

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 17 December 2021 from the Secretary-General
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

In accordance with Security Council resolutions [1575 \(2004\)](#), [1639 \(2005\)](#), [1722 \(2006\)](#), [1785 \(2007\)](#), [1845 \(2008\)](#), [1895 \(2009\)](#), [1948 \(2010\)](#), [2019 \(2011\)](#), [2074 \(2012\)](#), [2123 \(2013\)](#), [2183 \(2014\)](#), [2247 \(2015\)](#), [2315 \(2016\)](#), [2384 \(2017\)](#), [2443 \(2018\)](#), [2496 \(2019\)](#), and [2549 \(2020\)](#), I have the honour to transmit herewith the letter dated 9 December 2021 from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles, transmitting the fifty-third report on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see annex). The report covers the period from 1 March to 31 August 2021.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) António **Guterres**



Annex

[Original: English]

In accordance with Security Council resolution [1575 \(2004\)](#) and subsequent resolutions in which the Council requested that Member States acting through or in cooperation with the European Union report to the Council on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, please find enclosed the fifty-third such report (see enclosure).

(Signed) Josep **Borrell Fontelles**

Enclosure

Report of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the activities of the European Union Military Operation (EUFOR-Althea) in Bosnia and Herzegovina covers the period from 1 March to 31 August 2021.
2. In its resolutions [1575 \(2004\)](#), [1639 \(2005\)](#), [1722 \(2006\)](#), [1785 \(2007\)](#), [1845 \(2008\)](#), [1895 \(2009\)](#), [1948 \(2010\)](#), [2019 \(2011\)](#), [2074 \(2012\)](#), [2123 \(2013\)](#), [2183 \(2014\)](#), [2247 \(2015\)](#), [2315 \(2016\)](#), [2384 \(2017\)](#), [2443 \(2018\)](#), [2496 \(2019\)](#) and [2549 \(2020\)](#), the Security Council requested that Member States acting through or in cooperation with the European Union report to the Council on the activities of EUFOR at six-monthly intervals. The present report is the fifty-third such report.

II. Security situation

3. During the reporting period, there was no major change from the previous report in the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Political tensions, which are still the main driver of instability in the country, persist, with inflammatory and divisive rhetoric. The country continues to face a serious political crisis, with increasing tensions and polarization. There have been renewed attempts at scaling back reforms and questioning the functioning and existence of State-level institutions.
4. The lack of effective coordination and cooperation between law enforcement agencies and their vulnerability to political manoeuvring remain key issues of concern.
5. Regarding irregular migration, the country's reception capacity has been strengthened and coordination among the main stakeholders and engagement of State-level authorities have improved.
6. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continued to overshadow all processes in the country.

III. Strategic review of 2021

7. In June 2021, the third strategic review was presented to the European Union member States. Its findings and recommendations were well received. Member States subscribed to the general assessment that the operation's presence continued to play a key role for stability and security in the country and that the strength of the operation was to be maintained. The strategic review also suggested a number of recommendations, inter alia that: (a) the focus of the operation be kept on its core task of supporting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain a safe and secure environment; (b) the reserve forces, on which the operation relies for the implementation of its core task, be maintained and fully filled at all times; (c) the operation continue to coordinate the disposal of ammunition, weapons and explosives in surplus in view of the establishment of a sustainable life-cycle management; and (d) the operation continue to monitor – and, if necessary, provide advice on – the Bosnia and Herzegovina-owned humanitarian demining. It was also recommended that the operation maintain a solid liaison with the law enforcement agencies.

IV. Activities of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

8. **COVID-19.** During the reporting period, the pandemic continued to pose a serious challenge to the operation. However, the continued efficient emergency and protective measures enabled the force to remain fully operational.

9. **The core task.** During the reporting period, EUFOR continued the implementation of its core task, namely, supporting the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining a safe and secure environment.

10. **Support for and cooperation with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.** While overall activities resumed during the reporting period, the COVID-19 pandemic continued to compound the already stagnant decision-making by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in the area of humanitarian demining and the disposal of ammunition, weapons and explosives in surplus.

11. With regard to the latter, the marking and registration of small arms and light weapons were finalized, but there are considerable delays regarding their disposal. Overall, ammunition, weapon and explosive disposal targets will need to be reviewed because of the delays.

12. With regard to humanitarian demining, progress achieved towards the implementation of the national mine action strategy was very limited. The demining battalion of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina is logistically still in a critical situation. At the European Union level, a number of strands continued to be explored to solve that challenge, but a final decision on support measures has not yet been taken.

13. EUFOR continued to monitor and inspect weapons and ammunition storage sites of the Armed Forces, defence industry factories and the export and import of weapons, ammunition and military equipment.

14. EUFOR also continued its collective training with the Armed Forces in order to enhance their operational capability. The planning and preparation for the operation rehearsal level-2 exercise scheduled to take place from 20 September to 3 October 2021 were concluded.

V. Outlook

15. Operation EUFOR-Althea will continue to adapt and evolve, having in mind that stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not entrenched and that the security situation could be affected by several internal and external factors of concern. In this context, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic still needs to be considered. EUFOR will continue to implement the recommendations of the strategic review of 2021. The tasks of EUFOR will remain under regular review by the Council of the European Union.