for the competencies of the Republika Srpska in defence matters and foresees the establishment of a Republika Srpska Army under the command and control of the Republika Srpska President. With regards to the judiciary, it foresees the establishment of the Republika Srpska High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council with full powers of appointment and dismissal of the judicial office holders in the Entity. The Draft additionally claims exclusive authority and ownership of the Republika Srpska over property as well as its independent management and disposal, including natural resources and goods of general interest, thereby seeking to legalize a unilateral takeover of state property on the territory of Republika Srpska.

26. Disregarding the decision on interim measures of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 7 March 2025 and the prohibition to take any action based on the above listed acts, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA), at its special session of 14 March 2025 adopted a proposed Law on the Protection of the Constitutional Order of the Republika Srpska with the aim to establish the Special Prosecutor's Office for the Protection of the Constitutional Order of the Republika Srpska and the Special Court of the Republika Srpska for the Protection of the Constitutional Order of the Republika Srpska as well as the Service for the Protection of the Constitutional Order of the Republika Srpska responsible for performing tasks related to collection of data and preventing activities aimed at undermining or destroying the constitutional order and security of the Republika Srpska, which already affected smooth functioning of some of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
27. On 28 March 2025, Republika Srpska Minister of Justice Miloš Bukejlović sent a letter to courts and prosecutors' offices in the Republika Srpska recalling the previous Republika Srpska Government's Conclusions, thus specifying a threat of prosecution, of termination of budgetary support and of termination of employment, together as well as with a possible abolishment of judicial institutions, if judicial officials in the Republika Srpska abide by the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and do not implement the laws that the Republika Srpska passed *ultra vires* and that were found *prima facie* unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby thus trying to incite judges and prosecutors into committing the criminal offence of non-enforcement of decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or an attack on the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 2 April 2025, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a Ruling on Non-Enforcement of its Decision on Interim Measure No. U-8/25 of 7 March 2025 establishing, among others, that the Rulebook adopted by the Republika Srpska Minister of Justice on the basis of the suspended Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of the Republika Srpska does not have a legal effect and cannot be legally valid and is thus null and void, concluding also that actions by the Republika Srpska Minister of Justice, by his actions-adoption of the disputed Rulebook and its publication in the Republika Srpska Official Gazette, disregarded and acted in contravention of the prohibition of the final and binding Decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina no. U-8/25 and that such actions taken by him may entail a criminal liability.
28. In anticipation of the verdict of Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted conclusions on 24 and 25 December 2024, attacking the sovereignty of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Responding to these developments, I issued an order on 2 January 2025 declaring that said conclusions violate the Republika Srpska obligations and commitments

under Annex 4 and Annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and prohibited the implementation of specific RSNA conclusions. the Republika Srpska officials dismissed my order as irrelevant, a further attempt to challenge my authority.

29. The Republika Srpska authorities have continuously worked on shrinking the space for critical voices in society, including media, NGOs, and opposition politicians. Those who voiced dissenting opinions faced public denunciations from political leaders and threats of criminal prosecution. These actions create a climate of fear and intimidation, discouraging open discourse and criticism.
30. In December 2024, the Republika Srpska authorities adopted amendments to the Republika Srpska Criminal Code that removed gender as a protected category from hate crime provisions. This change weakened protections for women and marginalized gender groups, receiving condemnation by human rights organizations as discriminatory and regressive.
31. In February 2025, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted the Draft Law on a Special Register and Publicity of Work of Non-Profit Organizations (NGO) under urgent procedure, which was subsequently suspended by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Law stipulates closer scrutiny and extensive registration requirements for registered NGOs that receive foreign funding and stricter financial disclosure requirements. NGO representatives have expressed concern that the selective application of this law would target NGOs and media outlets. Combined with the Entity's reinstated criminalization of defamation in 2023, this legislation has the potential to restrict criticism of public officials even further.

European Union Accession Process

32. The progress Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved in terms of European integration following the European Union's decision in March 2024 to open accession negotiations, and the momentum it created for some time did not prevail in the reporting period.
33. While the stated commitment to the European path by the Chairwoman of the Council of Ministers and mainly the political elites of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina persisted, the process as a whole has been held hostage by current political crises in the Country and the mentioned political blockages.
34. The reporting period saw only limited progress in adoption of the four pieces of legislation required for opening accession negotiations, as the Law on Border Control and the Law on Protection of Personal Data were fully adopted, while the Law on High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council has only passed through the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina despite the ministers affiliated with the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) voting against it. There was no

progress in reaching an agreement on appointing a chief negotiator and setting up the required negotiating structure.

35. No agreement was reached on the Law on Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) kept demanding its prior consideration by the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA). Previously, there had been no movement on the Draft Reform Agenda, necessary for implementation of the Growth Plan for Western Balkans, and a precondition for the 70 million Euro allocation by the European Union as part of the first tranche within the European Union Growth Plan for the Western Balkans.
36. On 14 February 2025, the Council of Ministers Bosnia and Herzegovina consented to the provisional application of the FRONTEX Agreement with the European Union on operational activities carried out by the European Border and Coast Guard Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreement and its provisional application is one of the key steps in strengthening operational cooperation between European Union member states and the competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in migration management and in advancing on the European Union path.
37. On 27 December 2024, Chairwoman Krišto submitted an official application for funds from the Solidarity Fund of the European Union to help with the damages caused by torrential floods and landslides that had taken place in October 2024. The application was finalized by a Joint Team appointed by the Council of Ministers coupled with assistance from local and foreign experts. By submitting this application, Bosnia and Herzegovina reaffirmed its commitment to transparent and efficient administering of Solidarity Fund resources.

Updates on the October 2024 Local Elections

38. As noted in my previous Report, the Local Elections were held on 6 October 2024. While certain parties based in the Republika Srpska initially opposed the elections integrity package that had been introduced by my Decision Enacting the Law on Amendments to the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, all Parties from the Republika Srpska, including the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), decided to participate under the set of rules in the elections as announced and organized by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
39. On the eve of the elections, due to heavy rainfalls and landslides in the country, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina had to postpone elections in five municipalities, and they were subsequently held on 20 October 2024 in Fojnica, Kiseljak, Konjic and Kreševo and on 3 November 2024 in Jablanica.
40. On 5 and 15 November 2024, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted two Decisions confirming the results

of the 2024 Local Elections, thereby successfully completing the election process, with results timely certified and mandates awarded.

41. The distinct feature of the elections was that the Central Election Commission piloted the use of Information and Communication Technology with an aim of enhancing election integrity. Their use was widely assessed as positive by both domestic and international observers and interlocutors.
42. To that end, and upon the request of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central Election Commission submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 March 2025 the Final Report on the implemented pilot projects for the introduction of new technologies in the electoral process in the country. The Report consists of the evaluation and analysis of implemented pilot projects and a detailed feasibility study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies in the electoral process, availing the authorities to secure timely allocation of resources and adequate training in order to enable their comprehensive application in the next general elections. Based on the Report's findings, the Central Election Commission submitted the respective budget request for funding for the introduction of election technologies, which according to Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, under specific conditions can exceed the expenditure ceiling determined by the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
43. The draft Law on the Budget of the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and International Obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2025, as determined by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4 March 2025, does not envisage any new funding for strengthening the Central Election Commission nor for the introduction of new technologies.
44. So far, the Council of Ministers did not approve the Central Election Commission Rulebook on Internal Organization, essential for strengthening its institutional capacities to strengthen the integrity, accountability and transparency of the electoral process.
45. The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections "Pod Lupom" published its final report on monitoring the 2024 Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 January 2025. The report concluded that the Decision of the High Representative on 26 March 2024 amending the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina fully or partially implemented 28 of the recommendations of Pod Lupom for better elections, including 4 of 5 priority recommendations. As noted, the changes positively affected different aspects of the election process, including the election administration and pre-election campaigning as well as the introduction of the new technologies in the electoral process.
46. The Final Report by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) Election Observation Mission was published

on 25 February 2025 and concluded that the legal framework overall provides a solid basis for the conduct of democratic elections with the latest amendments to the Election Law having introduced “important integrity safeguards and confidence building measures and further strengthened some aspects of the electoral process.” As noted, many long-standing ODIHR recommendations were implemented and generally welcomed by the interlocutors, whilst some recommendations, including priority recommendation that requires adoption of constitutional amendments by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain unaddressed for the time being.

47. When it comes to the implementation of the confirmed election results, all Municipal and City Councils as well as their respective Assemblies were constituted by the time of reporting.
48. However, at the time of reporting, the local elections process is still underway due to the indirect elections in two places – the City of Sarajevo and the City of Istočno Sarajevo (East Sarajevo). The respective Municipalities that delegate councilors and representatives to the Sarajevo City Council and East Sarajevo City Assembly finalized the procedure. On 8 April, the CEC certified the results and allocated the mandates for both bodies and the appeal procedure has started. As soon as over, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to confirm the results and thereby enable the constituting of the Sarajevo City Council (and subsequent election of Mayor and Deputy Mayors) and East Sarajevo City Assembly in accordance with the 2024 Local Elections results.
49. On 4 February 2025, the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted an initiative submitted by Deputy Speaker Edina Gabela (SBiH) for changes to the Federation’s Constitution that would enable the direct election of City of Sarajevo authorities, including the Mayor. Whilst the City of Sarajevo authorities successfully overcame challenges in appointing an ad interim Mayor, following the incumbent Mayor’s assumption of newly awarded municipal-level mandate, additional statutory improvements may be made to respective provisions to ensure clear continuity of office.

B. Decisions of the High Representative During the Reporting Period

Order Declaring the Conclusions of the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted at its 16th Special Session held on 24 and 25 December 2024 violate Republika Srpska’s obligations and commitments under Annex 4 and Annex 10 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and prohibiting their implementation

50. In anticipation of the verdict of RS President Milorad Dodik, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted several Conclusions on 24 and 25 December 2025, attacking the sovereignty of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its key institutions, including the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Court of Bosnia

and Herzegovina, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina. RSNA Conclusions constituted serious violations of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) and consequently, threats to peace and stability in the country and the region. Some of the Conclusions specifically instructed and/or demanded from certain authorities or representatives of the Republika Srpska and State-level officials "from the Serb constituent people" elected or appointed from the Republika Srpska to take actions to implement the policies contained in said Conclusions and were as such particularly problematic, including in its segregative intention directed against the multiethnic character of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Republika Srpska. Furthermore, elected and appointed officials at the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina exercise their respective mandates and duties in accordance with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Conclusions which were seeking to oblige elected and appointed state-level officials in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina constituted a direct attack on the autonomy and independence of State-level officials and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, some of the Conclusions obliged the Republika Srpska Government to submit a law which will regulate the procedure for considering issues decided by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a way that the RSNA has to take a position on those issues first and thereby to give the RSNA the mechanism to trigger the entity voting procedure provided for in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in violation of the provisions of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and undermining the functionality of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 2 January 2025, I have decided to issue an Order declaring that the adopted Conclusions violate the Republika Srpska's obligations and commitments under Annex 4 and Annex 10 to the GFAP and prohibited implementation of specific Conclusions.

Order Supporting the Functioning of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Other Cultural Institutions of Significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina

51. On 21 November 2025, in the exercise of the powers vested in the High Representative by Article V of Annex 10 (Agreement on Civilian Implementation of the Peace Settlement) to the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), I issued the Order Supporting the Functioning of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Other Cultural Institutions of Significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina.
52. Pursuant to the constitutional principle of continuation of laws as determined by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the entry into force of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, seven cultural institutions of significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina - namely the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Historical

Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Museum of Literature and Theatre Arts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Library for Blind and Visually Impaired Persons of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Film Archives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina - continued to legally exist as state institutions.

53. The listed cultural institutions are dedicated to preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an integral part of the country's shared history, identity, and values, making them a crucial element of social cohesion and lasting peace.
54. As the laws governing the foundation of the said institutions remained in force and applicable, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to be the founder of these institutions and therefore obliged to exercise its founding competencies, including regarding the necessary appointments of management boards and directors, and financing.
55. Although established by the regulations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the competent State-level institutions have for many years failed to comprehensively assume their founding obligations toward these cultural institutions, placing them in a situation of operational difficulties, blockade, and dysfunction. Consequently, all seven institutions currently lack supervisory and management bodies, while six of them have directors appointed by non-State authorities as a means to overcome the continuous obstacles they face.
56. The National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina was in a particularly difficult situation. Following the retirement of its director, the institution was left without an authorized signatory required for the lawful execution of basic daily operations. During this period, the National and University Library, as the national center, ceased issuing ISSN, ISBN, and ISMN numbers, thereby paralyzing the publishing sector across Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, employees were deprived of fundamental labor rights, the academic community was put at risk, and the functioning of 78 libraries across Bosnia and Herzegovina was severely disrupted.
57. To address the immediate threat to the continued work of the National and University Library but also to preempt a similar situation in the other cultural institutions of significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina, I issued the Order that addresses the authorization for the conduct of specific tasks of the National and University Library of Bosnia and Herzegovina - and the other six institutions should they face a similar problem - that are necessary for the daily management of the institution or are necessary to avoid damage to the institution.
58. Although it has unblocked the National and University Library, allowing its smooth functioning in the coming period, the Order has not permanently resolved the issue of funding and management in these cultural institutions. Therefore, I gave a deadline of 60 days to the

Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina to propose a law to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regulating the management and the financing of cultural institutions of significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

59. Following the expiration of the given deadline, the necessary legislation, unfortunately, has not been adopted - partly due to political obstructions and partly due to a lack of will from those responsible. The authorities must take full responsibility and take decisive steps to finally resolve the status of these institutions. I continue to follow the domestic process with both interest and concern and expect concrete actions from all relevant stakeholders.

C. Five Objectives and Two Conditions

Progress of the Objectives

60. There was no major breakthrough in the implementation of the 5+2 Agenda in the reporting period. Unfortunately, there has been no legislative work at the State level towards the resolution of State Property. Meanwhile, the so-called State Property Disposal Ban, as well as relevant decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina referring to State Property, are consistently being ignored, contested and openly violated. In the Brčko District, the general positive trend is expected to continue after the newly elected delegates of the District Assembly and the Brčko District Government have been sworn in following the October 2024 Local Elections.
61. The Fiscal Council unanimously adopted the Global Fiscal Balance and Policy Framework for the Period 2025-2027 in February 2025, fulfilling the prerequisites for the adoption of the Budget of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Institutions for 2025. In the context of reforms pertaining to the rule of law cluster among the 14 key priorities set out in the European Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for European Union membership, the Council of Ministers outvoted the Members of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) on the adoption of the Draft Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, but the prospects of this Draft Law being adopted into law by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina seem dim as the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) has already passed a decision on the non-implementation of any State-level Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, while adopting parallel legislation to the same effect.
62. The Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) passed a similar decision ordering the non-implementation of the Law on the Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which had already been taken off the agenda of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. With both of these reform initiatives in limbo, commitment to the advancement of the rule of law is in question.

State and Defense Property

63. There was no major breakthrough in the resolution of the State Property objective during the reporting period, in particular no legislative work at the state-level towards regulation of the State Property issue. There have been increased calls by domestic, mainly local authorities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the amendments to the Law on the Temporary Prohibition of Disposal of State Property of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the so-called State Property Disposal Ban). The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a new decision concerning disposal of state property.
64. In October 2024, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina established an Inter-Ministerial Working Group in charge of assessing the impact of the latest Constitutional Court decision on State Property (the case related to the Decision of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina regulating repurposing of forest land, Case No. U-3/24 of 11 July 2024) in connection with the State Property Disposal Ban. The Working Group submitted its findings and conclusions in the form of an “Information”, which was adopted by the the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at its regular session held on 30 December 2024. The "Information" outlines significant challenges faced by various Federal Ministries due to the Constitutional Court ruling – in particular delays in construction projects, obstacles in issuing construction and environmental permits, and issues with land ownership and land use rights, particularly concerning state property. Key sectors currently facing disruption include energy, mining and agriculture (with investments valued at around EUR 4.5 billion), and transport and communication (with investments valued at around EUR 2.6 billion). The Information contains six conclusions which were adopted, including submitting a request for the swift resolution of this matter for all relevant stakeholders to the Council of Ministers and requesting discussion with and assistance from the Office of the High Representative to consider all options available to resolve this urgent problem. The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina also informed the Office of the High Representative and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in writing on 7 January 2025, emphasizing the urgency of the matter.
65. In the meantime, the City of Lukavac submitted an initiative to the Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina requesting changes to the State Property Disposal Ban, proposing that the “publicly or state-owned land needed for expropriation in public interest, in accordance with the relevant expropriation legislation” shall be exempted from the Disposal Ban – possibly through an action by the Office of the High Representative. This intervention would arguably enable implementation of numerous – infrastructural and other public projects at the level of local self-government, such as (re)construction of local roads, regulation of watercourses (particularly

important in the context of flood prevention and protection), construction of substations, etc. As the said initiative received support by numerous local communities, the Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina officially endorsed the initiative of the City of Lukavac and forwarded it to the Office of the High Representative and relevant domestic institutions.

66. In its plenary session held on 23 January 2025, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued its Decision No. AP-2990/22 in which it was concluded that the State Property Disposal Ban and other relevant legislation do not allow adverse possession as a way of acquiring ownership on state property.
67. It is important to notice that the State Property Disposal Ban as well as relevant Constitutional Court decisions referring to State Property are consistently being ignored, contested and openly violated – particularly in the Republika Srpska and certain parts of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The unresolved state property issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a significant barrier to the country's economic development, particularly impacting foreign direct investments in key sectors such as renewable energy, mining, transport, and agriculture.
68. Considering all existing problems and challenges caused by the lack of relevant state-level legislation, I offered to the international community a proposal for a facilitation process aimed at developing and defining a sustainable resolution of the issue of State Property. The task of such a process would be to ensure the adoption of State Property legislation by facilitating a broad cross-party, cross-governmental consensus through domestic political dialogue, with participation of lower levels of government and non-governmental actors such as investors and civil society.

Completion of the Brčko Final Award

69. Following the local elections on 6 October 2024, the newly elected delegates of the Brčko District Assembly were sworn in on 19 November 2024, while the Brčko District Government took office on 15 January 2025. Delegates from thirteen political parties and two independent delegates representing Turkish and Russian national minorities took 31 seats in the Brčko District Assembly.
70. Thanks to the six new politicians, the fifteen-member incumbent Government shows great energy and enthusiasm along with a desire for positive change.
71. Encouraged by the Brčko District Supervisor, the local leadership managed to keep the focus on the reform agenda, and to avoid reflection of national political developments following the first-instance verdict against Milorad Dodik onto the District. The leadership reaffirmed their approach during their official addresses at the ceremony marking the 25th Anniversary of Brčko District on 7 March 2025.

72. The Brčko District Supervisor continued his regular exchange with Ambassador Clint Williamson, the Presiding Arbiter of the Arbitral Tribunal for Dispute over Inter-Entity Boundary in Brčko Area and kept him apprised of political developments at the State level and their possible reflection on the implementation of the Brčko Final Award. The Presiding Arbiter visited Bosnia and Herzegovina between 25 and 27 March 2025 for meetings in Brčko with the leaders of the executive and legislative authority, and law enforcement, and for meetings in Sarajevo with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the President of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and international stakeholders to discuss the current political situation in the country and compliance with the Brčko Final Award. He called on all parties to respect the status of Brčko District in accordance with the provisions of the Final Award, reminding that the Brčko Arbitration process and the Final Award are sacrosanct and that all parties need to be diligent in complying with the terms of the Award, including support for the state institutions on which Brčko District relies for its stability and security.
73. During the post-election period, the Office of the High Representative and the Brčko District Supervisor continued to engage at the expert and political level in promoting good governance, economic growth, infrastructure development, and a business environment conducive to private sector growth.
74. The Brčko District Supervisor's engagement and action was critical following a decision of the Brčko District Appellate Court of 7 October 2024, determining that the Decision on the Appointment of the Brčko District Chief of Police of 9 November 2020 pursuant to the law which had been repealed in the meantime, is not in accordance with the Brčko District Statute. Concerned about the immediate effect that the Appellate Court decision would have on the functioning of the police and possible disruption in its ability not only to provide a safe environment for the District residents but also continue several ongoing criminal investigations, without questioning the validity of the decision of the Appellate Court, the Supervisor issued an order instructing the competent authorities how to implement the mentioned decision so that the District Police is not left without its management until a replacement for the Chief of Police is appointed in accordance with the law.
75. On 31 January 2025 several political parties submitted an initiative to amend the Law on Police that, *inter alia*, seeks to allow an unlimited number of mandates for the positions of chief, deputy chief and assistant chief of police, as opposed to the existing restriction to two consecutive mandates. Since all other police laws in the country on different levels limit the number of mandates for the said positions, the initiative was put on hold to allow for additional consultations with international partners engaged in the police related matters – the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the Delegation of the European Union (EUD), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

76. There has been no progress on the public administration and civil service reform, i.e., on finalizing the new Law on Public Administration and producing a new Law on Civil Service and the Law on Public Employees. The EU-engaged consulting company that assisted the Brčko District Government and worked with the working groups on drafting these laws determined that the expected progress has not been achieved and decided to discontinue its further engagement in late September 2024. At the call of the current District authorities that seem more determined to finalize this reform, the consulting company agreed to continue its work with the District.
77. The Brčko-Gunja Bridge connecting Brčko to Zagreb-Belgrade highway was closed for traffic on 14 February 2025 after inspection identified that the bridge was unsafe for vehicular traffic. In a meeting held between the respective institutions of the Republic of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Brčko District, an agreement was reached to repair the damaged parts of the bridge and improve its condition to make it fit for light vehicle traffic again.
78. Implementation of the project of constructing the main water pipeline that will secure sustainable, clean and uninterrupted water supply throughout the Brčko District is in progress, with completion expected by the end of 2025.
79. Strengthening the District's energy security, the Brčko District-established Energy Working Group continued to assist the authorities in finalizing the adoption procedure of four Laws on concessions, water, environment protection, and spatial planning and construction. Since the Laws are in different phases of adoption, the process is expected to be completed in two months' time.
80. Aiming to achieve the objectives of the Brčko District Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan, the authorities continued to work with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) on retrofitting public buildings for better energy efficiency. Works on the third of four buildings selected for retrofitting in 2023 – 2025 were completed in November 2024, while retrofitting of the fourth building started in early February 2025, with the completion expected in two months.
81. Due to the overall slowdown, hence the failure of the Brčko District to progress on providing the necessary infrastructure to the first business zone, which it was obliged to provide under the agreement signed with an Austria-based consortium, the construction in the zone was minimal.
82. With regard to clearing the territory of the Brčko District of mines by the end of 2024, demining activities were completed and producing of the final report on demining is in progress. The ceremony of officially declaring the Brčko District mine free is planned for late Spring 2025.

Fiscal Sustainability

83. Certainty and adequacy of financing are key elements affecting the ability of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to carry out their constitutional and legal obligations. Akin to the previous reporting period, no steps have been taken to provide assurances to that end regarding 2025 funds.
84. The Fiscal Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina held two sessions (23 and 30 January 2025) in the reporting period. The Fiscal Council unanimously adopted the Global Fiscal Balance and Policy Framework for the Period 2025-2027 in the amount of BAM 1.570 billion on 24 February 2025 in its extended session that had started on 30 January 2025. Revenues from indirect taxes in the 2025 State Budget will amount to BAM 1,020 billion, remaining at the same level as in 2023 and 2024. The adoption of the Global Fiscal Balance and Policy for 2025-2027 has created the prerequisites for the adoption of the Budget of the BiH Institutions for 2025.
85. In the reporting period, the Indirect Taxation System Governing Board scheduled four sessions on 2 and 27 December 2024, as well as 23 and 30 January 2025. The Indirect Taxation System Governing Board considered a number of technical issues within its responsibility, but they failed again to adopt the quarterly coefficient for distribution of the indirect taxes between the entities. As a consequence, the last agreed coefficients – those from the third quarter of 2023 that benefit the Republika Srpska – will continue to apply.
86. There was no progress on at least two longstanding issues with financial implications.
87. The Board has not yet agreed on a model of distribution of road toll revenue reserves, the balance of which has reached nearly BAM 297.3 million. The absence of an agreement prevents the usage of these funds in highway and road construction. It also causes the Indirect Taxation Authority financial losses as it must pay charges on the deposit accounts.
88. The Board has not yet identified an alternative enforcement source for the outstanding BAM 30 million debt of the Indirect Taxation Authority to the Republika Srpska based on a 2015 Bosnia and Herzegovina Court decision. The attempted debt enforcement by the Republika Srpska in 2018 from public revenue accounts of the Indirect Taxation Authority caused financial damage to all indirect tax revenue beneficiaries, including both Entities and the Brčko District, as well as to recipients of value-added tax refunds and customs insurance depositors. The suspension of the enforcement by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina expires in June 2025.
89. Addressing the issues pertaining to certainty and adequacy of financing of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as to the stability and functionality of the single indirect tax system is crucial to

strengthening the fiscal sustainability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and thereby its political stability.

90. Another element of importance to that end is the Central Bank of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, is the sole authority for issuing currency and for monetary policy throughout the country pursuant to the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP). The Office of the High Representative continues to follow and strongly support the work of this institution, whose unimpeded work and ability to meet constitutional and legal obligations safeguard the monetary and financial sector stability and are vital for reforms and overall stability of the country.

Rule of Law Issues

91. The concrete requirements in the rule of law sector form part of the European Commission's 14 key, namely the adoption of the new Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HJPC) and the new Law on Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
92. After years of preparation, the first step in the formal adoption of the new Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on 4 March 2025, when the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted this Draft, which continues the functioning of a single council with the jurisdiction for judicial appointments and discipline, as well as overall development of judiciary, in the entire country. To become Law, the Draft needs to be adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
93. In parallel, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted two laws that stand in contradiction to the proposed Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 27 February 2025, the RSNA adopted an opposing law that shall prevent current and any future Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina be applied or implemented in the territory of the Republika Srpska.
94. The RSNA also adopted its law on a judicial and prosecutorial council, in defiance of the Republika Srpska's constitutional obligation under the "Agreement on the Transfer of Certain Entity Responsibilities through the Establishment of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina" signed under the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Government of the Republika Srpska on 11 March 2004. Under this transfer agreement, both Entities and the State agreed to transfer responsibilities over judiciary at all levels throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina to this single state level body, with uniform standards. By signing this agreement, the Republika Srpska constitutionally transferred its jurisdiction over these issues to the State level council and consequently cannot constitutionally establish its own council while the Transfer Agreement exists. The statement of a member of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the

Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina Staša Košarac provides an insight on the status of the Draft Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where he said: “we are aware of the fact that we will enact our own Law on High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of the Republika Srpska, and that there is no more High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is irrelevant”.

95. As far as the substance is concerned, the draft Law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina contains a provision that should correct a serious flaw in the urgent amendments adopted in 2023. To the detriment of rule of law, the rigorous asset declaration scheme initially envisaged to prevent and sanction possible conflicts of interest and irregularities of judges and prosecutors, fight corruption and improve perception of the judiciary was seriously undermined by diluting the obligation of the authorities to deliver the information required to investigate the truthfulness of asset declarations. That situation does not meet the expectations of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and the international community, which were expressed formally to the Collegium of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The current law is thus insufficient, as it makes the application of the State-level law dependent on Entity-level and the Brčko District legislation, which may directly contradict State obligations and thus render the State law void, creating the possibility of different legislative treatment of judges and prosecutors depending on their Entity background.
96. Positively, the Draft reverted to the explicit provisions guaranteeing functional independence of the Council by prescribing that general legislation regulating administrative bodies shall not apply to the Council, an issue that could otherwise enable operational influence of the executive over the judicial council.
97. The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the cornerstone of the division of competencies between the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Entities. With its competency on the entire territory of the country, and its criminal jurisdiction over offences prescribed by entity codes when they have consequences for or endanger the values of the whole State, or are otherwise of inter-Entity character, is the State’s ultimate tool in defense of its constitutional values and in ensuring that it functions pursuant to the rule of law, as is its constitutional requirement. The new Law on Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina should not diminish the Court’s competency or its functionality.
98. For both these requirements on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s European Union path, there is a danger that the process designed to improve rule of law conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be abused to undo previous reforms. On the contrary, to continue to build a country that functions on the principle of rule of law, previous reforms should only be enhanced by

measures identified in the so-called Priebe report of 2019. For starters, the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina need to be respected and implemented, and the existence and jurisdiction of institutions previously found constitutional should only be upheld.

99. On 28 March 2025, Republika Srpska Minister of Justice Miloš Bukejlović wrote to courts and prosecutors' offices in the Republika Srpska distributing the previous Government's Conclusions, by which the Republika Srpska Government *inter alia* tasks the Republika Srpska Ministry of Justice to suspend funding for all judicial institutions in that entity that fail to implement laws and acts adopted by the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA). The very same laws and acts that were already found *prima facie* unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This constitutes an attempt to force the judiciary to apply the unconstitutional Republika Srpska laws whose application the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has temporarily prohibited until its final decision, under a threat of sanctions, of termination of budgetary support and of termination of employment, together with possible abolishment of entire courts. The conclusion explicitly tasks the Republika Srpska Ministry of Justice with identifying judicial institutions financed from the Republika Srpska Budget that continue to adhere to Bosnia and Herzegovina State laws, and to immediately notify the Republika Srpska Ministry of Finance to terminate their funding. Apart from relating to the RSNA law adopted on 27 February 2025 seeking to prohibit the implementation of laws and the operation of the judicial and law enforcement institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the territory of the Republika Srpska, it also referenced the Republika Srpska law adopted on 27 June 2023 rejecting within the Republika Srpska territory the authority of the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina; a law that I needed to annul on 1 July 2023.
100. The judgments of the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR) in the Sejdić-Finci group of cases which require amending the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to eliminate discrimination remain unimplemented. I have consistently encouraged politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the said judgements, and to amend the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to eliminate discrimination. Such a constitutional reform process should also be aimed to address the European Commission's 14 key priorities. The country's accession status shall be reviewed this year by the European institutions with the possibility of advancing the accession negotiations by holding the first intergovernmental conference and setting up the negotiating framework. It is understood, the constitutional reforms, including implementation of the ECtHR Sejdić-Finci case-law would be included in the first cluster of the negotiating framework governing fundamental rights and the functioning of democratic institutions that will require engagement of the authorities in their implementation from the very outset of negotiations.

101. In the Case of Kovačević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina that was referred to the Grand Chamber of the European Court on Human Rights (ECtHR) at the request of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 14 December 2023, I was granted leave to intervene in the written and oral proceedings as third party in accordance with the European Convention and the Rules of the Court. Acting within my mandate as the final authority in theatre for interpretation of the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP), I provided written submissions to the ECtHR in the capacity of "friend of the court" (*Amicus Curiae*) in order to provide information on the Dayton framework and to ensure that Court knows the situation prevailing in Bosnia and Herzegovina before rendering a Decision in the Case of Kovačević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina. In my submissions to the Court, including in the Grand Chamber hearing in the case held on 20 November 2024, I highlighted, my assessment of the delicate and fragile political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has continued to deteriorate compared to the situation when the Court considered the Sejdić-Finci group of cases. I underlined the importance of an incremental approach to implementation of the ECtHR jurisprudence, as well as the constitutional standing of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a body which is under attack, and which is itself distinguished and enhanced by the presence of both domestic and international judges of high repute.

Criminal Records on War Crimes

102. In the mandate of the current Minister of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Davor Bunoza, the Memorandum of Cooperation on provision of information from judgements of convictions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals is reported as being in the process of implementation, with a certain differences between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the process has started and the Republika Srpska for which it was claimed that it needed to adjust its internal regulation. Pursuant to this Memorandum of Cooperation, information on criminal judgements against citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and persons born in Bosnia and Herzegovina is officially delivered to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The domestic registration of judgements of the international tribunal is not only a general rule of law issue but is critical to the implementation of legislation that requires a clean criminal record or at least that a person was not sanctioned for war crimes in order to perform certain public functions. I attach particular importance to this issue so that I intend to continue facilitating and monitoring this process. At this time, judgements of the ICTY are being registered in the domestic criminal records in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while such confirmation for the Republika Srpska is missing.

103. Registration of international judgements regarding the most serious violations of international humanitarian law is a step forward in curbing a

disregard for these judgements in political, professional and social life to the detriment of reconciliation and social cohesion, while various parts of the country still glorify war criminals. While domestic registration in Bosnia and Herzegovina depends on citizenship or on having been born in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no centralized registry for criminal records, but the task of registering criminal records is the responsibility of local police authorities in the place of birth.

D. Further Challenges to the GFAP

Attacks on High Representative

104. The ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska continued to use legislation and political rhetoric, alongside international contacts and lobbying to question and undermine the legitimacy of the Office of the High Representative, which was established pursuant to Annex X of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP).
105. The ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska repeatedly challenged the authority of the High Representative to “*make binding decisions as he judges necessary on issues as elaborated by the Peace Implementation Council in Bonn on 9 and 10 December 1997*” as affirmed in UN Security Council Resolution 1174 (1998) and reaffirmed by later UN Security Resolutions.
106. Despite confirmation from UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres in a letter dated 14 July 2023 to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in response to an inquiry from the Presidency Member Željka Cvijanović that the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board is the relevant body for the appointment of the High Representative, the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska continues to assert that the High Representative is illegitimate unless the appointment was confirmed by the UN Security Council.

Srebrenica

107. Srebrenica Local elections in October 2024 were again characterized by the same kind of problems and complaints as during the previous election cycles – influx of voters from outside the municipality, most notably from Serbia, who still hold permanent residence in Srebrenica though they live elsewhere. The results went largely in favor of the Serb parties and candidates.
108. The newly appointed representatives led by the new Mayor Miloš Vučić (SNSD), showed openness for cooperation. This renewed will to work jointly resulted in the formation of a multiethnic coalition, reinstating Bosniak representatives to some of the posts they were denied during the preceding administration.
109. However, this positive signal has not received sufficient concrete support for the new authorities. Their proclaimed aspirations to work together toward a more efficient solving of local problems and living conditions

for the remaining local population, such as the improvement of the currently insufficient water supply, have so far not met direct support.

110. The new authorities remain in reality under pressure to break the coalition and revert to the earlier display of interethnic discord and division.
111. This became evident in the second half of January 2025 during the period of tensions caused by a local Orthodox Church representative placing crosses to mark the place of old Serb graves next to a Bosniak cemetery and war memorial in the Bosniak community of Kragljivoda. After strong reactions by the Bosniak community, and public polarization, with a lot of effort and patience, the local authorities have settled the crisis, for now, in a meeting of the local security forum.
112. This situation has, at the same time, shown how detrimental uncoordinated or unilateral moves can be, especially in relation to the subsequent ethnic polarization and threats that ensued in public or in social media against some of the participants in this incident.
113. Still, the local multiethnic coalition in Srebrenica has thus far shown resilience. Recent marking of the municipal day on 11 March also involved the Bosniak representatives after several years of their boycott. In the midst of a constitutional crisis, such an approach sends rare positive messages.
114. With the eye on the approaching 30th Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide, and within the context of the rising problems due to the ongoing political and constitutional crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina, all these developments call for additional caution, restraint and conciliatory wisdom from all relevant stakeholders for the marking to pass in a dignified atmosphere.
115. On 15 April 2025, I convened a joint meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and Board of Principals at the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center in support of the efforts to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica and honor the legacy of its victims. The participants heard about the plans for commemoration from the leadership of the Potočari Memorial Center and victims' associations and commended their tireless dedication to truth and justice as the basis for trust building and enduring peace and stability.

Threats to Transitional Justice

116. The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP) addresses the issues of refugees and displaced persons in Annex VII. The implementation of Annex VII of the GFAP is based on strategies adopted by the domestic authorities and other measures including projects implemented by domestic authorities with the help of various international organizations. The "Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton

Peace Agreement”, which was adopted in 2003, pointed to the basic aims and directions of strategic activity, necessary to be undertaken, with the intent of fulfilling the goals of Annex VII. The new “Revised Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement” was adopted in 2010 by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and identifies ten key areas that align with the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees.

117. The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to publish reports on the implementation of the "Revised Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Implementation of Annex VII of the Dayton Peace Agreement," in line with the ongoing strategy. The most recent report, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 May 2024, is the 2022 report. According to this report, there are currently 91,223 displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, while 16,935 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina remain abroad, as per the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) data. The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the country remains high due to factors such as financial and legal challenges, as well as the need for an updated IDP database, since the existing system makes it difficult to accurately determine the true number of IDPs in the country.
118. The Regional Housing Program (RHP), which ran from 2013 to 2023, was the most significant recent multilateral initiative aimed at providing sustainable housing solutions for displaced persons and refugees in the Western Balkans. The original target for housing in Bosnia and Herzegovina was 5,400 households, or approximately 14,000 people. However, by the project's conclusion in November 2023, the RHP had delivered 2,778 housing units in Bosnia and Herzegovina, benefiting between 9,000 and 10,000 individuals. Meanwhile, 35 collective housing facilities across the country remained occupied by internally displaced persons (IDPs) still awaiting permanent housing, with some having lived in temporary accommodation for over 20 years. As of early June 2024, 321 RHP units in the country remained incomplete due to a lack of co-financing from the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
119. During the first half of the reporting period, the trends regarding return-related violence have continued in a similar fashion as before. Occasional incidents continued to draw attention to the problems faced by the minority returnees in their communities. However, the incidents resulting in physical harm were sporadic and did not involve grievous bodily harm, except for a 70-year-old Serb woman returnee who was beaten and robbed in Stosnica/Vozuca (Zenica-Doboj Canton) on 7 December 2024.
120. The most frequent type of incidents included damage to property and burglary, some of which were targeting shrines, cemeteries and grave markers. While some of these incidents may not have had a direct inter-

ethnic hatred component, they cause concern for the returnee population.

121. These concerns are specifically highlighted around the marking of disputed holidays and commemorative events, when they are accompanied by negative media reports on generally divisive issues. There were provocations and incidents related to the marking of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Statehood Day on 25 November and the unconstitutional Republika Srpska Day on 9 January, some of which involved flags and other symbols or offensive graffiti. Intolerance is further shown through occasional reports of damage to the Latin or Cyrillic traffic signs.
122. The concerns are further aggravated by continued genocide denial and glorification of war criminals. Most recently, the statements by the Mayor of Vlasenica in the Republika Srpska in March, glorifying convicted war criminals Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, during a local commemorative event, sparked public reactions.
123. Lack of proper law enforcement follow up has typically been flagged as one of the problems aggravating the situation. However, during the reporting period, there were several positive developments in that regard, namely the judicial follow-up to some earlier reported cases, including attack on a Bosniak returnee in Kamenica-Zvornik from September 2023, and police beating of a Bosniak minor in Osmaci in August 2023, both currently on trial, and the first instance verdict in the murder case of an elderly Serb female returnee in Tumare-Lukavac (first instance verdict against the perpetrator passed in January 2025).
124. Guaranteeing the exercise of religious freedom, without any impediments, obstructions or discrimination, is one of the most important obligations for all relevant authorities throughout the country. The “Tucaković Mosque” in Rabrani, for example, is the only Muslim religious building with a minaret in the Municipality of Neum. According to available information, the Mosque is being used for regular, unhindered prayers and other religious matters; however, the property-related legal status of the complex remains unresolved, and I asked the municipal administration to undertake all efforts within their competence to resolve this issue as soon as possible.
125. The level of anxiety rose notably in the period leading to and following the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina verdict against Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik in February, because of the general tense atmosphere created by the unilateral moves by the Republika Srpska authorities and the ensuing media coverage. Despite the efforts by individual representatives on the municipal level, statements by the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska create further confusion with their uncompromising severity and frequent contradictions.
126. People on the ground generally note that they are tired of all the political squabbles and stress the difference between what is happening in their

daily lives and what is being presented in the media. Any occasional unchecked or misrepresented information add to the confusion.

127. Some encouragement comes from the post-election cooperation in the municipalities such as Stolac and Srebrenica, with the inclusion of returnee representatives in the joint authorities.
128. Whilst political squabbles and pressures continue, returnees across the country have more pressing issues regarding their basic rights to safety, property, employment, health care and education, which are insufficiently dealt with, and in some cases, left completely unaddressed.

Trust-building and Reconciliation

129. In September 2024, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republika Srpska introduced a new ninth grade history curriculum. Thirteen members of the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina requested a review of the constitutionality of Article 4(1)(12) of the Rulebook on the Curriculum for Primary Upbringing and Education of the Republika Srpska (Official Gazette of the Republika Srpska, 77/24) and Appendix No. 20 – Curriculum for the subject History for the ninth grade. At an extraordinary plenary session on 11 October 2024, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued an interim decision to suspend, effective immediately, the implementation of the disputed article of the Rulebook and the Appendix in the part pertaining to “Topic 11, the Republika Srpska and the Homeland Defense War” until a final verdict by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Case No. U-20/24).
130. On 23 January 2025, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a decision according to which the mentioned changes do not comply with Articles I/2. and III/3.b of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a result, in accordance with Article 61(1) of the Rules of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the mentioned changes have been repealed and annulled from the date of publication in the Republika Srpska Official Gazette (No. 77/24). It is prohibited to teach ninth grade History on the basis of pages 185–192 of the textbook “History for the Ninth Grade of Elementary School,” published by the public enterprise “Institute for Textbooks and Teaching Materials” a.d. Istočno Novo Sarajevo, 2024 edition.
131. The Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina determined that the contents of the mentioned textbook in the part relating to “Topic 11. The Republika Srpska and the Patriotic War”, do not comply with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and are contrary to the standards of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education and the Common Core as decided by the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The contents fail to meet the requirement for multiperspectivity in the design of the history curriculum, which shall expose students to the perspectives and experiences of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups in the country and develop a more

objective and comprehensive understanding of past events. Furthermore, the Court's decision highlights that the failure to mention verdicts on genocide and war crimes in the appropriate context trivializes these crimes and negatively affects the reconciliation process.

Missing Persons

132. I reiterate statements made in previous reports regarding the need to step up efforts to search for missing persons. Time is running out to obtain credible information on the locations of 11,000 people still listed as missing after the conflicts in the region, 7,540 of whom are from Bosnia and Herzegovina alone.
133. Efforts to resolve cases continue, including at a regional level. After presenting their Fifth Work Report to European Union Ministers of Foreign Affairs at the Berlin Process Summit on 1 October 2024, the Missing Persons Group—consisting of domestic institutions for missing persons from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo—continued to resolve cases of unidentified human remains through cross-border cooperation.
134. In December 2024, the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) and Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina (MPI) presented the publicly accessible online version of the Regional Database of Active Missing Persons Cases from the Armed Conflicts in the Former Yugoslavia to associations of families of missing persons and the public. Created as part of the Berlin Process, this interactive database provides up-to-date records that allow families of missing persons, media, researchers, and the public to access comprehensive, transparent, and verified records regarding missing persons in the region in a single platform. It also eases the submission of new information that could contribute to the resolution of active missing persons cases. This database is a crucial tool for harmonizing and exchanging data among relevant institutions and enables families of the missing to actively participate in the process of accounting for their loved ones. Moreover, it represents an important example of how trust can be enhanced among institutions in the region and foster cooperation in addressing the legacy of the conflicts in the 90s. While pursuing a common goal, the involved stakeholders ensure that the issue of missing persons remains a human rights priority and is not politicized to undermine peace and stability.

Compensation for Victims of War

135. Compared to the previous reporting period, Bosnia and Herzegovina made little to no progress in creating an efficient system of reparations for victims of war crimes.
136. Survivors are still lacking state level legislation that would treat all victims of war crimes the same, across the country. While the ruling political structures have not demonstrated interest in advancing a state

legislative solution, camp detainees from both the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina showed willingness for a unified approach and joint action for the adoption of a State level law, although it remains constrained by ongoing political turmoil.

137. As I reported previously, even after six years, the UN Committee Against Torture decision from 2019, ordering the State to ensure that applicants receive compensation previously awarded in criminal proceedings, medical and psychological care and a public apology, remain unimplemented.
138. Due to its complex nature and the shared jurisdiction between the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Cantons, the implementation of the Law on Protection of Civilian Victims of War, in effect since January 2024, has faced significant challenges. Victims reported that access to certain rights is limited or impossible. Further regulation through lower-level legislation is needed. It is crucial for cantonal and municipal authorities to enact specific laws to ensure the implementation of the victims' rights, particularly in healthcare, without delay.
139. The Republika Srpska authorities continue the practice of collecting court costs from victims of war crimes who were barred by statutes of limitations from seeking compensation through civil proceedings. Considering the political and financial instability of the Republika Srpska, more cases can be expected in the coming period. Although previously reported that there were no new cases of forced collections at other levels of government, according to TRIAL International, a few enforcement proceedings have been initiated in the Tuzla Canton of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
140. The authorities in the Republika Srpska have not amended the Law on Victims of Torture to extend the deadline for application by victims to obtain the status, which expired in October 2023. Consequently, victims residing in the Republika Srpska are unable to access their rights. However, as reported by victims' associations and municipal authorities at least three requests for status were submitted after the deadline had passed.
141. *Peacebuilding Fund* As indicated in my previous report, following the confirmation of eligibility of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2022 for the UN Secretary General's Peacebuilding Fund, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Steering Committee, co-chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the UN Resident Coordinator in Bosnia and Herzegovina, marks a pivotal moment in collective efforts to support sustaining peacebuilding initiatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is aligned with the government's progress in implementing key priority five of the European Union accession priorities focused on creating an environment conducive to reconciliation.

142. State-level authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, Ministry of Civil Affairs, and various Entity-level ministries and departments, have continued implementing programs supported by the UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) for Bosnia and Herzegovina. These programs focus on Women, Peace, and Security; Youth, Peace, and Security; strengthening trust between institutions and civil society; addressing hate speech; and dealing with the past. The peacebuilding efforts are led by the Peacebuilding Committee.

Gender-based violence

143. Gender-based violence remained widespread in the reporting period. More than 60 women have been murdered in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past six years. Only in 2024, twelve women were murdered by their partners or family members. In the last three years, SOS helplines received over 17,000 calls, suggesting many survivors seek help even if official reports remain low. The Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina intensified efforts to draft a Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women and amendments to the Criminal Code of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Proposal of the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and Violence against Women was adopted on 4 February 2025 by the House of Representatives and on 4 March 2025 by the House of Peoples.

Gender Equality

144. The October 2024 local elections saw limited progress in terms of women's representation, with elected women representing 22.76% of councilors 5.6% of mayors. Although this represents slight progress from the previous elections, it remains far below the European average of 34.5% and the objectives of parity set out by the European Union and within the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) General Recommendation number 40. Women in executive positions remain also notably absent, with only one woman minister in the state level government. Legislation across the country should be aligned with the gender equality law, to increase women's public and political participation and to align with the European Union's renewed commitments, as exemplified through the Commission's Roadmap for Women's Rights and its annexes.
145. Concurrently, young individuals also face underrepresentation in decision-making roles, further exacerbating issues of youth dissatisfaction and emigration. This stems from a perceived absence of opportunities for advancement, highlighting a critical area for improvement in addressing both gender and age disparities in political participation.
146. The UN Resident Coordinator Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina reports that structural gender inequalities continue to constrain the functioning of a market economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The labor force

participation rate for women remains among the lowest in the Western Balkans—38.6% in 2023 compared to 59.1% for men (BHAS, 2024), significantly lower than the European average of 75.30%. Women are overrepresented in informal, low-paid, and vulnerable jobs, particularly in agriculture and care sectors. The overall employment rate stood at 41.5%, with limited disaggregation available by gender, pointing to the need for more robust labor market data systems. Persistent gaps reflect systemic barriers, including lack of childcare infrastructure, fragmented parental leave frameworks, and inadequate coverage of social protection schemes for informal work.

147. Barriers to economic inclusion also stem from women's limited participation in policy and economic decision-making, and gendered norms around unpaid care work. These constraints not only limit individual opportunities but also reduce aggregate productivity and innovation, particularly in rural and low-growth regions. Without targeted efforts, these disparities risk deepening as the economy transitions toward green and digital sectors.
148. The 2023-2027 Action Plan for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security" is pending validation from the Republika Srpska Government and subsequent adoption by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
149. In March 2025, Republika Srpska amended its criminal legislation, removing "gender identity" from the list of protected groups. This is of concern as it "reduces the scope of protection and signals that authorities will no longer provide specific safeguards against bias-motivated crimes based on gender identity". This development comes among a broader pushback against gender in Republika Srpska, exemplified also by the renaming of the Gender Centre of Republika Srpska to the Centre for Equality of the Sexes. In both cases, the Republika Srpska authorities have justified these moves by arguing that they aim to align the terminology with that of the Constitution of the Republika Srpska.

III. Developments Related to the State Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina

A. Presidency and Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

150. The extraordinary crisis since the signing of General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP) was most reflected in the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
151. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina held three regular sessions in the reporting period as well as number of extraordinary sessions. The Presidency took decisions from within its competency in the domain of foreign affairs and defense and engaged in serious bilateral and multilateral forums and international summits and conferences, including Munich Security Conference and Antalya Diplomacy Forum.

152. On 16 November 2024, Serb Member of the Presidency Željka Cvijanović took over the chairmanship of the Presidency as part of the regular eight-month rotation cycle.
153. During the reporting period, Presidency Member Denis Bećirović continued his intense domestic and international diplomatic activities, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora, initiating meetings with foreign officials and attending regional and international summits.
154. Presidency Member Bećirović regularly warned of the serious political situation in the country, unravelling in the aftermath of All-Serb Assembly and subsequent adoption of the Declaration both by the Republika Srpska National Assembly and the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia and its political and legal impact.
155. Presidency Member Bećirović submitted constitutional challenges before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the occasion of the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopting laws banning the work of State Judicial institutions and law enforcement agencies (challenges submitted in a coordinated fashion alongside Speaker and Deputy Speakers of the House of Representatives and House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina) and a constitutional challenge on the occasion of RSNA adopting amendments to the Law on the use of Flag, Coat of Arms and the Anthem in the Republika Srpska. Both appeals resulted in the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina ruling in favor of interim measures suspending the laws in question.
156. On 4 March 2025, Presidency Members Denis Bećirović and Željko Komšić requested convening an urgent session to discuss the current internal political situation in the country. Presidency Chair Cvijanović convened instead a special session on 10 March 2025 to deliberate the adoption of the State Budget for 2025. The session was not held due to lack of quorum.
157. On 8 April 2025, Presidency Members Bećirović and Komšić tabled set on conclusions in relation to the current political and constitutional crises, officially calling on EUFOR stations in the country to provide assistance to the police agencies in enforcing decisions of the judicial authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, namely in apprehending Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik and others. Presidency Chair Cvijanović voted against the conclusion and announced she would invoke vital entity interest clause, defending that such conclusion fall under the foreign policy domain.
158. Presidency Chair Željka Cvijanović stated that the current crisis was political in nature, provoked by the High Representative, and that there were no security threats.
159. Presidency Member Komšić labeled actions by the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska as a rebellion against the State, which require

action by domestic institutions. In contrast to Presidency Chair Cvijanović, he concurs with Presidency Member Bećirović that the current crisis is an attack on the constitutional and legal order of the country, hence a security issue.

160. The Presidency members passed decisions on 27 December 2025, approving engagement of Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina to help civilian population with fighting natural disasters, clearing snow paths.
161. The Presidency Members Cvijanović, Bećirović and Komsić visited Brussels on 15 April 2025 in order to participate in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, chaired by NATO Deputy Secretary General Radmila Šekerinska.

Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina

162. The Council of Ministers held a total of 15 regular sessions and 10 extraordinary sessions chaired by Chairwoman Borjana Krišto (HDZ BiH).
163. Chairwoman Krišto continued to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership to the European Union remains the key strategic goal and a foreign policy priority. Regional cooperation and preservation of good neighborly relations were stressed as foundations of foreign policy and strategic priorities in accession process.
164. Chairwoman Krišto repeatedly stated that Bosnia and Herzegovina had to keep up the dynamic in European integration and find solutions to internal challenges domestically. She maintained her position that a non-election year poses an opportunity to continue reform path including making progress in domain of Electoral Reform.
165. On 28 January 2025, Chairwoman Krišto dismissed Nenad Nešić from his duties as Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, de facto accepting his resignation, following his arrest on corruption charges, while the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina had already voted on 23 January 2025 in favor of his removal upon initiative of the Republika Srpska opposition and Federation parties. Chairwoman Krišto put forward a new candidate for the Minister of Security, who later withdrew his candidacy. No new candidate for the Minister of Security has been nominated thus far.
166. The established practice of not proposing legislation to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina unless there is full political consensus produced once again modest legislative output.
167. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted four pieces of legislation, one of them being the State Budget for 2025, which the Council adopted on 4 March 2025, and the others being three long overdue so-called EU laws - Law on High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, Law on Border Control and Law on Protection of Personal Data.

Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

168. During the reporting period, the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina held six regular and eight urgent sessions, while the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina held only two regular and four urgent sessions.
169. As a result, the legislative output of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be constrained. Total of five laws had been adopted in the reporting period, of those two long overdue EU Laws – Law on Border control and Law on Protection of Personal Data (adopted on 30 January 2025) with both the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and the Republika Srpska opposition voting in favor in the House of Peoples, with SNSD clearly signaling that they were set to defend their position in the government, and Law on Amendments to the Law on salaries and remunerations in judicial and prosecutorial institutions at the State level (adopted in November 2024), as well as additional amendments to the Laws on Value Added Tax and Law on Salaries and other remunerations in the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
170. Following the close to eight-month long blockage, the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina succeeded in reconvening in a regular fashion on 29 October 2024, finishing session which commenced on 18 March 2024, when Bosniak Caucus representatives walked out in protest over an unconstitutional proposal by Serb Democratic Party (SDS) for the Law on Constitutional Court to be included on the agenda. The Bosniak Caucus at the time conditioned its return to regular sessions with the removal of the controversial proposal from the agenda. The proposal, however, remained pending in the procedure, after the House rejected calls for urgent and semi-urgent procedure.
171. As was mentioned earlier, the State-level coalition was renounced on 23 January 2025 after the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) abstained in the House of Representatives on the so-called EU Laws. SNSD Deputy Speaker and member of Collegium Nebojša Radmanović was immediately relieved of his duties and on 20 February 2025, Darko Babalj (Serb Democratic Party - SDS) was appointed as new Serb member of Collegium and Deputy Speaker. This triggered more initiatives to reform the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Troika parties' (SDP BiH-NiP-NS) request for the removal of SNSD Ministers and Deputy Ministers in the Council of Ministers, which had been adopted in the House of Representatives on 25 February and 4 April 2025, respectively. All initiatives are required to be confirmed by the House of Peoples, where SNSD explicitly announced they would block every attempt to remove SNSD officials. Therefore, in a deliberate attempt to prevent a vote on the initiatives to remove House of Peoples SNSD Speaker and collegium member Nikola Špirić, as well as SNSD ministers Staša Košarac (Foreign Trade and Economic Relations) and Srđan Amidžić (Finance and Treasury the

same fashion), rules of procedures and quorum rules were persistently abused through non-attendance, causing four urgent sessions to be adjourned. On the other hand, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) had separately requested the removal of Minister of Foreign Affairs Elmedin Konaković on 13 and 27 January 2025 respectively with different argumentations, but both of these initiatives were rejected on 12 and 20 February respectively. In parallel, deliberation on Amendments to the Election Law was tabled by the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ BiH) in urgent procedure as a condition for a government reshuffle and the formation of a new coalition at the State level.

Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina

172. Interviews for the replacement of Seada Palavrić, judge in the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina who turned 70 in November 2024, were completed by the Federation House of Representatives Working Group for the implementation of the procedure for the Election of a Judge of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 11 February 2025. Following the proposal of the Committee for Appointment and Election in the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina elected Larisa Velić to the position of a judge of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina at its session held on 2 April 2025.
173. As part of a deliberate policy of blockage to put pressure on the Court and its ability to operate, the Republika Srpska authorities continue to disregard their constitutional obligation to appoint two judges from the Republika Srpska. Due to said blockage, the Constitutional Court cannot function at its full capacity, and this has led to an increase in the accumulation of pending cases (more than 11,000) falling under the appellate jurisdiction of the Court related to protection of human rights and freedoms.
174. During the reporting period, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina held several regular and extraordinary plenary sessions deliberating and deciding on important cases under its abstract review jurisdiction (review of compatibility of legislation with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina) ensuring adherence to the country's constitutional framework. In particular, the swift action taken by the Constitutional Court to adopt Ruling on interim measures of 7 March 2025 putting the laws and acts passed by the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) and published on 5 March 2025 temporarily out of force as well as all acts undertaken to implement them, highlighted the importance of the Court in protecting the sovereignty, constitutional order and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and safeguarding rule of law.

IV. Developments Related to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

A. Executive and Legislative Authorities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

175. The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina met regularly throughout the reporting period, holding eleven regular sessions and 67 extraordinary sessions. On the other hand, the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina met far less frequently, with the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina holding two extraordinary sessions and five regular sessions and the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina holding three extraordinary sessions and six regular sessions. The third Joint Thematic Session of the Parliament discussing the institutional response to domestic violence and violence against women was held on 3 December.
176. The Federation Parliament adopted seven new laws as well as twelve proposals amending current laws.
177. Among other adopted laws, it is worth noticing that the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Law on Gas Pipeline “the Southern Interconnection Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republic of Croatia” (House of Representatives on 21 December 2024 and House of Peoples on 16 January 2025) thus making important steps to lay the foundations for Bosnia and Herzegovina's energy security, diversification of energy sources and reduce dependence on Russian gas.

B. Constitutional Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

178. A replacement for Kata Senjak, a judge of the Constitutional Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who met the retirement requirements on 14 January 2023, but continued to serve in the Court until a new judge assumes office, has not been appointed by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the procedure to fill the vacant position in the Court was initiated on 27 June 2022, the Constitutional Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina reminded the House of Peoples on the urgency to fill the vacant position on several occasions. On 20 December 2024, I sent a letter to the Speaker of the House of Peoples Tomislav Martinović (HDZ BiH) reminding him that it is the constitutional obligation of the House to put the appointment on the agenda without delay and conduct the procedure to fill the vacant position in accordance with relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
179. There were several attempts in the House to resolve this issue in January 2025, but due to procedural and legal disputes in the House, the said appointments were left pending until the next session of the Federation House of Peoples on 22 April 2025. It is also expected that the House of Peoples would consider the replacement of Judge Mirjana Čučković

in the Constitutional Court of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina due to retirement age.

C. Mostar: City Statute, Issues of Discontent

180. Following the October 2024 Local Elections, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina certified the local election results for Mostar on 7 November 2024, confirming Croat Democratic Union's (HDZ BiH) strongest result, securing 15 seats out of total 35. Meanwhile, the Troika Coalition (SDP BiH, NiP, NS), particularly Social Democratic Party (SDP BiH) suffered significant losses, with one of SDP's two seats potentially transferring to People and Justice (NiP) due to a conflict of interest. HDZ BiH's Marko Novak, despite winning nearly 5,000 votes, was denied a mandate due to surplus of ethnic quota rules, prompting him to question the Central Election Commission's legitimacy and publicly call for Election Law reforms in part referring to Mostar rules.
181. On 3 December 2024, the new City Council was constituted, re-electing Mario Kordić (HDZ BiH) as Mayor with 20 votes against Party of Democratic Action's (SDA) Djani Rahimić (15). Rahimić was elected City Council President, while Goran Bošnjak-Croat and Radmila Komadina-Serb (both HDZ BiH) became Vice Presidents.
182. Mayor Kordić's (HDZ BiH) council seat was replaced by Marko Novak (HDZ BiH) and that was the procedure according to which Novak entered the Council. In line with Statute provision, an HDZ BiH Serb councilor's appointment led to their mandate being reallocated to the SDA-led Coalition for Mostar (KzM), adjusting final seat distribution: HDZ BiH 14, Coalition for Mostar 11, HRS 3, "Grade moj" 3, Troika 1, HDZ 1990 1, and NLJ 1. With the Mayor and Vice Presidents hailing from HDZ BiH and 19 seats held by pro-Croat parties, Mostar continues to serve as a pivotal stronghold of Croat political influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
183. As earlier reported the non-implementation of Mostar Agreement from June 2020 remains. Adoption of the Statute enacted in 2004 by the decision of the High Representative with possible amendments has not yet been discussed, though Mayor Kordić expects amendments and adoption during the new mandate of Mostar City Council. Recognizing the fundamentally divergent visions of Mostar's Statute held by Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and Croat Democratic Union (HDZ BiH), I maintain that only a carefully negotiated political compromise can ensure a more effective and sustainable governance framework for the City. That is why I continue to strongly urge all parties to create a compromise and commit to adopting the Statute that offers a functional, equitable, and cohesive governance structure for Mostar, one that genuinely serves the interests of its diverse population and a good living together; and one that safeguards the City's long-term stability. The intention of separation is unfortunately used as political and educational narrative.
184. On 4 December 2024, the Council for Religious and Administrative Affairs reaffirmed support for the Mevlana Center, urging the City

Administration to honor legal requests from the Islamic Community and called for international intervention to prevent the marginalization of Bosniak heritage. The marking of the confrontation line of war remains the symbol of weak progress to overcome separation.

185. On 19 December 2024, Vice President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Refik Lendo met with the leaders of Mostar's Party of Democratic Action (SDA) in Sarajevo to discuss the Mevlana project, emphasizing its importance for civil rights and religious freedom. Participants agreed on the project's role in promoting unity and urged public and institutional support.
186. On 10 January 2025, the Mufti's office launched a Fund for the Mevlana Center, sparking controversy over legal and zoning concerns. Critics, including Croat Democratic Union (HDZ BiH) and the Croatian Republican Party (HRS) councilors, emphasized the need for legal and urban plan regulatory compliance, with doubts over securing enough votes in the City Council (24 votes out of 35). Meanwhile, the construction of the Croat National Theatre within the Central zone in Mostar on going with strong financial support from Republic of Croatia.
187. On 25 February 2025, newly re-elected Mostar Mayor Kordić publicly stated that the Mevlana Center must comply with legal requirements, citing legal barriers as the reason for the delay. The Mostar Muftiate rejected his claims, accusing city authorities of deliberately obstructing Islamic Community's projects. They called for an end to misleading the public and highlighted ongoing difficulties in realizing the Mevlana project.
188. On 3 April 2025, the Citizens' Association Mostarski krug held a public debate on the legality of the Croat National Theatre's construction in Mostar's Central Zone. Their experts presented documentation and correspondence with city authorities and the Office of the High Representative, arguing that the project lacks proper permits and had bypassed urban planning procedures. The discussion highlighted the theatre as a symbol of Croat Democratic Union's (HDZ BiH) dominance in cultural portraying institutions in contrast to the lack of support for Bosniak and Serb initiatives and suggested the delays in adopting urban plans.
189. Mostarski krug requested my involvement in assessing the legality of construction and ensuring equal rights for the construction of a Jewish cultural center with a synagogue, an Intercultural Center requested by the Islamic Community, hindered by administrative obstacles and restoration of the Serb municipality building, that has also been subject to obstruction, all to be located within the Central Zone.
190. Following Mostarski krug's "Mostar Warning" letter, BiH House of Representatives Speaker Denis Zvizdić and Deputy Speaker of the House of Peoples Kemal Ademović formally requested my involvement, while Federation Vice President Refik Lendo also echoed their call.

Croat National Assembly-Declaration

191. On 8 February 2025, the Croat National Assembly (HNS) of Bosnia and Herzegovina held its XII session in Mostar, reaffirming its commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and unity, while marking the 30th Anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP). Five Croatian opposition parties (HDZ 1990, Croatian National Movement, Croatian Democratic Party, Croatian Peasant Party, and Croatian Republican Party) boycotted the session, criticizing Croat Democratic Union's (HDZ BiH) dominance within the HNS. Despite the boycott, HNS President Dragan Čović expressed regret and announced efforts to resolve the communication issues and misunderstandings.
192. The Croat National Assembly (HNS) of Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasized the importance of peace, stability, and equality among the country's Constituent Peoples. Key points included advocating territorial integrity, political stability, equal representation, and rule of law, with a focus on political pluralism and federalism. The HNS supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration, election law reforms, the protection of Croat judicial representation, and economic and demographic revitalization. It also supports energy security, investment in education, science, and technology, and the promotion of Croat cultural identity, pointing out that Croat National Theatre in Mostar is an institution of paramount importance for the Croats. The HNS continues to fight for the recognition and rights of Croatian veterans and victims of the Homeland War.

D. Cantonal Developments

193. All ten Cantons adopted their respective Budgets for 2025 within the legal framework and according to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Law on Budgets, i.e. by 31 March 2025. The smallest Budget this year is again in the Posavina Canton (BAM 72.4 million), whilst the highest is in the Sarajevo Canton (BAM 1.8 billion).
194. In the reporting period, some Cantons faced political reshufflings and changes. On 20 February 2025, Social Democratic Party (SDP BiH) in Tuzla Canton managed to topple the coalition between the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and the Democratic Front (DF) to install the new Government along with its allies – the expanded Troika (SDP BiH, NiP, NS, SD BiH, PDA) and two SDA turncoats. On 1 March 2025, the former SDA-DF parliamentary majority, with the assistance of two mentioned SDA representatives, reinstated the previous Government.
195. In Sarajevo Canton, Minister of Communal Economy, Infrastructure, Spatial Planning, Construction and Environment Protection Bojan Bošnjak (NS) was arrested by the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) on 15 November 2024 over suspicion of certain illegal construction activities in the Canton. The Cantonal Assembly officially dismissed him on 14 March 2025 and, meanwhile, another Cantonal

Minister was appointed as Acting Minister, taking over Bošnjak's duties to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of the Ministry.

196. Solving this issue in the Sarajevo Cantonal Government became a part of the talks on possible political reshuffle in that Canton (reallocation of party positions and personnel changes), announced by the ruling Troika parties (SDP-NS-NiP) after the 2024 Local Elections and due to different problems in some of the Cantonal Ministries. The Troika talks are still underway, and, at the time of reporting, there was no final agreement or decision on the matter. Of course, the ongoing process of the indirect elections for the Sarajevo City Council and subsequent election of the future City Mayor will also be a subject of those talks.
197. Specific developments took place in the City of Sarajevo administration following the 2024 Local Elections. Namely, the then City Mayor, Benjamina Karić Londrc (SDP BiH) won the mayoral race in Novo Sarajevo Municipality and resigned from the position of the City Mayor on 18 November 2024. One of her two Deputy Mayors in the City, Samir Avdić (NiP), also resigned on 20 November 2024, after taking over a new mandate as a councilor in the Novo Sarajevo Municipal Council. Therefore, the Sarajevo City Council had to elect new officials to these two positions and, upon the relevant parties' proposals, it elected Predrag Puharić (SDP) as Mayor and Mirza Selimbegović (NiP) as his Deputy, on 29 and 26 November 2024 respectively. Mayor Puharić and his Deputies will be in these positions until the new convocation of the City Council is constituted and new Mayor and Deputies are elected based on the 2024 Local Elections' results.

V. Developments Related to the Republika Srpska

A. Executive Authorities of the Republika Srpska

198. During the reporting period, the Republika Srpska Government held 25 sessions.
199. On 4 April, the Republika Srpska Government declared Anna Lührmann, German Minister of State for Europe and Climate, persona non grata during an official visit to Banja Luka for meetings with political opposition and civil society leaders, ordering her and her delegation to leave the Republika Srpska territory. This unprecedented move by the Entity government further raised concerns about the Republika Srpska authorities' efforts to undermine State-level institutions.

B. National Assembly of the Republika Srpska

200. During the reporting period, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) held three regular and seven special sessions, adopting 40 laws. On 27 February 2025, the RSNA adopted four laws outlawing State-level institutions on the Republika Srpska territory, as well as the law to heavily increase scrutiny of the work of NGOs in the Entity.

Political Developments and Rhetoric

201. Political developments and political rhetoric during the reporting period reflect systematic efforts of the ruling coalition in the Republika Srpska to question my legitimacy as High Representative and undermine State-level institutions.
202. Efforts by the Republika Srpska authorities to restructure governance mechanisms intensified with plans for the adoption of a new Entity Constitution in the first draft reading on 13 March 2025. This new constitution would revert to the 1992 Republika Srpska Constitution. Proposed changes would include the reintroduction of the Republika Srpska Army; the establishment of separate Republika Srpska law enforcement bodies, such as a High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council; the end of current constitutionally guaranteed representation for the three Constituent Peoples in the entity, and the abolishment of the Republika Srpska Council of Peoples, a core institutional mechanism designed to protect constitutionally guaranteed Vital National Interests of Constituent Peoples. The proposed new Entity Constitution would roll back State-level reforms that the Republika Srpska authorities had agreed upon with national counterparts and the international community, such as defense reform, introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT), and the establishment of the Border Service, as well as any amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution by High Representatives. As of the end of the reporting period, mandatory public hearings and expert consultations about this draft Entity Constitution are ongoing.
203. Despite ongoing calls to the Republika Srpska authorities to fill two vacancies on the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no actions to perform this duty occurred during the reporting period. The majority in the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) continues to block these appointments.
204. The Republika Srpska authorities removed gender as a hate crimes criterion in the Republika Srpska Criminal Code and enacted the Republika Srpska Law on Non-Governmental Organizations that significantly expanded the government's authority over NGOs and civil society groups operating in the Entity. Additionally, the Republika Srpska leadership increased their verbal attacks targeting journalists and media organizations.
205. The Republika Srpska authorities exerted pressure on ethnic Serbs employed in State-level institutions with calls to resign from their posts, but these calls were left unanswered by an overwhelming majority.
206. The Republika Srpska leadership deepened its ties with the Government of Serbia. Visits and statements by Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and other high-level Serbian officials expressed explicit support for the Republika Srpska leadership, particularly Republika Srpska President Dodik, strengthening the political alliance between Banja Luka and Belgrade.

207. The Republika Srpska authorities intensified their promotion and enforcement of the Republika Srpska Law on Flag, Anthem, and Coat of Arms. This law permits the display of Serbian state symbols across public institutions.

VI. Public Security and Law Enforcement, Including Intelligence Reform

208. The practice of inappropriate political interference in operational police functions remained unchanged during the reporting period.
209. The Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina recently exhibited their reduced ability to control and monitor the country's borders. This is evident in the case of Milorad Dodik, Nenad Stevandić, and Radovan Višković, all of whom are subject to arrest warrants issued by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina for allegedly attacking the constitutional order. Despite these warrants being distributed to all police agencies, including the Border Police, the criminal suspects Milorad Dodik and Nenad Stevandić have repeatedly crossed the State borders without being detained by the Border Police. Border Police officers have failed to enforce the Court's order, raising concerns about the Agency's capacity to uphold the law.

Personnel Issues

210. Staffing problems in the country's police organizations, including State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) and Border Police, continued in the reporting period as well. The current staffing of the police structure in the whole country remains somewhere between 70 to 80 per cent of its capacity. Many police officers have reached retirement age, but there seems to be little interest among the youth to fill in the cadres in this line of public service. Moreover, some police officers are reported to leave their ranks to take up better paid jobs.
211. The post of Police Director of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been vacant since January 2019 and the post of Deputy Police Director has been vacant since February 2023. The Independent Board of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, responsible *inter alia* for recruiting the police director and deputy director, was disbanded in August 2022. In order to form a new Independent Board, the Joint Working Group for Election and Appointment of both Parliamentary Houses of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina met on 5 March 2025 to interview the suitable candidates for this public vacancy. On 2 April 2025, the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed members to the Independent Board, but the final approval is expected by the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its session on 22 April 2025.
212. On January 23, 2025, the Assembly of West Herzegovina Canton (WHC) adopted amendments to the Law on Police Officials (LOPO), modifying Article 77, paragraphs 2 and 3, which regulate police promotions. The changes require the police commissioner to obtain written consent from the Minister of Internal Affairs before initiating

the promotion process. Additionally, the promotion commission has been expanded to include two civil servants from the Ministry, nominated by the Minister. The WHC Government justifies these amendments to enhance transparency and efficiency in promotions. However, from a policing policy perspective, these changes weaken the merit-based system and increase political influence over police ranks. The Minister now holds significant control over promotions, potentially impacting the integrity of investigations and future police operations. The WHC Prosecutor's Office since then has launched an investigation, based on a report by the WHC police director, against the Minister of Interior of WHC, over allegations of obstructing police operations, abusing authority, and illegally appointing officers. The introduction of this provision and its adoption sets a concerning precedent that could lead to further political interference in policing across other Cantons.

213. On 15 April 2025, the Assembly of Canton 10 appointed its new Independent Board (IB) responsible, *inter alia*, for the recruitment of the police commissioner. The mandate of old IB expired in December 2023.

Anti-Corruption Measures and Countering Organized Crime

214. The political divisions in the country and lack of harmonization between the legal frameworks at different levels of government continue to make it difficult to direct and coordinate law enforcement agencies, especially in the fight against corruption and organized crime.
215. The Federation legislation establishing the Special Department for the Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime within the Federation Prosecutor's Office and the Federation Supreme Court adopted in 2014, remains unimplemented for a decade. Prompted by international assistance in the past year, the Federation authorities expressed readiness to follow through on their declared commitments to fight corruption and fulfil technical prerequisites for the special departments to start operations.
216. Acknowledging the need for an Entity level solution, I sent a letter to Prime Minister Nermin Nikšić and Minister of Justice Vedran Škobić of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 20 December 2024, reminding of the obligation of the relevant Federation authorities to implement the Law in force. I called on Prime Minister Nikšić and Minister Škobić to show commitment and take decisive action to ensure the Law is implemented.
217. On 16 January 2025, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina appointed judges and prosecutors who will work in special departments. Hrvoje Čabrajić has been appointed as the Head of the Office who performs the function of Special Deputy Chief Prosecutor of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
218. On another positive note, anti-corruption measures are being developed within both the Border Police and the State Investigation and Protection Agency. The recommendations of the Group of States Against

Corruption (GRECO) of the Council of Europe are being followed and have been partially implemented.

State Investigation and Protection Agency

219. State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) is a key police institution with competences in both Entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an operatively independent administrative organization within the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is charged with executing the functions of prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal offences falling within the jurisdictions of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
220. President of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik threatened to expel employees of the Agency from the territory of the Republika Srpska, including from State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) Headquarters in Istočno Sarajevo and the Regional Office in Banja Luka. This was yet another action undertaken after the verdict of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina pronouncing President of Republika Srpska Dodik guilty of the criminal offense of failure to implement the decisions of the High Representative.
221. On 27 February 2025, the Republika Srpska National Assembly adopted a law prohibiting the work of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prosecutor's Office, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, and State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) within the Entity's territory. In reviewing the constitutionality of the act, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a temporary suspension of the law. Despite this, initially SIPA halted operations in the Entity following a decision by its Director, Darko Ćulum, citing the risk of confrontation with the Republika Srpska police. This decision effectively paralyzed SIPA's activities in the Entity, raising significant concerns about law enforcement capabilities. Notably, SIPA is one of the key agencies responsible for apprehending Milorad Dodik, against whom an arrest warrant has been issued. Subsequently, SIPA did conduct certain law enforcement activities in the Entity, reportedly in co-operation with the Republika Srpska police.
222. The Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior issued a public invitation for the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) employees from the Republika Srpska to voluntarily transfer to the Entity's Ministry of the Interior. This move is based on the Law on Non-Application of the Laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Prohibition of Extra-Constitutional Institutions that was suspended by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as a regulation adopted by the Republika Srpska Government on absorbing SIPA personnel. The actual number of transfers remains unclear, but the initiative is widely seen as an attempt to pressure and intimidate SIPA officers. The Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior stated that 20 employees have left the Agency, while SIPA claims there have been only

2 such cases to date. The Agency has approximately 800 employees, around half of whom come from the Republika Srpska.

223. The Republika Srpska Ministry of the Interior refused to execute two orders from the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and declined to provide the Agency with criminal records of two individuals from Banja Luka who were arrested on charges of making threats to the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina judge who tried the case of Milorad Dodik and Miloš Lukić. In addition, information appeared in the media in which the Cantonal Police and the Federal Police complained about the inability to communicate with the Republika Srpska Police via dispatch, the official means of communication for the purpose of performing everyday police and operational tasks. The Republika Srpska Police claims there are technical difficulties in communicating via dispatch.
224. Director of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) Darko Ćulum resigned from his position. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina still has to confirm his resignation in order for the procedure of appointment of a new director to start. So far, Council of Ministers has not reached an agreement to accept Darko Ćulum's resignation. Darko Ćulum announced that he would go on to serve as advisor to the Republika Srpska Director of Police in the future.
225. The post of Deputy Director of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) has been vacant since the former Deputy Director Zoran Galić was removed from his post after he crossed the border into Croatia just before his planned arrest upon allegations of abuse of office and accepting gifts or other forms of benefit, to facilitate tobacco smuggling to Bosnia and Herzegovina during the period when he was the Director of the Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The selection process for this position is pending. Considering that there is no person appointed as Deputy Director of SIPA, while at the same time the SIPA Director, resigned, leaving the position of Director of SIPA virtually vacant, SIPA remains operating without appointed high-ranking officials. Currently, there are two authorized and responsible persons in SIPA who ensure the functioning of SIPA in operational and administrative sense.

VII. Economy

A. Economic Trends

226. Economic activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2024 indicates a continuation of positive trend. The growth rate in the period January-September was 2.5 per cent, compared to the same period in 2023. On the other hand, some economic indicators - such as exports and industrial production - confirm the slowdown. In 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina's exports dropped by 3.7 per cent and while imports increased by 3.2 per cent. In the same period industrial production dropped by 4.2 per cent while inflation was 1.7 per cent. Foreign direct investments in Q3 amounted to BAM 1.5 billion, up by 0.3 per cent compared to the same period in 2023.

227. The Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina estimates the overall public debt at the end of Q3 of 2024 at BAM 13.04 billion, which is around 24.38 per cent of Bosnia and Herzegovina's GDP. Out of this amount, the foreign debt is BAM 8.93 billion (68.48 per cent) and the domestic debt is BAM 4.11 billion (31.52 per cent). The Federation's share in the overall debt is 48.98 per cent, the Republika Srpska's share is 50.31 per cent, and the shares of the State institutions and the Brčko District is 0.40 per cent and 0.31 per cent, respectively.
228. The financial sector appears stable. According to the preliminary data, the banking sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina had a profit of BAM 847 million in 2024. This is a 19.4 per cent increase compared to 2023.
229. The positive economic indicators stand at odds with the available economic ratings and social indicators. On 2 August 2024, credit rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investors Service confirmed sovereign credit rating on Bosnia and Herzegovina "B+ outlook stable" and "B3 outlook stable" respectively. The Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2024 ranked Bosnia and Herzegovina as 114th among 180 countries, which is 6 places down. The Fraser Institute's Economic Freedom of the World 2024 Annual Report ranked Bosnia and Herzegovina 102nd among 165 countries and territories.
230. As for the social indicators, the average net salary was BAM 1.430 in December 2024, up by 10.2 per cent compared to the same month in 2023. In December, the average pension in Bosnia and Herzegovina amounted to BAM 667, up by 8.2 per cent compared to December 2023. Nevertheless, income levels remain significantly below the average price of the basket of goods of over BAM 3,000 for a four-member family, suggesting that even those with steady incomes struggle to make ends meet. The number of unemployed persons in December was 320,700. This is a 6.6 per cent decrease compared to the same month in 2023. The registered unemployment rate is about 27.3 per cent, while the real (labor survey-based) unemployment rate is about 12.2 per cent for Q3 of 2024. The number of employed persons is 859,261 (up by 0.8 per cent). The number of pensioners is 742,348 (up by 2.0 per cent).
231. There has been no apparent improvement in the demographic situation in this reporting period. Political instability, corruption, nepotism and poor standards of living are quoted as the key factors that account for emigration. The outflow of youth is especially among the most serious impacts of the political, economic, and social challenges Bosnia and Herzegovina faces and it continues to jeopardize the overall economic, political, and social prospects of the country.

B. Fiscal Issues

232. There were no delays in debt servicing and regular budget payments in the reporting period. This was foremost due to the continued growth of indirect tax revenue, which accounts for most budget revenue for all levels of government. In 2024, the Bosnia and Herzegovina Indirect

Taxation Authority collected BAM 11.541 billion, which is the record collection of indirect taxes since the establishment of the Indirect Taxation Authority. This is an increase of 8.47 per cent or BAM 901 million over 2023. The regular execution of financial commitments should also be attributed to borrowing, which was particularly excessive in the Republika Srpska, but decreased due to the sanctions of the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC).

233. As it has regularly been the case these past years, State institutions are again forced into temporary financing as of 1 January 2025 since all budget calendar deadlines were missed in terms of budget preparation for 2025 as well as the adoption of the budget.
234. On 27 December 2024, the Ministry of Finance and Treasury of Bosnia and Herzegovina sent an instruction stating that the State institutions will be on temporary financing from 1 January until 31 March 2025. According to the instruction from the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, a total of BAM 338,850,000 has been allocated for temporary financing, which is a quarter of the total funds foreseen in the Budget for 2024.
235. Preparation of the 2025 Budget has been delayed for more than eight months since the Fiscal Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted on 24 February 2025 the Global Framework of Fiscal Balance and Policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2025-2027.
236. The Draft Budget of Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and International Obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2025 adopted by Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4 March 2025 amounts to BAM 2.797 billion, with BAM 11.1 million increase compared to 2024 adopted Budget. The amount foreseen for financing State institutions has increased by 16 per cent and amounts to BAM 1.570 billion, but real increase is BAM 15.1 million or 1.1 per cent since Fiscal Council members agreed to transfer BAM 200.0 million out of Central Bank's profits from 2024 to Entity Budgets. The amount foreseen for servicing foreign debt in 2025 is BAM 1.226 billion, with a decrease by 14 per cent compared to 2024.
237. Domestic revenues for financing State Institutions amount to BAM 1.447 billion (with 16 per cent increase compared to 2024), of which indirect tax revenue amounts to BAM 1.020 billion (same amount as in 2023 budget), BAM 426.7 million from non-tax revenues (72 per cent increase), BAM 0.75 million from transfers from other levels (1 per cent decrease) and BAM 1.7 million grant. The budget shows a deficit in the amount of BAM 120.6 million (42 per cent increase) and its coverage is planned mainly from transferred surplus funds from previous years in the amount of BAM 119 million.
238. On the expenditure side, adopted budget plans, among others, BAM 842.4 million for gross salaries and allowances (4 per cent increase); BAM 169.6 million for compensations of employees and members of parliament (1 per cent decrease); BAM 228.2 million for material and

- service expenditures, rent, agreed services etc. (1 cent increase), BAM 237.0 million for current transfers and grants (570 per cent increase) and BAM 80.7 million for capital expenditures for purchasing land, buildings and equipment (20 per cent decrease).
239. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina forwarded the Draft State Budget to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the budget proponent.
240. The Federation maintained its budget stability, which should be attributed to the sustained growth of indirect tax revenues and the continued domestic borrowing, mainly through the issuance of treasury bills and bonds.
241. On 29th & 31st January, the Federation House of Representative and Federation House of People respectively, adopted Federation Budget for 2025 in the total amount of BAM 8.248 billion, an increase of BAM 773.7 million or 10 per cent over the 2024 budget.
242. Total domestic revenues of the budget are projected in the amount of BAM 6.801 billion, which is 16 per cent increase compared to 2023 budget and include among others: indirect tax revenue in amount of BAM 2.462 billion (9 per cent increase), revenues from contributions for pension fund in amount of BAM 3.618 billion (21 per cent increase) and non-tax revenues in the amount BAM 588.6 million (5 per cent decrease). Current transfers and donations are planned in the amount of BAM 13.9 million (2 per cent decrease).
243. Borrowing and receipt from financial assets in 2025 budget are planned in amount of 1.447 billion, a 4 per cent increase compared to 2024 budget, with plans to be covered by short-term borrowing (BAM 360.0 million), long-term borrowing (BAM 1.036 billion), receipts from financial assets (BAM 50.0 million) and income from the sale of fixed assets (BAM 0.1 million).
244. On the expenditure side, the budget foresees, among others, BAM 397.2 million for gross salaries and allowances (15 per cent increase), BAM 41.9 million for employee' contributions (13 per cent increase), BAM 160.9 million for expenditures for material and service (8 per cent increase) and BAM 5.721 billion for current transfers (13 per cent increase) - which among others include transfers for social and veterans categories, pension funds, transfers for stabilization of the economy, and transfers to lower levels-, BAM 458.2 million for the capital transfers BAM (34 per cent increase), BAM 78.9 billion for the acquisition of fixed assets (18 per cent increase) and BAM 252.5 million for interest rate (21 per cent increase). In addition, the 2025 budget envisages BAM 15.0 million planned to cover part of the realized deficit.
245. The Federation debt payment in adopted budget totals BAM 1.086 billion (10 per cent decrease), of which foreign debt totals BAM 625.7 million (17 per cent decrease).

Financial Sector of the Republika Srpska

246. The Republika Srpska continues operating within a delicate financial environment. However, the RS maintained the stability of budget payments thanks to the sustained growth of public revenues and continued borrowing. In 2024, borrowing was difficult due to sanctions from the United States Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). The shortfall from borrowing was compensated by increased public revenues, mainly from indirect taxation, while the Republika Srpska Government reduced non-priority spending and delayed payments to suppliers.
247. On 11 December 2024, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) approved the 2025 Budget of BAM 6.07 billion, representing a 4.5% increase compared to 2024. The budget envisages a total borrowing of BAM 1.24 billion to finance the budget deficit and repay maturing loans. Out of this amount, BAM 862 million will be long-term borrowing, and BAM 378 million will be short-term borrowing. The Republika Srpska Government plans a budget deficit of BAM 98.4 million, while it earmarked BAM 816 million for debt service in 2025.
248. Over half the budget funds have been earmarked for pensions and civil servants' salaries, BAM 1.946 billion and BAM 1.197 billion, respectively.
249. Moody's Investors Service, an international credit rating agency, has assigned the Republika Srpska a credit rating of "B3" with a stable outlook. This "B" rating indicates that the Republika Srpska is considered a high-speculative credit risk and falls into a non-investment category. The stable outlook suggests that the credit rating is unlikely to change soon. The Entity receiving this rating may face financial instability or may not have sufficient cash reserves to meet its business needs, debt obligations, or other financial commitments.
250. According to the Republika Srpska Fiscal Council, the main economic challenges in the future period will be the slow rate of convergence with European Union standards, poor management of public companies, insufficiencies in the business environment, poor quality of education, lagging digitalization, and no legislative plan for transitioning away from coal.

C. Specific International Obligations

251. Bosnia and Herzegovina still has not rectified its non-compliance with the Energy Community Treaty which is the reason for being on-and-off sanctions by the Energy Community Ministerial Council since 2015. Bosnia and Herzegovina's overall implementation performance score in 2024 is the lowest of all contracting parties and it decreased from the previous 35 to 30 per cent. At the same time the overall number of breaches increased to 13 in different areas (third energy package, electricity, oil, gas, renewable energy, etc.). The most serious breach concerns the long-standing failure of Bosnia and Herzegovina to establish a gas sector regulator at the State level, which the Republika

Srpska persistently rejects. At the Energy Community Ministerial Council's annual meeting held on 12 December 2024 all contracting parties are urged to finalize complete transposition of the Electricity Integration package in the first quarter of 2025.

D. Problems of Specific State Legal Entities

Electricity Transmission Company of Bosnia and Herzegovina

252. In the reporting period the issue of the management of the Electricity Transmission Company of Bosnia and Herzegovina that were performing their duties in the acting capacity for almost eight years, is finally put to an end. At the Shareholders Assembly on 28 November 2024, and upon prior consent given to appoint a new General Manager, five executive managers were appointed as well. This completes the company's management and enables their work in full capacity.

253. To remind, the company was established by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Law Establishing the Electricity Transmission Company, adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004, following the June 2003 agreement between the two entities regulating the issue of the establishment of a joint transmission company and independent system operator at the State level, based on Article III (5) (b) of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Public Railways Corporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

254. The issue of underfunding of the Public Railways Corporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the only corporation established under Annex 9 to the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), continued. The Corporation is fully dependent on financial transfers from the Entities. While the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina regularly respect its dues, the Republika Srpska constantly contributes less than its share of 40 per cent, leaving the Corporation at risk of not being able to sustain itself. Due to the rationalization and savings needed, employees that retired in 2024 were not replaced. The Corporation is barely settling its financial obligations, including payment of salaries and operational expenses.

E. Sustainable Development Goals

255. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina is fully functional as the first institutionalized, intersectoral and inclusive coordination body responsible for management and oversight of the SDG implementation in the country. In the reporting period, it is commendable that the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union Delegation continued to strengthen their partnership with the European Union reenforcing the complementarity between the SDGs/the Agenda 2030 and the European Union accession process. With the aim of leveraging the available capacities and normative frameworks in support of the reform process in the country, the UN Resident Coordinator Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union Delegation continued their strategic

dialogue around digitalization, energy efficiency, human capital, gender and human rights, and peacebuilding with the focus on joint policy recommendations, advocacy initiatives and pooled financing.

256. Through a strategic partnership, the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federal Institute of Statistics, and the Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics developed a new Methodology for Adult Education and post-secondary non-tertiary education (ISCED 4). This milestone ensures internationally comparable data to track progress towards Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 17.18, reinforcing Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspiration to join the European Union and its commitment to global education standards.

Disaster Risk Reduction

257. As noted in my previous report, heavy rainfalls in Bosnia and Herzegovina in early October 2024 caused severe floods and landslides that resulted in the loss of lives and property, especially in Municipalities of Jablanica and Konjic in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and Fojnica, Kiseljak and Kreševo in Central Bosnia Canton. The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina issued a decision on 16 October 2024 to declare the end of the state of natural disaster.
258. On 30 October 2024, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated activities to secure financial support from the European Union's Solidarity Fund for the flood-affected areas.
259. On 27 December 2024, the needs assessment team completed the damage evaluation, and Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted a request to the European Union's Solidarity Fund for flood recovery assistance. Total damages have been assessed at BAM 270 million (approx. EUR 138.5 million).
260. The public call for the selection of beneficiaries of assistance for the construction and rehabilitation of housing units destroyed or damaged in the flooding of 2024 within the European Union's support to flood recovery in Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently closed, and the verification of a total of 334 applications received from the affected communities has been in progress. A Public Call to Support Farmers/Agriculture is open until 6 May 2025.
261. Info sessions were held to promote these calls in all communities affected in October 2024 (Drvar, Jablanica, Konjic, Kreševo, Kiseljak, Fojnica, Vareš, Mostar (Drežnica)).
262. In the last week of March 2025, most of the country was again struck by severe weather, floods and landslides (Una-Sana, Posavina, Zenica-Doboj, Central Bosnia and Sarajevo Cantons, as well as most of the Republika Srpska, including Banja Luka, Prijedor, Doboj and Bijeljina). Some of the worst cases were seen in Sanski Most, Velika Kladuša, Gračanica, Živinice, Olovo, Fojnica, Sarajevo, Doboj, Prijedor, Banja Luka, Gradiška, Kostajnica, and Kozarska Dubica. Several municipalities and cities had to

proclaim state of natural disaster and seek help from other administrations. The preliminary damage estimates are already estimated in the millions (BAM), but fortunately, there were no human casualties.

263. The European Union activated the Copernicus Emergency Management Service on 28 March 2025 to assess and map the most affected zones in the country.

Air Pollution

264. Ambient air pollution has historically been a problem in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recent years, it has been identified as an issue that requires action in order to improve the overall quality of life. Moreover, air pollution is known to increase the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. According to statistics released by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2017, Bosnia and Herzegovina had the highest European mortality rate attributed to ambient air pollution. A 2019 report by the World Bank estimated that exposure to air pollution caused as many as 3,300 premature deaths in the country every year.
265. The use of non-standard fuels, high emission vehicles and disruption in the spatial planning all lead to dangerously low levels of breathable air in centers such as Tuzla, Zenica and Banja Luka, but primarily in Sarajevo. A study carried out in 1976 by the World Bank documented that Sarajevo was struggling with air pollution at an early stage. The study revealed that the mountain-valley configuration of the terrain inhibited air flow in and over the city. The study stated that large quantities of pollutants emitted from heating units during the winter months were frequently trapped close to the surface under a “lid” of warm air in higher altitudes, or in meteorological terms, “temperature inversions.” While the underlying causes have not changed since then, the issue of air pollution in Sarajevo has deteriorated every passing year. In the reporting period, Sarajevo was consistently listed among the cities with the worst air quality in the world, occasionally surpassing the rest by multiple folds in terms of pollutant concentrations.
266. In 2024, air quality monitoring in Bosnia and Herzegovina was conducted across both Entities, with a notable emphasis on continuous data collection in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Monitoring in Federation saw an increase in the number of stations and improvements in data transmission, with 32 automatic stations reporting to the Federal Hydrometeorological Institute and 16 stations in the Republika Srpska monitoring network.
267. The most concerning pollutant in both entities was particulate matter, particularly PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}, which exceeded regulatory limits at several locations. In the Federation, the levels of particulate matter remained high throughout the year. In the Republika Srpska, PM₁₀ exceeded the 24-hour limit of 50 µg/m³ in multiple cities, including Doboj, Banja Luka, Zvornik, and Brod, with the highest number of exceedances recorded in Doboj (23 times in November 2025).

268. Concerned about air pollution in the functional urban area of Sarajevo, the Government of Sarajevo Canton, the City of Sarajevo and the City of East Sarajevo have initiated a process of establishing the so-called Climate Assembly or Citizens' Forum with the financial support of the European Union. The said Assembly will convene for the first time in May 2025 as part of a collective effort to seek solutions for cleaner air and a healthier environment.
269. I strongly believe that public emergencies like these can be prevented by identifying risks and reducing vulnerabilities. Indeed, the legal framework for air quality is in place and the scientific knowledge for prevention is readily available, but there are apparent challenges with the implementation and enforcement of the necessary measures. Beside the imminent dangers the country is currently facing, it is equally important to develop an increased awareness of this “silent danger”, which, first and foremost, affects the most vulnerable groups in the society – the elderly, the children, individuals with chronic illnesses and the economically disadvantaged.

VIII. Developments Related to Annex VIII and Commission to Preserve National Monuments

270. With five professional expert members – two foreign and three locals (two from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and one from the Republika Srpska) – the Commission to Preserve National Monuments operated effectively, also due to relevant decisions adopted by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the early 2000s. However, in 2016, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina decided not to fill the two international positions in the Commission. The 2016 decision of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina was temporary, as it was supposed to be applicable until 30 May 2017. At the same time, a new rule was introduced, whereby the presence of the three domestic members constituted a quorum for work and decision-making. Despite advocacy from the international community at the time, the remaining two international members have not been appointed to the Commission as of the time of writing. Nevertheless, the quorum and decision-making rules (i.e. the presence of three members and the consensus of three members) were incorporated into the Commission’s rules of procedure, which are still applicable.
271. The Commission's independence is jeopardized because two of its members are active in political parties and elected as such to cantonal assemblies while the third member of the Commission also made numerous statements and launched several actions which threaten the independence and functioning of the Commission.
272. In its 15th regular session held on 12 November 2024 the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Report on the Work of the the House’s Ad Hoc Investigative Commission for Collecting information on the work of the Commission to Preserve National

Monuments. The Report was done by an Ad Hoc Commission consisting of Snjezana Novakovic Bursac of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Zdenko Cosic of the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ BiH), while Dzenan Dzonlagic of the Democratic Front (DF), although initially appointed to the Commission, resigned from that post and was not replaced. The said Report contains 26 Conclusions of the Ad hoc investigative commission adopted by this Commission on its 5th session held on 13 June 2024. The conclusions of the Ad Hoc Commission are problematic as they are related to the competencies of the Commission, technical and legal terminology used and the receipt and endorsement of petitions, among other issues. Based on the data from the Report the Ad Hoc Commission adopted the stance that the wording “national monuments” excluding Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be used in the future work of the Commission, including its Decisions. The adopted Conclusions are problematic as they would further complicate the work of the Commission.

273. Regarding the state and operations of the Commission, nothing changed in the reporting period. The Commission has not adopted a Decision on declaring a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina since February 2023, while the last Decision on declaring a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina published in the Official Gazette was in October 2022. The next session is expected to take place on 22 April 2025.

IX. Media Developments

Intimidation of journalists

274. Media freedom and freedom of speech in the Republika Srpska have increasingly come under attack since October 2024, further suppressing critical voices in the entity. Independent journalists critical of RS government officials, particularly Republika Srpska President Dodik and his political allies, have faced harassment, intimidation, and threats. Such accusations have fostered an environment conducive to hostility, threats, and physical attacks against journalists.
275. Republika Srpska President Dodik verbally threatened the owners and editors of the Banja Luka-based BUKA, Capital.ba, and BN media outlets at a 26 February 2025 rally, during which he accused them of receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars from the United States Agency for International Development to “destroy Republika Srpska” and attack him personally. Dodik added that “the people should judge them for this.” On the evening of the next day, Republika Srpska President’s Advisor Branislav Okuka verbally attacked and physically confronted BNTV, Al Jazeera and RTL journalists. Attacks and threats against these media outlets are a recurrent issue.

Communication Regulatory Agency

276. The mandate of the members of the Governing Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) of Bosnia and Herzegovina

expired at the end of 2017. New members of the CRA Council were elected by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina in March 2024. The proposed candidates were confirmed by the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 2024 and only six months later were appointed when the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed same group of candidates, due to unrelated political blockade.

277. Seven members of the Communications Regulatory Agency Council officially assumed their duties in October 2024.
278. The competition for selection of the new Director General of the Communication Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is ongoing. The mandate of the current Director General, Draško Milinović expired in July 2024. The competition procedure itself was initiated by the now former CRA Council in May 2024 and according to available information Draško Milinović is the only candidate for that position and will presumably be reappointed.

Sustainability of the Public Broadcasting System

279. The public broadcasting system continues to face financial challenges. Three public broadcasters comprising the public broadcasting system are financed separately, contrary to the legislation in force. Namely, the financing of Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio-Television and Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is temporarily settled by a contract with EP Bosnia and Herzegovina (JP Elektroprivreda BiH d.d. - Sarajevo is the name of the company dealing with the distribution of electricity) which collects the radio and television tax at about 56 per cent of households in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with noteworthy non-payment in western Herzegovina. The Republika Srpska Radio-Television (RTRS) has been independently collecting the RTV tax in the Republika Srpska since 2017 and is not allocating the collected tax in accordance with stipulated ratio (50 per cent to Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio-Television, and 25 per cent to each Entities' broadcasters). Partial collection of the RTV tax, as well as large organizational structure of all three public broadcasters, especially Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio-Television, cannot result in financial sustainability of the system as a whole.
280. Following the final court decision from 2022 establishing the debt of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio-Television to European Broadcasting Union (EBU) in the amount of around BAM 20 million, competent court has issued a conclusion scheduling a hearing for sale of real estate by Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio-Television for 25 September 2024. The hearing for the sale of Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT) assets to settle claims towards EBU failed due to the lack of interested buyers and the objection of the BiH Public Attorney Office, who disputed ownership of the assets whose sale was intended, claiming that the assets were owned by Bosnia and Herzegovina.

281. According to the European Broadcasting Union's (EBU) address to the Minister of Communication and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 28 March 2025, the EBU Executive Board discussed the current situation surrounding Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT) and unanimously decided that it has no alternative but to file a freezing order on all BHRT's bank accounts if the debt is not paid in full by the end of February 2026.
282. In addition to the debt to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), there are registered claims of the Tax Administration of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Indirect Taxation Authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the amount of BAM 38 million. At this moment, the debt of Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT) to various creditors, and only that which has been determined by final court decisions, amounts to approximately BAM 60 million.
283. Despite the announcements of the Ministry of Communications and Transport of Bosnia and Herzegovina that it will demand the debt to the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) be paid from the Budget of Bosnia and Herzegovina and that a new law on the public broadcasting system be drafted to ensure the collection of the radio and television tax, no concrete activities have been carried out on any of these initiatives. Funds for the repayment of the EBU debt are not allocated in the 2025 Budget. Although a working group has been established to draft a new law on the public broadcasting system, no significant progress has been made.
284. The situation is further complicated by the December 2024 Decision of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which set the minimum wage at BAM 1,000. According to information received from the director of Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT), a significant number (some 65%) of BHRT employees earn less than BAM 1,000 and adjusting their salaries to the minimum and the expected linear increase of other salaries will lead to the inevitable financial collapse of BHRT. The BHRT management sees the solution in adjusting the amount of the radio and television tax to inflation, which is legally possible based on a decision issued by the Public Broadcasting (PB) System Board. However, at this moment it is not possible to convene the PB System Board because the members of this board from Republika Srpska (the Republika Srpska Radio-Television - RTRS) are not responding to calls, and the public broadcaster of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has only one member.
285. In the dispute that Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT) commenced against the defendant the Republika Srpska Radio-Television (RTRS) in 2021 claiming illicit separate collection of the radio and television tax, which caused damage to BHRT in the amount of approximately BAM 90 million (two lawsuits for different periods), BHRT lost the case before all courts in the Republika Srpska in all instances, including the Supreme Court of the Republika Srpska. BHRT brought the case for appeal before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia

and Herzegovina, which annulled the ruling of the Supreme Court of the Republika Srpska on 28 April 2025 and returned the case for retrial.

286. The ongoing situation is critical regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to meet the European Commission's 14 key priorities, which include ensuring the financial sustainability of the public broadcasting system. The proposed solutions include short-term measures for immediate stability and long-term strategies such as legislative changes and internal restructuring for the efficiency of public broadcasting system.
287. As a result of the joint letter from the international community to the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 27 February 2024 expressing concerns arising from the fact that Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been operating with only one of four members of the Governing Board for more than 10 years, and asking the Parliament to fulfill its responsibility and appoint board members, so that this body, which is a part of the public broadcasting system board, could function properly. The House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament appointed members of the Governing Board of the Radio-Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at its session on 2 and 3 April 2025, the final approval by the Federation House of Peoples is expected in its next session on 22 April 2025.

X. European Union Military Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

288. The unanimous approval of the UN Security Council on 1 November 2024 to extend the mission of EUFOR-Althea was of utmost importance for peace and stability in the country. The international community cannot permit a security vacuum to develop in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
289. Due to lack of reconciliation, and markedly increased political tension, EUFOR-Althea is very much needed as a stabilizing force in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In response to the political and constitutional crisis, EUFOR activated part of its Reserve Forces in March 2025 to underline its commitment and readiness. Increased visibility, mobility and activities of EUFOR-Althea troops, as well as the availability of Over-the-Horizon Reserve Forces (OTH RF) proved to be essential for providing reassurance, assisting de-escalation, and for the preparation of adequate responses to any eventual deterioration of the security situation.
290. According to articles I and II of Annex 1-A and articles I, II and IV of Annex 1-B to the General Framework Agreement for Peace, all parties are committed to arms control and have agreed to cooperate with international organizations. EUFOR continues to undertake a role in arms control by conducting verifications and inspections. Due to the political crisis, this role has become even more significant for the maintenance of a safe and secure environment, in close coordination with the relevant ministries. EUFOR-Althea remains a key contributor in the field of humanitarian demining through the Mine Action Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina

291. Since the invitation to the NATO membership Action Plan in 2010, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) have continuously evolved to become a reliable partner in the Euro-Atlantic security architecture. Although cooperation with AFBiH functions considerably better than other State-level institutions in this multi-ethnic structure, its operational and command capabilities remain dependent on the support of NATO and European Union partners.

XI. Operations of the Office of the High Representative

292. While the Office of the High Representative has faced substantial reductions to its budget and staff over the past few years, its remaining tasks have not decreased commensurately. The current annual operating budget of the organization is EUR 5,858,618. Collecting budgeted funds remains challenging, with around EUR 600,000 of the budget expected to go uncollected in the current operating period. As previously noted, the Russian Federation suspended its contribution to the Office's budget in February 2022, and this remains its position. The Office employs 82 national staff and 20 international staff, 16 of whom are seconded to Sarajevo, its regional and field offices.
293. To achieve progress on the 5+2 Agenda and to prepare political conditions for European integration, it is imperative to maintain an efficient Office of the High Representative. Its capacity to fulfil its mandated responsibilities is highly dependent on the appropriation of necessary resources. The current financial situation is not commensurate with the goals established by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and could endanger the achievement of the purported mandate of the Office of the High Representative.

XII. Reporting Schedule

294. I submit this report in accordance with the requirement in UN Security Council Resolution 1031 (1995) for the High Representative to submit regular reports to the Secretary-General for transmission to the Security Council. Should the Secretary-General or any member of the Council require further information, I am at their disposal. The next regular report is scheduled for November 2025.
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