



Security Council

Eightieth year

9911th meeting

Tuesday, 6 May 2025, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Sekeris	(Greece)
<i>Members:</i>	Algeria	Mr. Koudri
	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	Denmark	Ms. Lassen
	France	Mr. Dharmadhikari
	Guyana	Ms. Persaud
	Pakistan	Mr. Jadoon
	Panama	Mr. Alfaro de Alba
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Hwang
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sierra Leone	Ms. Swallow
	Slovenia	Mr. Žbogar
	Somalia	Mr. Mohamed Yusuf
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Kelley

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 1 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/272)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President: I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Jérôme Bonnafont, Permanent Representative of France, for his service as President of the Council for the month of April. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Bonnafont and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 1 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2025/272)

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

I request the Protocol Officer to escort Her Excellency Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to her seat at the Council table.

Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted to a seat at the Council table.

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Christian Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to participate in this meeting.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor on a point of order.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to express our principled disagreement with the presence at this meeting of Mr. Christian Schmidt in his capacity as the so-called "High Representative". The Security Council has not authorized him in that capacity.

We recall that the Bosnia and Herzegovina issue is on the Council's agenda under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. There is and has been a quarter-century-old practice of approving High Representatives. Therefore, without an appropriate mandate from the Council, the position of High Representative remains vacant.

In the light of that, I would like to emphasize that Mr. Schmidt has no right to speak on behalf of the international community nor to submit any documents to the Security Council.

The Security Council does, however, have a practice whereby we can listen to briefers in their personal capacity. That is how we are going to construe the presence of Mr. Schmidt here today. However, given the fact that he has completely discredited himself through his attempts to usurp power in Bosnia and Herzegovina and is doing everything he can to undermine the already tense situation in that country — and I am going to speak to that later, in my main statement — I do not intend to waste time listening to his biased thoughts.

The President: I take note of the remarks of the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation.

It is decided to invite High Representative Schmidt to participate in this meeting.

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

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

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2025/272, which contains the text of a letter dated 1 May 2025 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I now give the floor to Mr. Schmidt.

Mr. Schmidt: In two days' time, on 8 May, we will commemorate 80 years since the end of the Second World War in Europe. That is the day on which Hitler's aggression was finally brought to an end, albeit after incredible loss of life was sustained and unbearable scars were inflicted upon humankind. Eighty years on, we still mourn the victims of Hitler's aggression. At the same time, those events led to the conclusion that it is possible to prevent war and reach a peaceful settlement of conflict within a rules-based order: by adopting resolution 1031 (1995), on 15 December 1995, this very body, the Security Council — to which I have the honour to report — is the answer given by those who believed, and continue to believe, that living in peace and freedom is the first and foremost fundamental right of every human being.

Soon after, at the end of May, the representatives of NATO countries and the wider international community, along with the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, will come together in Dayton, Ohio, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which ended the bloodshed and the genocide of 1992 to 1995. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina brought back old horrors, atrocities and human agony not seen in Europe since the end of the Second World War. The 1995 Dayton Accords, as a successful reaction to that war, could be possible only on the basis of rules, the Charter of the United Nations, including Chapter VII, and a negotiated settlement paving the way in the region for a common future after the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The Dayton Peace Agreement included ad hoc mechanisms and instruments of international control to safeguard a sustainable peace that provides for human rights and a functioning democracy.

Here today, looking ahead to those two monumental dates, before I begin my address to the Security Council as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the value of life over death, the cause of peace over hostility and the preference of humanity over savagery. In that context, there is a personal impression that I feel obliged to share with the Council today. These days, I am increasingly approached by citizens of all ethnic backgrounds in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who ask me: "Mr. Schmidt, can you please make sure that we do not stumble into a war again?" To that I always respond that I do not see a danger of war, as nobody wants to go through such an experience again. Unfortunately, inflammatory political rhetoric, insults and the disregarding of the terror and the atrocities that culminated in the genocide in Srebrenica are calling into question the political will of some actors to ensure the continued existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as stated in article 1 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is annex 4 to the Dayton General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I must add that the international community and the neighbouring countries did not, in fact, make any such attempts.

Since my appointment by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, as the competent international body, on 27 May 2021, I have had the honour of submitting to the Secretary-General and the Security Council eight reports on the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, better known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. My competence — given to the High Representative by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council — has been reaffirmed, endorsed and welcomed in resolutions 1031 (1995), 1174 (1998) and 1247 (1999) and others repeatedly.

The Dayton Agreement was no ordinary legal document. Thirty years after its signing, it remains the basis for the democratic and multi-ethnic structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Annex 4, the Constitution of that State, is a very complex document that would benefit from further democratic development. The implemented rules and checks and balances to safeguard the representation and participation in decision-making by the three constituent peoples and the others include non-discriminatory rights for all voters in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All constituent peoples are not politically unitarist, but contribute to the richness of their respective different political positions beyond their ethnic or religious background. That was highlighted in the so-called *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* judgments of 2009 by the European Court of Human Rights, and in other decisions, such as the *Komšić and Ljubić* case of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those judgments addressing election requirements are to be implemented. The Croat political parties in the country — not only the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the leading party, also supported by the Prime Minister of Croatia — have clearly expressed their position in that regard. The Prime Minister of Croatia also indicated that the issue has a particular importance for Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration.

At this moment, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is invited to join negotiations over future European Union membership, the need to amend the Constitution — not only in this context — is both evident and important. That must be ensured by the constituent power of the peoples and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their legitimately elected representatives. The international community, based on its competences agreed on, and founded in, the Dayton Agreement, can play a supporting role in that process.

Allow me to make another clarification: colonialism has beaten the individual and collective right of decision out of the hands of those suppressed by it. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the right of decision is in the hands of all — not unilaterally against the international agreed Constitution and agreed laws, but by developing and amending them together. The European Union's requirements, as set out in the Copenhagen criteria, regarding the necessary adoption by an internationally accepted State of law — with the stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities — describe the path that must be followed. The current status of Bosnia and Herzegovina, based on a Chapter VII authorization of the Security Council, could then be finalized. Furthermore, that could create the conditions for the mandate of the ad hoc institutions of the Dayton Peace Agreement to be phased out.

Today I must inform the Council that the conditions for a full implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina have vastly deteriorated with respect to previous reporting periods. In particular, the first quarter of this year was marked by a significant rise in tensions, which without question amounts to an extraordinary crisis in the country since the signing of the Dayton Agreement. I would underline that I see a political crisis, but I do not yet see any indications of a security crisis.

As indicated in my report (see S/2025/272), the sudden deterioration in conditions comes from the reactions to the first-instance verdict of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina that convicted Republika Srpska's entity President, Milorad Dodik, for ignoring institutional rulings *ultra vires*. In hindsight, the recent actions appear to be a deliberate culmination of policies that had been planned and prepared for a long time, which I regularly pointed out in my previous reports. The recent development was therefore initiated by merely taking advantage of the opportunity that the verdict offered. After the verdict, Mr. Dodik intensified his attacks on the constitutional order of the country by directing the authorities of the Republika Srpska to adopt legislation that effectively banned State-level judiciary and State-level law enforcement in the Republika Srpska and even by putting on the table a draft entity constitution, hinting at *de facto* secession. The draft constitution — a document of considerable complexity — was revealed shortly after the verdict was announced. The speed with which that document and the draft laws were made public strongly suggests that they had been prepared well in advance.

First, those acts and that legislation fundamentally contradict the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and its annexes. Consequently, the country's Constitutional Court has immediately annulled all those laws passed by the Republika Srpska National Assembly. Secondly, they endanger the territorial and societal integrity of the country and its peoples by performing secessionist acts. And thirdly, they also create legal and executive insecurity by establishing entity laws and institutions that contradict and compete with State law and competence. Institutions created in Dayton, such as the Constitutional Court, will be required to prevent the country from falling apart, and when it comes to safeguarding the functionality of the State, my legal competencies as High Representative will also be required. Consequently, the State-level coalition has been seriously affected, the momentum towards European Union accession has stalled, the functionality of the State is being undermined and reforms have been sidelined. Those developments are not irreversible, but they are severe and must be addressed without delay. That requires active engagement by the international community.

As noted in my current report, the general economic situation appears to be stable for the time being, despite the current crisis. However, the demographic situation in the country is not improving. The heavy loss of young and skilled members of the population constitutes an impediment to the economic and societal sustainability of the country. A better understanding of the danger requires better data, ideally in the form of a new census. Alas, the discussion regarding a new census is highly politicized. We are awaiting any day now the new United Nations Population Fund report about the demographic development in the country.

Coupled with unmistakable environmental degradation and recurrent disasters, it is safe to conclude that daily life in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not getting easier. In these troubling times, Bosnia and Herzegovina has felt the unwavering support of the international community on its side against the existential threat. All members of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council and a great number of United Nations Members have reacted to the policies by expressing their concern, calling for such disruptive actions to stop and stressing, *inter alia*, their unwavering support for the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is imperative to continue those efforts. Furthermore, I would hereby like to express my gratitude to the Security Council for reaffirming its unequivocal commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in full accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement. I regard that statement as compassionate support for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I note that the Serb community paid no heed to Mr. Dodik's unlawful directives. For example, ethnic Serbs employed in State-level institutions have been pressured into abandoning their posts, but those calls and threats have been overwhelmingly disregarded. Despite the difficult political situation, I also have no doubt about the Serb community's commitment to pursuing the European path. That is clearly expressed by the opposition parties, the Party of Democratic Progress, the Social Democratic Party and others.

The Bosniak community has been able to remain calm despite the tensions and to continue on the path of patient dialogue in order to keep the country's European integration on the table. As for the Croat community, I also notice a continuing pro-European commitment and an increased willingness to engage in inter-ethnic dialogue, including in local disputes. Without taking sides, the case of the central district of Mostar — some details of which are present in my current report — constitutes a good example. In that specific case, I would prefer local actors to work out a solution among themselves rather than a solution brought about by the international community. Goodwill exists and must be encouraged so that it can overcome the disruptive noise that is being spread by some actors. We put our trust in those who remain committed to ensuring a peaceful coexistence in one city, including different boroughs. Mayor Kordić and the head of the municipal council have taken concrete steps towards addressing the situation in a proper manner. Let us wait and see.

Let us be clear that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina can, and do, live together. For the most part, the communities in the country do not support extremism or secessionism. There is ample evidence for that in daily life, but ethnocentric politics spend too much time dividing the communities rather than uniting them.

We witness the good and bad developments all at once; what is the way forward? As I reported previously, discrimination remains a complex problem encompassing many issues and groups. I therefore renew my call on political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to launch comprehensive constitutional and legal reforms to tackle the problem.

While the constitutional framework must be improved, past attempts have shown the sensitivity of the matter. It is important to keep in mind that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a State of three constituent peoples, representatives of others and all citizens, and the protection given to all must be safeguarded while removing discrimination from the current constitutional framework. Such a constitutional reform process should also be aimed at addressing the European Commission's 14 key priorities. Needless to say, there is a considerable amount of overlap between the 14 key priorities and the 5+2 agenda objectives, which are the basis of my engagement, by decision of the Peace Implementation Council. The rule of law and its entrenchment are two of the most important issues. I therefore take this opportunity to reiterate that the way forward also requires us to acknowledge that Dayton and the European Union reform agenda are mutually reinforcing. The task of amending the Constitution in a way that is fully compatible with European Union norms is by no means easy. I suggest that all those interested in ensuring a bright and prosperous future for Bosnia and Herzegovina organize a conference on those issues.

The issue of State property in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains unresolved. That issue continues to represent a significant barrier to the country's economic development. Considering the challenges caused by the current lack of State-level legislation on the matter, there is a need for the international community to remain engaged. As part of the 5+2 agenda, I also follow my obligation to initiate a facilitation process.

The challenges faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina are therefore complex and varied, but let us be clear: the extraordinary crisis Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently facing is the result of severe attacks by some political leaders against the Dayton Peace Agreement, encompassing the constitutional and legal order of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and has nothing to do with the Agreement itself. It leads to the misinterpretation of Dayton, which is to be developed democratically and discussed, but not called into question. Everybody in Bosnia and Herzegovina must understand that no individual stands above the law; on the contrary, everybody has to respect the rule of law.

In conclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina is facing difficult times. Thirty years ago, nobody would have expected that the international community would be needed today as much as it is. But the peace agreement that the Security Council endorsed 30 years ago remains the very foundation on which the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina — with its sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence — can be built. Reopening or redefining the peace agreement challenges the basis for peace and prosperity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

That does not mean that we should not talk about necessary amendments and adoptions with regard to the Constitution. The way forward includes countering threats and attacks to its very foundation, but also implementing meaningful reforms, including in the context of the country's European integration. It is about focusing on and strengthening the institutional stability and functionality of the State and continuing to reinforce election integrity in view of the country's general elections in 2026.

The Office of the High Representative, as an international, ad hoc institution was never intended to be permanent. But Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations for European integration will, for the foreseeable future, be built on the Dayton system, as the foundation for its constitutional order as a fully reorganized subject of international law, in legal continuation of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There are no other subjects of international law in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State.

However, it must be made clear that eventually the international community cannot determine the future of the country. The impulses and the directions must come from the domestic level. I therefore call on the political leaders of the country to continue their pursuit of full European integration, implement reforms and build a well-governed democratic society that provides prosperity for the current and future generations.

The international community should continue lending its support and assistance to help the country and the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to shape their future and to provide reassurance that the people in the country are not forgotten.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone and their Governments for the support they have provided to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Office of the High Representative. That support is also particularly relevant in relation to the necessary executive decisions that have to be taken within the authority vested in me as High Representative. But that should be a last resort, when there is no other option.

The President: I thank Mr. Schmidt for his briefing.

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

Mr. Jadoon (Pakistan): I thank High Representative Christian Schmidt for his briefing. I also welcome the presence of Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in today's meeting, as well as the representatives of the European Union (EU), Croatia and Serbia.

As we heard from Mr. Schmidt, Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the midst of a political and constitutional crisis, marked by rising political tensions, institutional paralysis and radical rhetoric and threats of secessionism. Persistent and pernicious nationalist rhetoric, with underlying ethnically divisive messaging and obstructed governance, seeks to undermine the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and State institutions and institutions of governance envisaged under the Agreement. The situation remains unstable, and any further deterioration could potentially jeopardize regional peace and security.

As indicated by the High Representative in his report (see S/2025/272), the events that have unfolded in the country in the past few months, have put its two entities — the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska — on a perilous path of confrontation. That is deplorable.

In that context, I would like to make the following points.

First, Pakistan enjoys historical, long-standing and fraternal ties with Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people. Pakistan firmly reiterates its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and categorically rejects the secessionist rhetoric seeking to undermine its territorial integrity.

Secondly, we take note of the Republika Srpska's pronouncement about respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as provided in the Dayton Agreement. We hope that those declarations will also be backed by matching actions.

Thirdly, we are alarmed by the charged rhetoric and unilateral actions targeting the constitutional and governance structures and bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We note, with concern, the passing of various laws by the Republika Srpska entity that seek to limit the jurisdiction of State institutions and authorities and undermine their operation, as well as moves to adopt a new Constitution in the Republika Srpska. Such moves, which go against the Dayton Accords, serve only to escalate tensions and must cease.

Fourthly, the use of inflammatory religious and ethnic rhetoric to stoke tensions in the country must end. The region's tragic history serves as a stark reminder that national, racial and religious hatred, discord and intolerance can trigger horrific violence. We therefore urge all political actors to exercise prudence, act responsibly and eschew the use of any narrative that seeks to sow inter-ethnic and interreligious discord and raise tensions.

Fifthly, Bosnia, as a sovereign State, has the right to choose its own alliances and partnerships. We support its EU aspirations and urge a constructive, forward-looking and inclusive dialogue to advance reforms.

In March, the Council unanimously called for adherence to the Dayton Accords, encouraging both sides to engage in a constructive dialogue. Today we reiterate that call.

In conclusion, Pakistan's commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity is unshakable. The path forward is clear: dialogue must replace division, cooperation must override confrontation and unity must prevail over discord. We urge all parties to act with restraint, renounce divisive rhetoric and work collectively towards lasting peace. All peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve nothing less than a future built on mutual respect, shared prosperity and enduring peace.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to start by congratulating Greece on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of May. The Chinese delegation pledges its full support to you and your colleagues. I would also like to

take this opportunity to commend France for its work as President of the Council last month.

I welcome to today's meeting Her Excellency Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the representatives from Serbia, Croatia and the European Union (EU).

Recently, following the Bosnia and Herzegovina court-issued a verdict against the leader of the Republika Srpska, after which the Republika Srpska National Assembly adopted a series of laws, ethnic tension in Bosnia and Herzegovina has further intensified and political differences have further increased. That development is concerning. The current tension does not serve the interests of any party in Bosnia and Herzegovina, nor is it conducive to peace and stability in the country and the region as a whole. I would like to point out that one major cause of the current tense situation is Mr. Schmidt's frequent invocation of the so-called Bonn powers. That has exacerbated tension and disagreement among the communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, rather than diffusing them, which has led to an increasingly difficult political situation in the country.

I would like to reiterate that the role of the Security Council in appointing a High Representative constitutes established practice. The appointment of Mr. Schmidt has not been endorsed by the Council. At the same time, the High Representative system and its Bonn powers are special arrangements for special times. They should not be considered lasting arrangements, let alone permanent ones. China calls on all communities in the country to exercise restraint, respond actively to the calls made in the press statement by the Council in March (SC/16033) and resolve differences through a sincere, open and constructive dialogue. If the confrontation is allowed to intensify, leading to the deterioration and escalation of the regional situation, it will ultimately harm the interests of all communities in the country and its entire population. The international community should adopt a fair, balanced and prudent approach, create favourable conditions for all the communities in the country to resolve disputes and refrain from interfering in its internal affairs and taking sides or even imposing unilateral sanctions.

China's position on the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina is consistent and clear. We respect its State sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and the independent choice of its people for the future of the country. As a sovereign State, Bosnia and Herzegovina's internal affairs should be ultimately managed by its people independently. The three ethnic groups in the country should aim to promote its national development and the well-being of its people, stay committed to constructive dialogue and work together to maintain the political and social stability of the country.

China supports all efforts conducive to maintaining the peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and commends the constructive roles played by Serbia, Croatia and other countries in the region in that regard. We hope that, while implementing its mandate, the EU force in Bosnia and Herzegovina will fully heed the views of all communities in the country and respect their views. China will remain committed to developing friendly relations with all communities in the country and playing a constructive role in safeguarding the peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the tranquillity of the region.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for May, and we would like to thank France for its presidency in April. We welcome the participation in this meeting of the Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms. Željka Cvijanović.

The Security Council has discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina three times in less than six months, which attests to the fact that what is happening in the country is particularly serious in terms of threats to peace and security. It would be no exaggeration to say that the country is experiencing the most serious internal political crisis it has witnessed in the post-conflict period, which was prompted by the desire of a host of external actors and their backers inside Bosnia and Herzegovina to revise the Dayton architecture and the system of the distribution of powers in the country. What we are seeing are dogged attempts to recast Bosnia and Herzegovina from a decentralized State to a unitary State by reducing the broad powers and rights of the three constituent peoples and the two entities.

We have warned on numerous occasions about the grave danger inherent in any revision of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In its press statement issued on 28 March (SC/16033), the Security Council sent a clear message to all parties that the Dayton Agreement remains the cornerstone of the peaceful settlement process and that all differences must be resolved through dialogue among Bosnians themselves, the entities and the constituent peoples. Regrettably, that unambiguous message was ignored by the very people who should be establishing conditions for the Agreement's implementation.

Once again, we are witnessing how the self-styled High Representative — with the outright connivance, if not support, of his Western sponsors — continues to unscrupulously interfere in the strictly internal affairs of the independent State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This time, he is doing so under trumped-up pretexts that have nothing to do with the Dayton issue and is thereby trying to cut off the oxygen to political parties in Republika Srpska, including those represented in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is nothing but an ongoing attempt to remove from the political scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina those figures and forces who are the most popular in Serbian society. It began with the absurd prosecutions of the President of Republika Srpska, the Head of the Government and the Speaker of the Parliament. All of the people I mentioned are democratically elected representatives, whose legitimacy and high popularity were once again reasserted in the municipal elections held in October 2024.

The convictions rendered against the top leadership of the Serbian entities and especially the fact that arrest warrants for those individuals were issued for their being suspected of undermining the constitutional order only served to significantly heighten the tensions in the country and in the region as a whole. Instead of attempting to ease the tensions, which are already at a fever pitch, we are seeing the opposite. I am referring to the incident of 23 April in eastern Sarajevo, in which an operative group of inspectors from the State Investigation and Protection Agency attempted to serve a subpoena to the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik. There is only one name for that: provocation — all the more so because one of the Agency's inspectors is suspected of war crimes against Serbs and another has ties to the secret service of Bosnian Muslims, which was active during the armed conflict of 1992-1995.

We cannot but conclude that Mr. Schmidt has set out to completely eliminate all things Serbian in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are convinced that the Council should state that such a policy is categorically unacceptable, especially given that it is being implemented on behalf of the West. Thus, the West is becoming complicit in the lawlessness under way, which exhibits clear signs of colonialism, as well as xenophobia.

Clearly, such destructive behaviour lies at the heart of the current crisis and is provoking an escalation of contradictions between the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, preventing them from reaching a mutually agreeable solution to pressing problems and inflating the potential for conflict to dangerous proportions.

Ultimately, such actions are prompting the Security Council to meet time and again to discuss the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Attempts to pin all responsibility for what is happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Banja Luka, which we are likely to hear in the Chamber today, are — to put it mildly — ludicrous. That is completely unhelpful. The focus should be on the root causes of crisis phenomena and not on their logical consequences. We are convinced that subjecting the Serbian people to ostracism yet again is not only unfair and contradictory, given what is going on in reality, but can only further exacerbate the entire situation, making it more difficult to find a way out of that dead end.

And there is a way out, which is through freeing the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the external custodianship that is poisoning their very existence. The Council must face the facts and take a responsible decision to finally shut down the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which lost any added value long ago and has become a driver of conflict. We suggest that the Council make a sober assessment of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based not on the pseudo-High Representative's biased assessments and comments which are completely divorced from reality, but on its own conclusions based on the reality of the situation.

What can be useful in that regard are the reports regularly submitted to the Council by the Government of the Republika Srpska, including a new document that we circulated as an official document of the Security Council yesterday, on 5 May.

A number of hotheads are proposing using the European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) in interventions on the part of the Bosnia and Herzegovina law enforcement agencies. Those proposals are totally senseless and unacceptable. Such interventions could result in a loss of control over the situation, which could have unpredictable results. We believe that the EUFOR-Althea leadership understands the responsibility entrusted to it by the Security Council and will therefore act only within the confines of its mandate, which excludes any interference in the political affairs of a sovereign State. We see no need for a quantitative expansion of the operational capabilities of EUFOR-Althea.

We stand convinced that the priorities of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina remain unchanged, that is, strengthening the country's Dayton architecture in every way; advancing the principles of equality of the three constituent peoples and the two entities; delivering the European State from the Office of the High Representative, which has in fact become an instrument of oppression; and guaranteeing the right to independent development for the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For its part, Russia, as one of the Dayton guarantor States, stands ready to engage constructively to ensure a genuine post-conflict settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Swallow (Sierra Leone): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. Allow me at the outset to extend Sierra Leone's warm congratulations to Greece on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May 2025. I assure Greece of my delegation's full support. I also congratulate the delegation of France for its effective stewardship during its presidency in April. I welcome the participation of Her Excellency Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the representatives of Croatia and Serbia and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) to the United Nations in this meeting. I thank Mr. Christian Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing and take note of his report (see S/2025/272), covering the period from 16 October 2024 to 15 April 2025, as submitted through the Secretary-General.

Sierra Leone acknowledges the vital role of the Office of the High Representative in overseeing the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement for nearly 30 years since its signing. We acknowledge the High Representative's dedication during the reporting period, particularly in navigating an increasingly challenging political environment. We reaffirm our steadfast support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina within its internationally recognized borders. We therefore reject any actions that seek to undermine the gains achieved under the Dayton Agreement or to impede the reform process essential for Bosnia and Herzegovina's path towards European Union accession — a pathway that we consider integral to lasting peace, stability and prosperity for all its people.

We remain deeply concerned about the rising trend of ethnically motivated political dissent and the escalation of divisive rhetoric into actions that threaten to unravel the Dayton framework. Such developments risk undermining the political, economic and social fabric of Bosnia and Herzegovina, placing its institutions and citizens at risk of renewed instability. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have borne the consequences of ethnic nationalism in the past. It is therefore especially troubling when political leaders and institutions entrusted with safeguarding peace and stability are implicated in fuelling divisiveness, instead of fostering inclusivity. In that context, Sierra Leone wishes to underscore the following three points.

First, we emphasize the critical importance of consensus-building within Bosnia and Herzegovina's political processes, including ensuring the inclusive and constructive participation of all political actors. We commend the efforts of the Troika coalition, which have demonstrated that cross-entity collaboration is not only feasible but also beneficial. That spirit of cooperation should be nurtured and expanded, particularly in advancing necessary reforms under the 5+2 agenda and in support of EU accession negotiations. We recognize the complexity and diversity of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political landscape. We urge political leaders to prioritize national unity, dialogue and cooperation, while keeping the welfare of the people at the centre of their actions. In that regard, we encourage greater engagement with multi-ethnic and institutional platforms, such as the Interreligious Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Parliamentary Assembly, to foster trust, dialogue and social cohesion.

Secondly, we caution against conflating individual political agendas and separatist pressures with legitimate national aspirations. We are particularly concerned about recent legislative initiatives in Republika Srpska that risk escalating tensions and creating institutional uncertainty. We note the ongoing appeals process and call on all parties to respect judicial outcomes and refrain from actions that could undermine public confidence in the rule of law. We urge national stakeholders to prioritize measures that align with the vision of a united, stable and forward-looking Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sierra Leone recognizes the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the supreme legal framework of the State. We believe that continued adherence to the constitutional order is fundamental to lasting peace, alongside respect for the integrity and identity of each of its constituent entities. We encourage political actors to work within Bosnia and Herzegovina's inclusive governance structures at all levels.

Thirdly and lastly, we underscore the continued relevance of international engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We appreciate the Security Council's close attention to developments, as evidenced by its convening of two meetings this year — an affirmation of its commitment to multilateralism at a time of growing global challenges. We also reaffirm the indispensable role of the international community, in particular the Peace Implementation Council and the European Union, in supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability. We encourage those efforts

to remain focused on the country's peace and development, beyond immediate geopolitical considerations.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone commends the progress achieved in the administration of the Brčko district and conveys its best wishes to the new Administration in addressing ongoing challenges. We further recognize the valuable contributions of the Peacebuilding Fund in advancing the women and peace and security agenda and the youth, peace and security agenda and commend the work of the International Commission on Missing Persons in bringing closure to affected communities. We also acknowledge the European Union's steadfast commitment to, and investment in, Bosnia and Herzegovina's stabilization, and we call for continued constructive cooperation among all stakeholders in the best interests of its people.

Mr. Žbogar (Slovenia): At the outset, let me first thank France for successfully steering the Council through April. And, of course, I want to congratulate you, Mr. President, and Greece for taking up the presidency of the Council. Greece will have all our support and cooperation. We welcome Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we want to thank High Representative Schmidt for his report (see S/2025/272) and for his briefing today.

The beginning of this year was marked by increased tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council reacted. We had two closed meetings on Bosnia and Herzegovina, culminating in the unanimous approval of a press statement (SC/16033). Let me re-emphasize the united message of the Council to the leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina: reduce political tensions, engage in dialogue and uphold the Dayton Peace Accords and the Constitution. Slovenia firmly supports those calls. We are committed to the peaceful development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its future within the European Union. With that introduction, I want to make three points.

First, Slovenia reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the primacy of the Dayton Peace Accords, our strong support for the mandate of the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining peace and security and for the Office of the High Representative. For nearly three decades, the Dayton Accords have upheld Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign, independent and multi-ethnic State. All political actors must exercise restraint and refrain from divisive actions. They must fully respect the Dayton Accords and the Constitution and laws of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to fully uphold the rule of law, the decisions of all institutions, including the courts, prosecutors and police, need to be respected, and due process must be followed. Slovenia firmly believes that the protection of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the preservation of its democratic character are fundamental pillars of its future.

Secondly, the ongoing political crisis that continues to impede the effective functioning of the State is deeply concerning and unacceptable. Slovenia strongly condemns the actions taken by the leadership of the Republika Srpska entity, particularly their efforts to establish parallel legal and institutional frameworks. Such measures represent a serious threat to the constitutional order and the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders must honour the clear aspirations of their citizens — a future within the European Union. Citizens expect reforms, tangible progress and stability, not political experiments. They seek a society rooted firmly in the rule of law, respect for human rights and core European values. There is no place for divisive and secessionist rhetoric in Bosnia and Herzegovina's European journey. And neither is there room for hate speech, historical revisionism or the glorification of war criminals. We must maintain zero tolerance for such behaviour, which fundamentally contradicts the principles of reconciliation and coexistence.

The thirtieth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide this year is a stark reminder of the devastating consequences that can arise from hatred. Rather than allowing the past to fuel divisions, we urge all political leaders to prioritize constructive dialogue, advance the necessary reforms and place the interests of their citizens first and above their own particular interests.

Slovenia will continue to support and assist Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path towards European Union membership. By doing so, we are investing not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina's success but also in the security, prosperity and unity of the entire European continent. And to Bosnia and Herzegovina, I say that its commitment to the European Union is seen as a strategic investment in the peaceful and prosperous future of Europe.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I welcome the High Representative and thank him for his briefing. I would also like to welcome the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Chamber today. It is an honour to be back in the Security Council and to see some familiar colleagues. I am here today in my new capacity as the United Kingdom's Special Envoy for the Western Balkans. I am also here to show our support for the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for its institutions and for the High Representative, and my Foreign Secretary is today visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As other people have said, it is an important year for anniversaries: it is the eightieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the founding of the United Nations; the fiftieth anniversary of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which enjoins us to take heed of non-interference across borders; and above all, for these purposes, the thirtieth anniversary not only of Srebrenica, but also of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself.

But in fact, Bosnia has been on the agenda of the Council since the early 1990s, and, at times, it has been the most serious issue that the Council has had to deal with. Dayton is one of the successes of the Council. And because of that, the Council enshrined the Dayton Peace Agreement in resolution 1031 (1995), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. That represented hard work by Security Council members over many years. It is unusual, as the High Representative and other speakers said — it enshrined some very unusual civilian interventionist elements, but it stopped a war, and it is worth recalling that at the time, that war was the worst war that Europe had seen since the end of the Second World War.

It is not colonialism for the Council to take an interest; it is not colonialism for us to help Bosnia and Herzegovina along its path. As the High Representative said, the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina can evolve democratically. That itself is written down in Dayton and with the successive conferences on peace that we have had, held by the Peace Implementation Council, held by the Steering Board. The outcome of those conferences has been endorsed variously over the years by the Council.

It is all our fervent hope that, one day, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to graduate from the Council's attentions and take its place as a normal and full member of Europe. The Dayton Peace Agreement mandates one State, two entities and three constituent peoples. The High Representative is also mandated by Dayton as the final authority on the civilian implementation of the Peace Agreement. The powers that he is using have been backed by the Security Council. It is not a one-off; they have been successively backed by the Security Council. And I want to stress that. I also want to stress that the High Representative himself, under Dayton, is chosen by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. He is not chosen by the Security Council, although the Security Council's interest has been evoked from time to time, but not universally; I want to set that straight. It is open to people

who have left the Steering Board and who, therefore, have not had an opportunity to share in the selection of the High Representative, to return to the Steering Board.

The cause of Bosnia and Herzegovina remains critical to the issue of stability and security in Europe. The United Kingdom has great pleasure in cooperating with the European Union, the United States and others. This autumn, we will chair the Berlin process, which emphasizes regional cooperation among the Western Balkans countries themselves. And I want to take a moment to salute the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea), which is executing its Chapter VII mandate to maintain a secure and safe environment. I agree that it does not have executive authority, but to pretend that it does is a mischaracterization of its role. EUFOR-Althea is there to support the State institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and maintain safety and security for the country's citizens. And it is clear — and we heard today — that those citizens want better relations with the European Union; they want Euro-Atlantic integration. We heard, particularly from the representatives of Pakistan and Sierra Leone, about their very strong support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I think that all speakers in the Council want to uphold that.

But it bears repeating that there is one threat to that today, and it lies in the person of the President of the Republika Srpska entity, Milorad Dodik. His secessionist moves, his introduction of unconstitutional laws and the threats to adopt a new anti-Dayton constitution represent direct threats to that sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence and to the aspirations of the Bosnian people.

What Bosnia and Herzegovina needs is more pluralist politics. There is no threat posed to the Republika Srpska entity or to the Federation entity by EU integration, or by a Euro-Atlantic future. I repeat that again: it is not a threat to Republika Srpska's citizens; it is not a threat to the Federation. There are many models in Europe of national and subnational government. And I would point out that the High Representative would not need to use his powers if the President of Republika Srpska did not challenge Dayton on an almost daily basis. The High Representative acts against all who challenge the State institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it happens that at the moment, the biggest challenges are coming from Republika Srpska, but the High Representative's role is to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement and help the State institutions to prosper and to do their work.

In conclusion, I want to refer again to what other speakers have said. It is the responsibility of the Council — as it was in the 1990s, and as it was when the Dayton Peace Agreement was concluded — to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement, to support Bosnia and Herzegovina on its journey, a journey freely chosen by its citizens for European integration, and to help its citizens thrive and prosper.

Mr. Koudri (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council, and I once again pledge our full support during your presidency this month. We also congratulate the French presidency for its successful tenure during the previous month. I would also like to welcome the presence of Her Excellency Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the participation of the Permanent Representatives of Serbia, Croatia and the European Union. I also thank Mr. Christian Schmidt for his briefing.

We follow with concern the political developments that have taken place in recent months in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the unprecedented divergence between the main political actors in the country. It is regrettable that while we should celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina this year, we are instead witnessing increasing political deterioration in the country. This situation does not only weaken trust between the constituents of the country and delay

the reconciliation process, but it also undermines the progress achieved in building the country's political and economic structures. Moreover, the ongoing conflict and the escalation of tensions will only widen the divisions between the political actors and threaten the country's stability.

Accordingly, I would like to emphasize the following today.

First, it is important to adhere to the Dayton Peace Agreement and to abide strictly by its provisions as the primary consensus-based foundation for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We therefore reiterate our call to all political parties to respect the Agreement and its annexes and to seize the balance that it offers in order to secure a better future for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, political differences and tensions must not in any way undermine the democratic process or threaten the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina or its constitutional and institutional order. We therefore encourage everyone to uphold the virtue of constructive dialogue and use all available means to promote inclusiveness and convergence, rather than divergence and a political stalemate, and to choose consensus over disagreement.

In conclusion, we encourage all political actors to focus their efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina on development, to which all Bosnians, Croats and Serbs aspire, and to avoid any course of action that could divide or threaten the unity of the country. In that regard, Algeria reaffirms once again its full support for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law and in conformity with the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Ms. Lassen (Denmark): I congratulate you once again, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency, and I commend France for its successful presidency in April. I would like to thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Christian Schmidt, for his latest report (see S/2025/272), and participation today. I would also like to welcome Ms. Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the representatives of Croatia, Serbia and the European Union, to today's meeting.

As we heard several times today, the year 2025 marks 30 years since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the horrific war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dayton laid out the foundation for peace, stability and progress. This year's anniversary should be seized to reflect on past achievements and to look forward on how to accelerate progress.

Unfortunately, in recent months we have witnessed a significant rise of tensions stemming from rhetoric and actions by Republika Srpska entity authorities and the unfolding of a political and constitutional crisis. Denmark is deeply concerned about those developments.

All actors must ensure full compliance with, and implementation of, the Dayton Peace Agreement, and must respect the independence of the judiciary. We are deeply concerned about recent months' secessionist rhetoric and actions taken in the Republika Srpska, under the leadership of Mr. Dodik. Those actions run counter to the Dayton Agreement. We condemn such actions, as they pose a clear threat to the constitutional framework and integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They threaten the functioning of central State institutions, which is key for stability and progress. Such actions are not only provocative, but also dangerous, as they risk jeopardizing the stability in the broader region.

Denmark remains committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity as a single and united country, with its multi-ethnic character. It

should be clear that the Dayton Agreement does not give the right to entities to secede. Any such attempts are therefore completely unacceptable.

Upholding the Dayton Agreement also means safeguarding the institutions deriving from it. Those institutions and mechanisms have ensured stability and progress for the past three decades. Denmark fully supports the work and efforts of the High Representative and his Office, whose role and decisions must be respected in order to implement the civilian part of the Peace Agreement. As we heard, the High Representative was legitimately appointed by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in accordance with the established procedures. We look forward to the day when international supervision is no longer needed, but we are not there yet.

The security situation currently remains calm. We commend European Union (EU) Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina for its presence and vital role in upholding peace and ensuring a safe environment. We urge all actors to refrain from any provocative rhetoric or actions that could escalate tensions.

Focus should be on what unites and benefits the citizens of the country, such as the aspiration of joining the European Union — an aspiration shared by all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Denmark, too, is committed to this. We therefore encourage leaders to step up the pace of reforms and make use of the opportunity granted by the March 2024 decision to open EU accession negotiations once the conditions have been met. We regret recent actions that run counter to those efforts, including shrinking the space for civil society organizations, media and opposition politicians in the Republika Srpska.

Before concluding, I would like to pay tribute to the victims and survivors of the Srebrenica genocide, where approximately 8,000 men and boys were systematically murdered. The 30-year anniversary is coming up in only two months. We — the international community — have a shared responsibility to preserve the memory of those atrocities to ensure that we learn from them so that it never happens again. The 30-year anniversary should be used to promote reconciliation and reaffirm our commitment to truth and justice.

Denmark stands with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as they work to build a peaceful, stable and prosperous country.

Mr. Alfaro de Alba (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): We congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team, on assuming the presidency of the Council for the month of May. We are confident that your vast diplomatic experience will ensure the success of your mandate. We also commend France for its successful Council presidency last month. My delegation welcomes Her Excellency Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the delegations from the European Union — Serbia and Croatia. We welcome the introduction of the sixty-seventh report (see S/2025/272) by the High Representative for the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

First, it is important to recognize that, while obvious challenges remain, the significant progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding stabilization over the past 30 years, thanks to the political dialogue and the framework established by the Dayton Accords, cannot be ignored. Precisely because of that progress, we must urgently express our deep concern about the escalation of tensions in the country resulting from recent political events, as it could undermine the institutional and democratic stability of the country. Among the most alarming developments are the attempts at institutional fragmentation via the promotion of a separatist constitution, the conviction of the Republika Srpska's President for disobeying decisions of the High Representative and the adoption of laws that could restrict freedom of expression and limit the work of civil society organizations.

Meanwhile, the implementation of annex 7 to the Dayton Agreement also continues to face challenges. According to the 2022 report of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in May 2024, more than 91,000 people are still internally displaced. In turn, data from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees indicate that approximately 17,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina are still abroad. Furthermore, the case of a 70-year-old woman of Serbian origin who was assaulted in December 2024 after her return highlights the persistent security challenges for minorities who decide to return to their places of origin. Beyond those figures, Panama also expresses its concern about the lack of updated information on those people, which only limits the possible national responses.

We feel it necessary to place particular emphasis on the following. Panama categorically rejects all forms of denial of genocide and glorification of war criminals, as such actions violate our principles, the Charter of the United Nations, justice and even humanity itself. More specifically, we repudiate the statements made by the Mayor of Vlasenica, Republika Srpska, who, unfortunately, in March of this year, publicly celebrated people convicted of atrocity crimes by international tribunals. Those recent events have highlighted a dangerous resurgence of divisive ethnic and political narratives that threaten the significant progress made in the past few decades on peace and reconciliation.

Faced with that complex panorama, as the Security Council did by means of a press statement just over a month ago (SC/16033), Panama makes a firm call for constructive dialogue among all parties. Further fragmentation of the social fabric must be avoided. To that end, all parties must overcome their differences and prioritize peace and the collective well-being of the entire population, in strict compliance with the Dayton Accords and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We firmly believe that the rule of law, constitutional order, sovereignty and territorial integrity must be safeguarded as essential pillars for stability and sustained peace in the country.

Panama also reiterates its conviction that regional organizations must play a central role in promoting peace, stability and development within their respective regions. In that regard, Panama will continue to closely monitor Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress on its path to European integration. Regarding that process, while we welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's participation in the European Union Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, we underline the urgent need to finalize the reform agenda. In that context, we express our confidence that the differences between the various communities within Bosnia and Herzegovina can be overcome through constructive dialogue, supported by the European Union and in the framework of the Dayton Peace Accords.

While we understand the concerns that can arise regarding the broad powers of the High Representative and are aware of certain questions regarding the scope of his responsibility and the limitations of his powers, which merit attention, we echo the call made by the High Representative himself today for all political actors to strengthen cooperation, resume channels of dialogue and work constructively on the reforms that will facilitate progress towards lasting peace.

Mr. Hwang (Republic of Korea): At the outset, we would like to commend France for its successful steering of the presidency last month and to wish Greece success as it assumes the presidency this month.

I thank High Representative Schmidt for his informative briefing. The Republic of Korea continues to support his valuable efforts to ensure the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. My delegation also welcomes the participation of the Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict and laid the foundation for peace and coexistence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While progress has been made, the journey towards lasting peace remains incomplete. That is why the Security Council, in its press statement in March (SC/16033), expressed concern about recent developments and urged all political actors to engage in sincere and constructive dialogue. Against that backdrop, my delegation makes the following points.

First, the Republic of Korea firmly supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Commitment to its unity as a sovereign State is a core principle of the Dayton Agreement, as explicitly stated in article I. The Agreement itself is a product of international efforts to end the country's past tragedies. All parties must return to the fundamental principles and spirit of the Dayton Agreement and refrain from unilateral actions or rhetoric that undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina's statehood, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Secondly, we urge all political leaders to respect judicial authority and the legitimacy of State institutions. Recent instances of disregarding court decisions or obstructing legal mandates risk institutional paralysis and erode public trust. That erosion could, in turn, weaken State legitimacy and threaten regional stability. That is why the Council has consistently emphasized the importance of upholding the Constitution and institutions established by the Dayton Agreement. Political dissent should remain within institutional boundaries.

Thirdly, the Republic of Korea fully supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's European Union (EU) integration process, including the accession negotiations launched in March 2024. We call on all constituent communities to cooperate constructively and to refrain from political boycotts or legislative obstruction that hinder reform. The EU path — chosen by the people — should not be compromised by short-term partisan interests.

Fourthly, we reaffirm our strong support for the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) — a pillar of regional stability. Amid rising tensions between State- and entity-level institutions, EUFOR-Althea plays a vital role in maintaining a safe and secure environment under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

As we mark three decades since the Dayton Agreement, let us recall that peace is built not only on the absence of conflict but on mutual respect, the rule of law and democratic accountability. While the region's painful past remains vivid, it must not define its future.

Mr. Kelley (United States of America): I thank High Representative Schmidt, for briefing us today and for your most recent report (see S/2025/272). I also welcome the participation of the Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will be brief.

The United States remains committed to stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the Dayton Peace Agreement. We have watched recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina with concern. We urge political leaders to de-escalate and avoid actions that could increase instability or violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to engage in constructive dialogue that leads to greater stability.

The United States firmly opposes secession and destabilizing rhetoric. And, as has been echoed around this table, we support Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, territorial integrity and multi-ethnic character.

Rooted in the Dayton Peace Accords, we welcome the contribution made by the European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina to a safe and secure environment in the country. We recognize the importance of the Office of the

High Representative in supporting the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The United States supports Bosnia and Herzegovina as it works to secure the future of all its citizens. Every member of the Council should support Bosnia and Herzegovina in achieving the same.

Ms. Persaud (Guyana): I thank High Representative Christian Schmidt for his report on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/2025/272) and welcome the participation of Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the representatives of Serbia, Croatia and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union (EU) in today's meeting.

Guyana is concerned about the troubling developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the reporting period. Rising tensions in the political landscape and a lack of progress in the implementation of the 5+2 agenda and the European Union accession process have created an extraordinary crisis that demands urgent attention.

As the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina prepare to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement later this year, we call on the leaders to recommit to the path of peace and to work together to rebuild trust and understanding. The Dayton Peace Agreement continues to provide a solid framework for reconciliation, peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we encourage enhanced support for the ongoing efforts to achieve lasting peace and stability.

With that in mind, Guyana would like to underscore the following messages.

First, EU accession is an important step for Bosnia and Herzegovina in transforming its socioeconomic landscape. We have taken note of the stalled momentum since the European Union's decision in March 2024 to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and encourage continued collaboration towards achieving that goal.

Secondly, Mr. Schmidt's report highlights the low participation of women at different levels of Government, as well as their low representation in the labour market. Guyana stresses that women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Through women's increased participation, decisions are more likely to be inclusive, comprehensive and sustainable. We therefore encourage the relevant authorities to take effective action to align legislation across the country with gender equality and to ensure more balanced political participation and power-sharing between men and women at all levels of political and public life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thirdly, the challenges faced by young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be addressed, including the limited opportunities for advancement and other challenges that are driving youth dissatisfaction and high emigration rates. To unlock the full potential of the youth population, young people must be empowered to participate in the decision-making processes and contribute meaningfully to the society. We welcome the ongoing efforts to implement the youth, peace and security programmes with the support of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Finally, as a multi-ethnic society, Guyana embraces inclusivity and the full participation of all ethnic groups in the national development process. We underscore the importance of upholding the provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and urge all relevant stakeholders to act in accordance with the provisions contained therein. We reiterate our call to political leaders to prioritize the national interests of all citizens through constructive dialogue in order to address divergent views.

In conclusion, Guyana urges actors at all levels to continue their efforts to ensure that the peace and security of Bosnia and Herzegovina is achieved, and its sovereignty fully respected.

Mr. Mohamed Yusuf (Somalia): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on the presidency of the Council this month. I wish you every success. We also commend the French delegation for the manner in which they steered the Council's work last month. We warmly welcome the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular that of Her Excellency Ms. Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also acknowledge the presence of the representatives of Serbia, Croatia and the European Union. My delegation also thanks the High Representative for his briefing.

The Security Council's engagement on Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects a shared commitment to peace and stability in the Western Balkans. We recognize the progress achieved since the Dayton Peace Agreement, while remaining mindful that lasting peace requires continued effort from all stakeholders.

Recent developments present both opportunities and challenges. Bosnia and Herzegovina's advancement towards European integration demonstrates the potential for positive transformation and offers a foundation for continued cooperation. Experience has shown that inclusive dialogue and consensus-building are vital for sustainable peace. We encourage all parties to use existing constitutional frameworks to address challenges through constructive engagement.

The extension of the EU-led stabilization force's mandate signals ongoing international support. This presence continues to play a positive role in maintaining an environment conducive to dialogue and development.

In that context, my delegation would like to highlight three priorities.

First, we must support the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which remains the basis for stability. Secondly, we must encourage an inclusive dialogue that respects the interests of all communities. Thirdly, we must maintain constructive support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's development path, including its European aspirations.

The international community's role remains one of support and facilitation. Sustainable solutions must be reached through consensus among all stakeholders, with full respect for Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty.

In conclusion, my delegations reaffirm its commitment to full respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and encourages working with all parties towards a peaceful, inclusive and multi-ethnic society. We are confident that through continued engagement, positive outcomes can be achieved for all communities and the wider region.

Mr. Dharmadhikari (France) (*spoke in French*): Let me begin, Mr. President, by wishing you every success in your presidency of the Security Council. I would like to thank High Representative Christian Schmidt for his briefing to the Council. I also want to welcome the presence in the Security Council of Ms. Željka Cvijanović, Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While we will celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Dayton-Paris Accords this year, Bosnia and Herzegovina is going through one of the most serious political and institutional crises in its history. Its unity is threatened. Its territorial integrity is under attack. The constitutional order established in 1995 is the subject of an unprecedented and unilateral challenge by the decisions adopted by the entity of Republika Srpska, leading to the verdict pronounced by the country's judiciary against the President of the entity on 26 February. It is irresponsible for the leaders

and some elected officials of Republika Srpska to thereby go back on the gains of peace by instrumentalizing the judicial situation of an individual, regardless of his or her functions. Everyone must respect the Constitutional Court's decision to suspend the laws promulgated in the Republika Srpska on 5 March.

France is concerned about the new draft constitution of the entity of Republika Srpska, which constitutes a further attack on the public law, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and another challenge to the peace agreements. France sees as unacceptable the threats made by the leaders of the Republika Srpska against State officials aimed at forcing them to resign. Faced with that situation, France reiterates its support for the unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the constitutional order and institutions of the State in the context of the Dayton-Paris Accords. Bosnia and Herzegovina's European path calls for respect for the rule of law, court decisions, civil liberties and a favourable environment for civil society. France calls on the leaders of the Republika Srpska to refrain from embarking on the path of separation, which, by compromising the country's European perspective, would be to the detriment of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Council's decision to open negotiations for Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the European Union was a message of encouragement and confidence. It is regrettable that some Bosnian political actors have not taken action in that regard.

Peace is built in hearts and minds. There can be no lasting peace or common European future without a shared horizon in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans. This summer will mark thirty years since the genocide in Srebrenica, which will remain a deep wound in the heart of Europe. I would like to spare a thought here for the victims of the genocide. The commemoration must be an opportunity to facilitate joint work for an authentic memory reconciliation. That will entail respecting and honouring all civilian victims of the conflicts of the twentieth century, regardless of their ethnicity or religious beliefs. But let us be clear: there is no place for the denial of genocide, historical revisionism or the glorification of convicted war criminals in a country and a region that have expressed their wish to join the European Union.

The Dayton-Paris Accords brought peace after the deadliest conflict that Europe had witnessed since the Second World War. Thirty years later, it is the Council's responsibility to preserve peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the country's security situation is stable, history has taught us not to underestimate the threats posed by the weakening of institutions and the stigmatization of an ethnic or religious group as a whole. An international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains necessary. Since 2004, the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has played a key role in maintaining stability and a secure environment in the country. Regarding the civilian aspect of the Dayton-Paris Accords, France reiterates its support for the High Representative's mandate. As a witness to the Dayton-Paris Accords, we will continue to support the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call on all witnesses to the Accords to do the same.

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

I thank High Representative Christian Schmidt for his briefing. I also welcome the presence of the Chairperson of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the observer of the European Union (EU) and the representatives of Croatia and Serbia.

Greece remains seriously concerned about the recent escalation of political tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at both State and entity levels. We regret the recent legislative acts and initiatives in the Republika Srpska, which risk

undermining the constitutional order and political unity of the country. Greece calls on all political actors and stakeholders to put an immediate end to any disruptive actions that endanger the stability, constitutional order or unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We stress that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in full respect of the Dayton Peace Agreement cannot, and will not, be put into question. Both entities must demonstrate strong political will and commit to a sincere, open and constructive dialogue, in good faith and trust, in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution, within the Dayton institutional framework, so as to overcome the current political crisis. In that process, the country's unity and political stability — with full respect for Bosnia and Herzegovina's independence and international personality as a single, united and sovereign country — must remain undisputed and beyond doubt. Greece will continue to support any mediation efforts towards that end. Furthermore, we urge the parties to abstain from divisive and secessionist rhetoric, which undermines the country's long-standing achievements towards peace, reconciliation and unity and the European perspective of the country.

This year, we commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement — a historic Agreement that brought an end to a destructive and violent war in the heart of Europe. Even though there are voices challenging its relevance today, we cannot cast any doubt on the utmost significance of the Agreement, which succeeded in its ultimate aim: to end a tragic European conflict and lay the groundwork for enduring peace and stability in the Western Balkans. Greece reiterates its steadfast support for the Dayton Peace Agreement and its institutions as a cornerstone for peace, stability and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina — a country in our immediate neighbourhood. We also welcome the continuous involvement of the international community towards stability and prosperity in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the broader region. Strengthening the institutional structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a spirit of mutual trust and on the basis of sincere dialogue should be pursued by all political actors and stakeholders in the region.

Furthermore, Greece is strongly committed to the maintenance of stability and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our continuous engagement in and substantial support for the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remain among our main priorities. We reiterate our firm position that all parties should engage fully and constructively towards realizing the European aspirations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Greece welcomes the European Council's decision of March 2024 to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it reflects the EU's strong commitment to the European perspective of the country and all its citizens, and looks forward to the adoption of the country's negotiating framework once conditions are met. Both entities must join their efforts to accomplish substantial reforms, which are required for the European integration of the country, with full respect for the Dayton Peace Agreement.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the Thessaloniki Declaration of the EU-Western Balkans Summit of 2003 laid the key principles of the European integration process, based on a shared European vision of fundamental values. Among them are dialogue and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Both remain of the utmost importance for the safeguarding of peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to Ms. Cvijanović.

Ms. Cvijanović: I thank you, Mr. President, for the opportunity to address the Security Council at this decisive moment for Bosnia and Herzegovina and indeed for the credibility of the international system on which we all rely.

Although I currently chair the tripartite Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I also speak to the Council today in my constitutional capacity as the Serb member of that Presidency — elected by the citizens of Republika Srpska, one of two constituent entities that comprise Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one that accounts for 49 per cent of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Dayton Agreement was not a perfect solution, but it was an act of courageous diplomacy that balanced three peoples and two entities in one State. It remains a legally binding treaty, lodged in the annals of the Council, whose annex 4 is our Constitution and whose annex 10 defines the mandate of the High Representative. It created a decentralized, consensus-based system precisely so that no single actor — domestic or foreign — could dominate the others. Yet today that balance is being hollowed out by unaccountable foreign intervention, either through the actions of various High Representatives or foreign judges in the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Allow me to begin where Dayton begins: with the rule of law. Annex 10 is clear when it requires that the High Representative be approved by the Security Council. That did not happen in Mr. Schmidt's case. He was selected by the self-appointed Peace Implementation Council — an informal assemblage with no basis in the Charter of the United Nations, no treaty or legal authority and no power to override this organ. And he has acted based on the so-called Bonn powers, which are not codified in any legally binding international instrument.

Some claim that because the Peace Implementation Council informed the Council of its selection, confirmation became unnecessary. But if the Council's vote were unnecessary, annex 10 would never have required it. Annex 10 is also clear about the mandate of the High Representative. The Dayton Agreement did not authorize the High Representative to legislate, to suspend constitutions, to criminalize elected officials and political parties or to rule by decree. Yet, that is precisely what Mr. Christian Schmidt and some of his predecessors have done many times in the course of the past 30 years.

There lies the heart of a continual crisis in Bosnia, the culmination of which we are witnessing today. Everything that flows from that irregularity — the lack of Security Council confirmation and unlawful impositions beyond the mandate set forth in annex 10 — is infected with the same defect. No legal system — domestic or international — can survive if the interpreters of the rules exempt themselves from the rules.

Let me briefly mention only some of numerous edicts Mr. Schmidt unlawfully issued since arriving in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

First, he unilaterally suspended the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to impose a Government he preferred, ignoring the election results. That has nothing to do with Republika Srpska or Milorad Dodik, who was mentioned in that regard. Secondly, he altered the electoral law, thus bypassing democratic parliamentary procedures. That too has nothing to do with, and was not provoked by, Republika Srpska. Thirdly, he extended the mandate of the Central Election Commission without legislative approval. Fourthly, he amended the criminal code to criminalize non-compliance with his own decrees — a move, primarily, to eliminate from political life a democratically elected president of Republika Srpska for fulfilling his constitutional duties to sign laws passed by the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, but also to intimidate any dissenting officials who would dare challenge his illegitimate rule. Fifthly, he cut public funding to the democratically elected political parties in Republika Srpska, cancelling the political will and voice of the vast majority of its voters.

This is neither the Dayton Agreement or a democracy — and certainly not the rule of law. It is dictatorship, Government by decree, unchecked by courts, devoid of appeal. What started as mere overreach has now solidified into a system of repression. Each action was justified in the name of functionality. Yet the result is not a more cohesive Bosnia; it is a deeply polarized country that can hardly survive this form and extent of foreign intervention.

When Republika Srpska protests such violations, we are unjustly labelled as separatists. However, demanding adherence to international treaties is not separatism. Contrary to some narratives, Republika Srpska is not undermining the Dayton Agreement — it is upholding it. Our demands do not seek to dismantle Bosnia and Herzegovina, but rather to restore the legality and balance originally enshrined in the Dayton framework. For that reason, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska has enacted legislation to defend its rights within Dayton. Those measures are not provocations; they are lawful responses to persistent violations of international law.

The ongoing crisis is neither of Republika Srpska's making nor in its interest. It has been triggered by Mr. Schmidt and his most expansive and authoritarian use of power, burdening the country with a series of unlawful impositions. Therefore, condemning Republika Srpska's actions without first addressing Mr. Schmidt's unlawful interventions is not ONLY misleading, but dangerously one-sided.

Allow me to state our position plainly: We remain fully committed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as defined by Dayton.

As for the mandate of the High Representative, we seek to place it back on its legal foundation, which is annex 10, and to prepare for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

We reject unilateral decrees that rewrite the treaty, criminalize debate, persecute political opponents through a weaponized judicial system, discriminate political parties or suspend the will of voters. A legal reset in Bosnia is a logical next step if we want to prevent escalation or successive future crises.

I therefore respectfully call on the Council to take some immediate steps. First, it must schedule a formal vote on Mr. Schmidt's confirmation. If he cannot pass the vote, find a candidate who can and who will be appointed in accordance with annex 10 of the Dayton Agreement. Secondly, it must establish an independent legal review, under Security Council auspices, of the conformity of the so-called Bonn powers with annex 10 and the United Nations Charter. Thirdly, it must encourage all Bosnia and Herzegovina stakeholders to engage in dialogue aimed at preventing further crises and revitalizing functional governance. We are prepared to participate constructively, transparently and in good faith.

The Dayton Agreement ended a devastating war and laid the foundation for our constitutional system. It deserves respect, not manipulation and breach of its procedures. Let us together ensure that Bosnia's future is written not by decree, but by law.

I know that some here have objections about my appearance here. Therefore, on a separate but critical note, I want to clarify one issue. As a member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I have been forced to engage directly with Council missions due to obstruction by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministry for Foreign Affairs, which selectively restricts my diplomatic correspondence, while granting unrestricted access to my Bosniak colleague. That bias even extends to Bosnia's Permanent Mission to the United Nations.

Such actions demonstrate the reality of the State we are being asked to accept — a system where power is centralized, constitutional rights are disregarded and even the fundamental ability to communicate is manipulated for political ends.

I remain at the Council's disposal for any questions.

The President: I thank Ms. Cvijanović for her statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lambrinidis.

Mr. Lambrinidis: Let me also extend my warm congratulations to you, Mr. President, on Greece's assumption of the Security Council presidency this month.

Allow me to begin with the most recent developments.

The European Union (EU) remains seriously concerned about legislation and initiatives in the Republika Srpska entity that run counter to the EU path of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including secessionist rhetoric and questioning the constitutional order of the country. The sovereignty, territorial integrity, constitutional order, including Constitutional Court decisions and the international personality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, need to be respected. Any action against those principles will lead to serious consequences.

The European Union Military Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to play a key role in supporting the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining a safe and secure environment for all citizens.

The European Union reiterates the importance of continued cooperation among international actors and expresses again its support to the mission of the High Representative and his Office towards fulfilling the 5+2 agenda.

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective as a single, united and sovereign country.

[run/on] The EU urges all political actors to renew the country's focus on progressing on the EU path, taking resolute actions to implement the necessary reforms. The EU urges all political actors to renew the country's focus on progressing on the EU path, taking resolute actions to implement the necessary reforms.

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

Mr. Ćurić Hrvatičić (Croatia): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate France on its successful presidency in April and to wish Greece all the best for the month ahead.

Regarding the sixty-seventh report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/2025/272), we fully share the concern about the current political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Republic of Croatia calls on all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to respect the constitutional order of the country and its sovereignty and to uphold the principles of equality and non-discrimination of the constituent peoples and others. We urge all political actors to refrain from divisive rhetoric and actions and to engage in constructive dialogue and cooperation in order to ensure the full functionality of the country's institutions. The current situation calls for strong and responsible diplomatic engagement to prevent escalation and to help navigate through the political crisis. Nevertheless, it is ultimately the responsibility of domestic political actors and the country's own institutions to take gradual and full ownership of the stability and functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is not only essential, but it is also a key precondition for the country's future as a member of the European Union (EU).

We appreciate the work done by High Representative Schmidt and his accomplishments in executing his mandate. However, referring specifically to his sixty-seventh report, we would like to add that it would have benefited from a more balanced treatment of the conduct of all political actors, especially those actions aimed against the political status of Croats, as the most underrepresented and vulnerable of the three constituent peoples. In that context, we must emphasize that the Dayton

Peace Agreement and the Constitution as its integral part remain the cornerstones of the constitutional order and political stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet the functionality of that order depends on the fairness and credibility of its democratic mechanisms. That is why electoral reform must be treated as the highest political priority. Only through meaningful reform that eliminates inequality among the constituent peoples and addresses systemic discrimination in the electoral process can Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve lasting political stability. Electoral reform is not a peripheral issue — it is a cornerstone of a just and stable democracy and of any lasting national compromise.

Finally, we commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for the significant progress it has made on its path towards EU membership. The European Union offers the best framework for peace, development and prosperity. We fully support Bosnia and Herzegovina on that path and hope to see European integration return to the forefront of the political agenda, as it benefits all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its three constituent peoples.

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

Mr. Ilić (Serbia): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and to wish you every success in discharging your duties.

Serbia has a strategic interest in the preservation of the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Any instability — let alone conflict — would have a devastating spillover effect, halting economic development, derailing much-needed reforms and creating yet another wave of chaos. It is precisely for those reasons that Serbia is invested in the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Agreement put an end to the war and has ensured peace and security for thirty years. That has been done through the constitutional structure set out in annex 10 of the Agreement. The preservation of stability therefore requires full respect for the constitutional mechanisms that underpin it.

The reality of Bosnia and Herzegovina is that it is a multi-ethnic society. The country remembers days of both joy and tragedy because of that. In order to preserve that diversity as a strength, it must be respected as such. If we seek a functional Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must respect what has already been achieved and tested — a structure based on two entities and three constituent peoples. Everyone must feel secure within the common State. No one in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be left constitutionally vulnerable. A State in which that is not the case cannot function properly. Respect for constitutional rights and competencies is essential.

In the complex environment of Bosnia and Herzegovina, neither ethnic outvoting nor the external imposition of decisions can provide sustainable solutions. Such actions can only serve to violate the constitutionally defined rights of the constituent peoples and the competencies of the two entities, which is neither legally acceptable nor politically helpful. Therefore, the problems with the functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been caused by the Dayton Agreement but rather by latent or overt attempts to undermine it. It is our understanding — as also stated in the report by its Government — that Republika Srpska does not advocate secession but rather the preservation of the Dayton Agreement and the protection of its constitutionally granted competencies. As a signatory of the Dayton Agreement, Serbia finds such a claim valid and justified.

On the other hand, one cannot escape the impression that the verdict of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina against the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, and the issuing of arrest warrants for Mr. Dodik, Mr. Višković and Mr. Stevandić on charges of violating the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina are politically motivated. INTERPOL's decision not to act on the

request made by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to issue an international arrest warrant for Mr. Dodik underscores the argument that the proceedings against the President of Republika Srpska are politically motivated and not grounded in the principles of impartial criminal justice. Serbia also considers that the imposition of the High Representative's decisions is not in line with the mandate stipulated in annex 10 of the Dayton Agreement or with universally democratic principles. Equally inconsistent with those principles is the attempt to eliminate democratically elected representatives of Republika Srpska from the political life of Bosnia and Herzegovina by misusing the judicial authorities for political purposes.

I am obliged to note that serious accusations against Serbia continue to be voiced by Bosniak political representatives. Those allegations, which are part of both internal narratives and the diplomatic rhetoric coming from political Sarajevo, suggest covert intentions to dismantle Bosnia and Herzegovina. We categorically reject such claims. Once again, we shall refrain from a counter-narrative that political Sarajevo seeks to dismantle Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State of two entities and three constituent peoples. Whether those attempts come from Bosniak ethnic parties or so-called civic parties drawing support primarily from the same ethnic group, the underlying goal remains the same. However, we believe that — even assuming good intentions — efforts to remove internal checks and balances must be judged not by intent but by the destabilizing consequences they may produce.

In conclusion, let me stress that, in the current tense climate in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the overriding priority — both internally and externally — must be the preservation of peace and stability above all else. Neither side should be exempt from its responsibilities in that regard.

I assure you, Mr. President, that Serbia will continue to contribute to regional peace and stability to the best of its abilities.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.