



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8658th meeting

Tuesday, 5 November 2019, 10 a.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Ms. Pierce	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Dominican Republic	Mr. Singer Weisinger
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Germany	Mr. Heusgen
	Indonesia	Mr. Djani
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	South Africa	Mr. Van Shalkwyk
	United States of America	Mrs. Craft

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 25 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/843)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 25 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/843)

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.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ms. Selma Korjenić, Head of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Programme for TRIAL International.

Ms. Korjenić is joining today's meeting via video-conference from Sarajevo.

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

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2019/859, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Germany.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/843, which contains the text of a letter dated 25 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the fifty-sixth report of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2496 (2019).

I now give the floor to Mr. Inzko.

Mr. Inzko: It is my honour to address this body today. In an ever-changing and frequently turbulent global environment and with so many important agenda items facing the Security Council, it is of utmost importance that Bosnia and Herzegovina not be forgotten. I sincerely thank the Council for its continued attention and interest.

In May, I reported to the Council on the many months of efforts to build a political coalition and form the Government at the State and Federation levels following the October 2018 general elections (see S/PV.8522). At that time, despite clear differences between the majority political parties, I would not have believed that I would be standing before the Council again today, six months later, to report that the process had failed. While the parties in the Republika Srpska formed their authorities soon after the elections and the Government of Republika Srpska is functioning properly, the State remains without a newly appointed Council of Ministers, and the Federation remains without a newly appointed Government.

Furthermore, the Council of Ministers from the previous mandate continues to function, but it remains hamstrung by the politically calculated and unnecessary blockage of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly, which means that no new legislation can be adopted, including the State budget. The State is therefore forced to operate on quarterly temporary financing, which severely limits the scope of its activities and its ability to effectively deal with such emerging issues as the migrant crisis. In this regard, I would also recall Republika Srpska's long-standing policy — since 2012 — of starving out State-level institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina by putting an unreasonable cap on the State-level budget, while at the same time increasing its own budget. I would also like to draw the Council's attention to

the clear lack of substantive fiscal coordination in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the related blockade of the fiscal-coordination body known as the Bosnia and Herzegovina Fiscal Council.

In May, the European Commission delivered its opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application to become a State member of the European Union (EU). The Commission set out 14 key areas in which Bosnia and Herzegovina must improve as part of the process that will open talks on accession. As the goal of EU membership is one of the very few areas where there seems to be consensus across the political spectrum, this should have been a milestone on Bosnia and Herzegovina's European path, with political leaders rallying to meet the challenge. However, the failure to establish authorities and the continued blockage of the State parliament hinder any possibility for Bosnia and Herzegovina to enact the reforms needed to make improvements in the key areas set out in the opinion.

Also in the EU-related context, I would like to warmly welcome the newly appointed European Union Special Representative, Johann Sattler, and wish him the best of luck.

As Council members will also recall following my previous briefing to the Security Council, numerous members rightfully called on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the 5+2 agenda consisting of the five objectives and two conditions to be fulfilled prior to the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the end of my mandate. However, the lack of authorities and a functional State parliament means that not only has there been no progress towards implementation of the 5+2 agenda, but the same forces working to block the parliament have also actively engaged in holding back previous progress and key reforms in this regard. We are moving away from the implementation of the 5+2 agenda, not towards it.

Moreover, the Republika Srpska authorities have announced a session of the National Assembly later this month, in which they will discuss the decisions of the High Representative. Senior Republika Srpska officials have previously questioned the authority of the High Representative and the validity of decisions that established or helped to establish State-level institutions and have suggested that Republika Srpska might withdraw from those institutions regardless of their ratification by State and entity parliaments. Trouble even from a single institution would have grave

effects on the State's sovereignty. I will monitor these developments and report to the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and, if necessary, to the Security Council.

Also worrying is the fact that these destructive tactics occur against a backdrop of continuing divisive and destabilizing rhetoric from many of the same political leaders who claim to be committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's European path. Some political leaders from Republika Srpska continue to make statements expressing separatist tendencies or predicting the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while some Croat representatives seek a territorial rearrangement of the country. At the same time, the biggest Bosniak party adopted, as it had in 2015, a party platform advocating a Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina if agreed in Parliament, which was also not helpful under the circumstances.

In this political environment, we must also be concerned about the potential militarization of police forces in Republika Srpska. It sends an alarming signal to the public. The international community needs to closely monitor this issue of separatist rhetoric and actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We do not need a police arms race; rather, we need fewer police, not more. But what is most reprehensible is revisionism or outright denial when it comes to the issue of genocide, which, in the case of Srebrenica, is a legal fact, as confirmed in judgments of both international and domestic judicial bodies, including the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which was established by this very body in 1993 (resolution 827 (1993)).

I want to take this opportunity to say once again that, as the ICTY concluded, genocide was perpetrated in Srebrenica in 1995, and nothing and no one can change this fact. I would also like to thank all those individuals and organizations that keep the truth about Srebrenica alive and continue to search for justice, particularly the Mothers of Srebrenica. The mothers deserve our deep appreciation and respect.

To honour the victims of genocide, the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina must introduce legislation that addresses genocide denial and the glorification and commemoration of war criminals. That will be a focus of mine in the coming period as we approach 2020, which will mark the passing of 25 years since the July 1995 Srebrenica genocide.

December 22 will mark the tenth anniversary of the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case. Dervo Sejdić, a Roma, and Jakob Finci, a Jew, both citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, contested the provisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution that reserved posts in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency and the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Peoples exclusively for Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats, claiming that these provisions discriminated against them because it made them ineligible to stand for election for either body. The contested provisions meant that if a potential candidate belonged to any of the 16 minorities — there are 16 minorities in the country — or was the product of a mixed marriage, or was born in the wrong entity, that person could not stand for election for the State Presidency or the House of Peoples, just like the Serbs in Sarajevo, who cannot run for the State Presidency there. In the same vein, Bosniaks from Srebrenica cannot run for the State Presidency because they were born on the wrong side of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. And it is not just a question of 16 minorities, for it is approximately 10 per cent of the population that is affected. Regretfully, nothing is being done to alleviate the situation.

Moreover, recent proposals for electoral reforms, particularly on the part of Croat political parties, seek to attain so-called legitimate representation, through which ethnic representatives in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency and the State and Federation Houses of Peoples could be elected only through constituencies of the same ethnicity. These proposals move even further away from implementing the judgment in the *Sejdić and Finci* case, which basically holds that every citizen — everybody who has a Bosnia and Herzegovina passport — can run for the State Presidency, which is, of course, logical, is it not? But that is not the case in Bosnia: candidates have to be Bosniak, Serb or Croat. If a candidate is not Bosniak, Serb or Croat, he or she cannot run for the State Presidency. As a result, people filed a complaint at the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg nearly 10 years ago, and they obtained a judgment in their favour, but nothing has changed.

By way of illustration, the Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, my respected friend and colleague, Mr. Sven Alkalaj, who belongs to a minority group, cannot run either for the State Presidency or for the House of Peoples. That is a real scandal. There is no

equality for him, or for others. But the other scandal is that we have a 10-year-old judgment from the European Court of Human Rights that remains unimplemented. Parties need to do something to celebrate this anniversary, as it were.

Similarly, 26 November will mark the ninth anniversary of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court's 2010 ruling that certain provisions in the Bosnia and Herzegovina election law pertaining to the city of Mostar were not in harmony with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution. Unfortunately, as a result of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament's failure to adopt necessary changes to the law, the ruling also remains unimplemented — and has been for nine years now — and Mostar has not held local elections since 2008. Can any of us imagine a city in our own countries not holding an election since 2008? That of course remains a black eye on Bosnia and Herzegovina's democratic record: yet another unimplemented Constitutional Court decision.

Most recently, in another case the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the failure of the authorities to act prevented a citizen from voting in or standing for local elections, which amounts to discrimination on the basis of her place of residence. Moreover, the Court found that the authorities' failure has created a legal void that has, since 2012, led to Mostar being governed by a mayor who does not have the requisite democratic legitimacy, obviously because there have been no elections there since 2008.

I call on the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly and political leaders to implement that judgment and all other judgments as a matter of priority, and to do so independently of other issues, by finding a political agreement to amend the Bosnia and Herzegovina election law. Bosnia and Herzegovina must be a State that is based on the rule of law, as stated and prioritized in the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The rule of law and the fight against corruption should be priorities for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Public opinion polls show that three quarters of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are extremely or mostly dissatisfied with the rule-of-law situation and the work of judicial institutions. Accordingly, I will make the rule of law and the functionality of judicial institutions my priority in the coming period, working together, of course, with the international community.

Unbridled disrespect for the rule of law does not occur in a vacuum. A case in point is the tragic and still unsolved murder of the young David Dragičević in Banja Luka almost two years ago. But dissatisfaction with the legal system remains one of the leading reasons for the brain drain that Bosnia and Herzegovina is experiencing. The brain drain is not unique to the country, but the phenomenon is particularly tragic in Bosnia, which has a small population. Data from the World Bank Group's Fall 2019 Europe and Central Asia Economic Update, *Migration and Brain Drain*, suggests that almost half of Bosnia and Herzegovina's population has permanently emigrated from the country. According to the World Bank, the main domestic risk is the challenging political environment, which makes structural reforms more difficult. In simple terms, people do not just want jobs: they also want political stability and justice.

Next year, we will mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Unfortunately, over these 25 years, the expectations of many citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or of the international community, have not been met. Bosnia and Herzegovina has proven serious problems related to the functionality of its institutions, the rule of law and the fight against corruption, the freedom of media and in many other areas, which are reflected by the pervasive separatism and divisive policies in the country and the general lack of focus of the country's political elite on issues of real importance to the citizens. Among these issues are gender equality, bearing in mind that on average women's salaries amount to only 50 per cent of men's salaries. Women are also severely underrepresented in the political sphere, despite there being a legal obligation for them to occupy 40 per cent of positions in the political institutions, which was mandated by a law that was passed without incident and with near-universal approval, but, of course, it remains to be implemented. We should remember that women in conflict situations across the world are experiencing great suffering, and that it is high time the international community and, above all, the politicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina, prioritize gender issues. I will look into this matter and encourage a more thorough discussion.

The fundamental issue that we must all consider is not only how to help Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to face its challenges going forward but, more importantly, how to prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from going backwards. The current trends and various public

pronouncements clearly indicate an ongoing effort to roll back the reforms that have carried the country thus far. In this regard, it is now more important than ever to preserve the Dayton structure and the tools at the disposal of the international community, including the authority granted to the High Representative under the General Framework Agreement for Peace and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including, of course, the European Union-led Operation Althea. It is of utmost importance that the international community work together to preserve the investments it has made over the past two decades and, above all, deliver on the promise of a better future for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As I have previously suggested, we must recognize backsliding when it occurs, and in such instances, acknowledge that our mission is not yet complete.

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

I now give the floor to Ms. Korjenić.

Ms. Korjenić: My name is Selma Korjenić, and I am Head of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Programme for TRIAL International, a non-governmental organization that fights impunity for international crimes and supports victims in their pursuit of justice. I am also honoured to address the Security Council as a woman and citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to speak about my country's efforts aimed at reconciliation and dealing with the past. My message to the Council is based on consultations with several other representatives of civil society organizations who work on justice and peacebuilding in my country.

Where is Bosnia and Herzegovina today when it comes to dealing with the past? For the average tourist coming for a short visit, we are a country of great natural beauty with a rich cultural heritage, delicious traditional food, beautiful music and warm-hearted people. But we are also a country where some of the worst atrocities in Europe since the Second World War occurred, a country where everyday life is profoundly affected by the war, which ended 24 years ago, and a country still carrying a heavy burden from the past. Many complicated issues, including bringing war criminals to justice, satisfying the needs of victims and their families and reconciling peoples and communities, are not being handled in a satisfactory manner.

For many years, a great emphasis was put on the judicial response to the horrendous crimes committed

during the war. We believed that bringing war criminals to justice would result in reconciliation, including by acknowledging the suffering of victims and their families. Although some positive developments were made, progress has been slow. At the current rate of prosecution, civil society is very worried that our judicial institutions will not be able to meet the deadline of closing all wartime cases by 2023. For the tired and forgotten victims who are still alive today, this denial of justice increases the suffering visited upon them during the war.

The prompt fight against impunity remains of paramount importance. But to provide a fuller sense of justice to survivors in particular and to society as a whole, the prosecution of perpetrators alone will not be enough. In order to normalize relationships among individuals as well as communities, we now also need to fight the denial that such crimes were even committed. Indeed, a perverse nationalistic rhetoric is today flourishing and dominating the public space more than ever. Leading political elites and the media working at their service now openly propagate the denial of genocide and other war crimes, at least when the crimes in question have been committed against the so-called opposing side. This discourse is accompanied by the increased glorification of criminals from one's own community.

Let me give Council members some examples. Public spaces, such as streets, memorials and monuments, have been named after legally convicted war criminals, thereby justifying the atrocities committed by them. In the town of Pale, for instance, a student dormitory has been named after Radovan Karadžić. In another location, Nevesinje, a mural of Ratko Mladić has been unveiled. When verdicts are rendered against a member of a community, nationalist circles often reject it, as was seen recently in the *Prosecutor v. Prlic et al.* case. These groups concentrate their attention only on the crimes committed against their own community. This biased celebration of past crimes is a refusal to acknowledge the full truth and to accept the suffering of all victims regardless of their community or origin, and it takes many forms.

International and national courts are often undermined. During public meetings, photographs of convicted war criminals are brandished. Some of the perpetrators released from prison are now welcomed at gatherings of leading politicians. Some are even elected to political positions, as was the case with convicted

war criminal Fikret Abdić, who became mayor of Velika Kladuša. Associations are created that bear the names of war criminals, and even fascist organizations no longer fear appearing in public, which is comparable to publicly admitting past crimes.

Moreover, there are almost no monuments or memorials universally dedicated to war victims. The initiatives for building memorials for victims are often politicized, even at the local level, which further frustrates survivors and their families, thereby preventing efforts to achieve just satisfaction and robbing them of their right to commemoration. In contrast to war veterans, civilian victims — in particular women survivors of sexual violence — have been fighting for many years for their voices to be heard and still have not been granted equal rights.

Efforts aimed at peacebuilding and reconciliation are fundamentally blocked at all political levels. Peacebuilding and reconciliation are not a main concern for most politicians nor, tragically, for many politically inclined media groups either. It follows that even positive stories that show the normalization of relations among individuals and communities are often silenced and rarely find any place in the public arena.

Sadly, objecting to the nationalist rhetoric entails risks. Those who dare to look at the past objectively, with a real concern for the fate of victims, and those who voice dissenting views about the events of the war, are often exposed to public attacks. They receive threats and sometimes have to leave their homes or even the country in search of protection, because State institutions are unable to protect their citizens from such intimidation.

Even schools fall under the influence of such policies and views about acceptable truths on what happened during the war. Indeed, some formal educational programmes create the basis for future distrust towards other communities, keeping alive the possibility of conflicts in future. For example, a new history textbook in the Republika Srpska glorifies one of the worst war criminals, Radovan Karadžić, as a poet and the first President of the Republika Srpska, without providing information about his responsibility for genocide and numerous crimes against humanity. Nothing is said of his conviction to life in prison by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Such retrograde narratives are on the rise and cause tensions among an already divided nation. Three generations

have now tasted the poison of hatred. Very little is being done to prevent the same fate happening to the next generation.

However, there is still a glimmer of hope. Work aimed at delivering justice to affected individuals and communities and providing engagement on reconciliation and peacebuilding does happen, and there are even successes to celebrate. But such work and engagement result from the dedication of civil society organizations, human rights activists and individuals who seek to normalize relations among individuals and communities through their activism. Some victims and survivors are increasingly active in their quest for justice and for opportunities to rebuild themselves, with the support of numerous civil society representatives. For example, for the past 12 years, my organization has been working alongside with and supporting victims of the war, including numerous survivors of sexual violence. This long-term involvement, coupled with a constant engagement with authorities to call for upholding international standards and for guaranteeing the basic human rights of victims, has made justice processes a little more efficient, fair and inclusive.

Those results, combined with successes from other sectors of society, show that the initiatives taken by human rights activists, local civil society organizations, war victims, former members of opposed armies, youth from different ethnic backgrounds and individual religious leaders to spread messages of peace and tolerance can really sow the seeds of justice, truth and reconciliation. Ordinary citizens want nothing more than to leave the war behind them and look towards a brighter future. Clearly, ordinary citizens are not the ones preventing peace, but without the support of the State and a comprehensive institutional approach, reconciliation cannot have long-lasting effects. Without a concerted effort to fight the denial of past crimes and to combat nationalistic rhetoric, Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to be a ticking time bomb.

Next Saturday we will be commemorating the destruction of the famous Mostar Bridge. The old bridge was destroyed on 9 November 1993. It has since been rebuilt, but Bosnia and Herzegovina still needs the support of the international community to rebuild numerous bridges between people and communities. For that, I would humbly like to propose two paths for the Council's consideration.

First, do not let denial and hate take stronger root. The international community should not be afraid to engage with Bosnia and Herzegovina on stricter terms. It should not be afraid to demand respect for the verdicts rendered by international and local courts. It should make sure that denying, minimizing or justifying any crime, regardless of its target, should be forbidden. It should demand that victims can see their right to justice, truth and reparations fully implemented. Only these kinds of conditions will enable us to move ahead as a nation and reconcile with one another.

Secondly, please do not despair of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a young Bosnian woman, I will not despair of my country. I want to leave it to my children free of the poison of hatred. There are many wonderful people here, from multiple sectors of civil society, including many human rights activists who fight on a daily basis to make their country a better place. Our civil society needs the trust of the Security Council. We need it to help and support the initiatives aimed at rebuilding bridges and delivering justice and reconciliation.

The President: I thank Ms. Korjenić for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council who wish to make statements. I would like to remind my colleagues of the time limit and that their microphones will flash if they go over that time limit.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): Let me begin by welcoming the Council's unanimous vote on resolution 2496 (2019), extending the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea. We thank all Council members for their constructive engagement in that regard. I am grateful to the two briefers for their presentations. They were very open, honest, sobering and comprehensive, and I thank them both.

As Germany aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union a bit later, I will not make a general statement but will rather speak to some specific points.

First, I have to say that even having an idea of what is happening, I was shocked, but I was also shocked at what High Representative Valentin Inzko and Ms. Selma Korjenić said in their briefings about the denial of past crimes, including genocide, the glorification of criminals and the lack of accountability and reconciliation. In that regard, I again welcome the

fact that reconciliation will be on the agenda of the British presidency of the Council this month.

I have a question for the High Representative. He mentioned that he wants to make the rule of law and respect for it a priority. In concrete terms, what does he think he can do with regard to the question that came up? How can he do more, so that we are no longer seeing genocide denied? How can he encourage other actors?

With respect to the *Sejdić and Finci* case, we all know that it has been going on for a decade or more, and many efforts have been undertaken in that regard. Mr. Inzko also put that on his list of priorities. How does he think he can make a difference? What instruments does he have at his disposal? When he returns in six months, how does he think he can achieve that? We do not want to lose the Ambassador here, but for him not to have the possibility of becoming President is remarkable.

I also very much appreciated the High Representative's underlining of gender equality, and we heard about the victims of sexual violence. My third question is similar to the previous ones. What does he think that he can do in terms of tackling that issue?

It has now been a year since the elections were held and a Government has still not been formed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a nightmare we have had before. Bosnia and Herzegovina is functioning somehow, but of course we in the Council cannot implement any legislation or deal with budget questions. The country is stuck. To some extent it is actually going backwards. Something has to be done, and only then can we stop the brain drain.

Those are the questions that I have. I wanted to thank Ms. Korjenić for at least concluding on a positive note and saying that we should not despair. But it is very difficult not to despair when listening to all of this. Maybe I can ask the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia when they speak later if they could also address the question of impunity and how they can contribute to combating the glorification of criminals and the denials of genocide.

Mr. Duclos (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): *We thank High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Valentin Inzko for his report (S/2019/843, annex), and both him and Ms. Selma Korjenić for their valuable briefings. We would also like to take this opportunity*

to welcome the renewal of the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea.

Despite some positive developments, we must express our concern about the lack of progress being made in implementing the five objectives and two conditions — the 5+2 agenda — with a view to ensuring Bosnia and Herzegovina's full autonomy. As the High Representative mentioned, it is particularly worrying that the delays and setbacks are due to the lack of real commitment on the part of the political class. The lack of respect for State institutions and their decisions, and the exacerbation of belligerent and secessionist messages contribute to this stagnation. In that regard, we reiterate how important it is for both the Federation and the Republika Srpska to renew their willingness to implement the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace, recognize the authority of the Office of the High Representative and reaffirm the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also essential that they show full respect for the Constitution and State institutions and competencies at every level. The cantons of the Federation must adapt their regulations, especially regarding elections, while the Republika Srpska must comply with the provisions of the Agreement regarding the registration of military properties and the transfer of indirect taxes.

We welcome the adoption of a series of reforms by both sides in their efforts to advance European integration, but it is also crucial to overcome the political impasse with a view to appointing a Council of Ministers, which has been pending for a year, and to resuming parliamentary work. The strengthening of institutions and the rule of law, like the path to Europe, should be an area of convergence based on common interests. Making progress in that reform process, as well as in addressing migration issues, organized crime and corruption, must be a priority.

In that regard, we reiterate the importance of creating a public prosecutor's office and a specialized court to combat organized crime and corruption. That would also contribute to the fight against impunity and improve the legitimacy of institutions and the people's trust in them. In that fight, and as we heard from Ms. Korjenić, access to justice is key. It is particularly regrettable that the judicial institutions have been unable to complete their work on war-crimes cases as planned. It is a legal and moral imperative for the victims of those crimes and their families in order to contribute to reconciliation, in which we also acknowledge the role

of civil society, especially women and young people. In that regard, we deplore and reject speeches and initiatives that foment division and hatred, particularly when they are used to restrict freedom of speech and of the press, as well as the right to association and peaceful protest. Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms cannot be conditional.

In conclusion, in underlining the importance of the full cooperation of the parties and the resources necessary for High Representative Inzko and Operation Althea to carry out their duties, we reiterate Peru's full support for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina on their path towards sustainable peace and development.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let me begin by thanking the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his briefing. Poland would like to convey its full support and appreciation to his Office for its pivotal role in maintaining stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Consistent with our previous statements, we also support the use of Bonn powers if the situation requires it. I would also like to thank Ms. Selma Korjenić for her briefing.

Poland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later during this meeting on behalf of the European Union. In addition, we would like to make the following general remarks.

We welcome the unanimous adoption today of the resolution 2496 (2019), which extends the mandate of Operation EUFOR Althea for another year. We also welcome the conclusions of the European Council on 14 October confirming its readiness to continue the mission's executive military mandate to maintain a safe and secure environment. As contributors to the mission since its inception, we are proud to be a part of that effort.

We regret that, more than a year after the country's general elections, Governments are still not formed at state and federal levels. We call on political leaders to proceed with Government formation with a sense of urgency and in a spirit of compromise, so that the country can continue to move forward.

We note with appreciation the progress that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made on the path to European integration and look forward to the issuance of the European Commission's opinion on the country's application for European Union membership. European Union integration remains the main unifying objective

shared by all political parties and is seen by a majority of citizens as a strategic goal for the country.

We would welcome an equal sense of purpose and unity around the submission of the first annual national programme under the NATO membership action plan. It is in the best interest of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be able to enjoy, in the foreseeable future, stability and security within Euro-Atlantic structures.

Also yet to be implemented are the comprehensive reforms of the electoral law in accordance with the standing rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

There are still many concerns regarding the internal situation in the country. Unemployment remains high and the outflow of younger generations continues, depriving the country of future elites while incoming migration bound for the European Union swells to alarming levels. Corruption and organized crime are rampant and are not tackled effectively. They need to be curtailed and effectively prosecuted to bring the country up to modern democratic standards. Its reform agenda must be consistently and vigorously continued and the new socioeconomic reforms should be implemented without delay.

Since this is the last time we will speak on this subject from our seat in the Security Council, let me once again say that Poland has been and will continue to be vitally interested in seeing Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united, prosperous and modern democratic country strongly rooted in Euro-Atlantic structures.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Valentine Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his valuable briefing and his latest report (S/2019/843, enclosure) on the implementation of the Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We fully support him in carrying out his mandate and his efforts to assist the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in overcoming the challenges they face. We also thank Ms. Selma Korjenić, Head of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Programme at TRIAL International.

We welcome the Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2496 (2019), which sends a strong message to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the international community that we are committed

to maintaining security and stability in the country. We are committed to providing the necessary support to Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to promote its sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

We commend the efforts made to maintain stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ensure its ethnic and cultural unity. We also appreciate the important role played by Operation EUFOR Althea under the leadership of the European Union. In that regard, we welcome the adoption by both entities of several reform measures related to the reform agenda of the European Union, including the entry into force of an agreement on the reduction of mobile roaming costs among the States of the Western Balkans in July of this year.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be the cornerstone for achieving institutional stability and the point of reference for bringing about sustainable peace in the country. We are therefore concerned about the continued rhetoric towards incitement and divisive statements. We call upon all political leaders to prioritize the national interests of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They must go beyond the narrow political and ethnic interests that undermine progress and stability and try to engage constructively in implementing the outcome of the elections held in October 2018, including establishing the state-level Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the federal Government and the other 10 cantonal Governments. All parties must participate in a constructive and open dialogue to ensure the establishment of the authorities at all levels without delay. That undoubtedly will benefit the political process.

Efforts must be redoubled so that the Parliament adopts new legislation that does not leave the judiciary without the necessary instruments to combat organized crime, corruption, terrorism and extremism, which pose a direct threat to the rule of law and undermine efforts to achieve socioeconomic development and accession to the European Union.

With regard to the implementation of the 5+2 agenda for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, we urge the parties to fulfil their commitments and meet the requirements of that agenda. We stress our full support for the Office of the High Representative in line with the Dayton Peace Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions. We call upon the High

Representative to make intensive efforts to implement the plan fully.

In conclusion, we reiterate the importance that all parties respect the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including its national Constitution and all judgments handed down by its judiciary, so as to ensure stability in the country. We also call upon all parties to make concerted efforts to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and meet their commitments towards achieving the goal of accession to the European Union and NATO.

Mr. Van Shalkwyk (South Africa): Allow me to begin by thanking Mr. Valentine Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing and report (S/2019/843, enclosure) on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ms. Selma Korjenić for her briefing.

As evident from the High Representative's briefing and report, the continued disagreements by the political parties has negatively impacted the fulfilment of the 5+2 agenda, established by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board. In addition, the divisive, provocative and nationalist rhetoric contributes to undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State.

South Africa therefore calls on all parties to recommit to the formation of an inclusive Government without delay and in line with previously agreed commitments. In that regard, we also call on all parties to respect the rule of law and the legal instruments that underpin the political structures in the country. That includes swiftly taking the necessary steps to harmonize the constitutions of some cantons with the national Constitution.

As my delegation has stated before, direct political dialogue among parties is critical in order to resolve outstanding issues. We call for constructive and open dialogue among all the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to those engagements, continued cooperation and talks among the various Bosnian structures and the High Representative is also of great importance. That is the only way to make progress in finding agreement on matters vital to all communities.

I would also like to commend High Representative Inzko for his continued dedication and efforts in

ensuring that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina retain ownership of the political processes in line with the work of the Peace Implementation Council.

In conclusion, South Africa encourages all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to recommit to the full implementation of their obligations under the various peace accords and agreements. Political will and national ownership over this process is essential to making progress towards long-term peace, stability and reconciliation for all the people and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I welcome the convening of this debate on the consideration of the fifty-sixth report of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2019/843, enclosure). I thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Ms. Selma Korjenić, Head of Programme-Bosnia and Herzegovina for TRIAL International, for their detailed and particularly enlightening briefings. In the light of the report, we have some comments to make on the political, economic and humanitarian situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the political front, my delegation notes with concern that the multi-ethnic State of Bosnia and Herzegovina is still dealing with a political impasse, an institutional deadlock resulting from the fact that it has not been possible to form a central Government since the general elections of 7 October 2018. The fact is that 24 years after the end of the civil war, the belligerent rhetoric and unconstructive behaviour of various political leaders is impeding progress towards the country's long-desired national reconciliation, which requires ensuring accountability.

Adding to the legal difficulties and ethnic tensions that the country has endured for more than a decade, the prevention of the holding of municipal elections in Mostar and denials of the Srebrenica massacre constitute further obstacles and call into question the meagre gains made so far in terms of national reconciliation. The multi-ethnic armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain the best example of this to date. Considering the risk of the situation deteriorating further, my delegation urges the country's political leaders to resolutely commit to the noble project of building a united and prosperous nation integrated within the European Union space.

With regard to the economic situation, my delegation welcomes the recent adoption by Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina of a four-year joint programme of socioeconomic reforms, which reflects their shared desire to boost economic growth and strengthen their competitiveness in line with the recommendations of the European Union. If this type of reform can inspire a fast-track economic transformation that increases the chances of integration into the European Union, there is no doubt that it could also foster the emergence of a more unified and competitive economy, creating jobs for young people, women and other vulnerable groups and reducing migrant flows towards the richer Western countries. However, in order to achieve this redeeming economic transformation, local authorities must rise above their political differences and commit to promoting the rule of law and creating a judicial environment that is attractive to investment.

On the humanitarian front, Côte d'Ivoire is concerned about the difficult living conditions of migrants in Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose numbers continue to grow, according to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. In addition, the lack of State preparation and measures that are inadequate to the challenges involved, as well as the existence of rhetoric that does not foster even a minimum of social cohesion, are worsening the situation of migrants in transit centres and making the work of humanitarian agencies increasingly difficult.

My delegation believes that despite their size and complexity, the sociopolitical and economic challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to deal with are not insurmountable. We continue to believe that a convergence of stakeholders' views and strong ownership of the national reconciliation process, as well as economic reforms, will enable the country to consolidate domestic peace and contribute to stability and shared prosperity in the Balkans.

In conclusion, my country wishes to commend the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina for his efforts in coordinating assistance from international partners. We encourage him to continue his good offices in working towards the full implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

I would like to thank High Representative Valentin Inzko and Ms. Selma Korjenić for their briefings.

We welcome the unanimity demonstrated by the Security Council, which led to our adoption of resolution 2496 (2019), renewing the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea for a further year. The mission contributes to the viability of a united, sovereign and multi-ethnic Bosnian State, as well as to the stabilization of the region. As a member of the European Union, Belgium will continue to lend Bosnia and Herzegovina its full support.

Six months after the High Representative's last briefing (see S/PV.8522), we have to acknowledge that the same challenges persist and that the political stalemate continues to delay the adoption and implementation of the reforms that the country desperately needs. We reiterate that a political or legislative solution to the electoral process must be consistent with the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights. Almost 10 years after the decision on the *Sejdić and Finci* case, its implementation is a dead letter. In this context, it is also essential to work urgently to implement the recommendations of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made a strategic choice, taking the path of Euro-Atlantic integration. That is also a choice for a democracy founded on respect for the rule of law and human rights. We are deeply concerned about the serious shortcomings we have seen with regard to respect for the rule of law, as well by the latest incidents in the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. It is a matter of urgency to ensure that the necessary reforms are enacted to strengthen justice and the independence of the judiciary. Given the Council's crucial role, it is critical that it respect the highest ethical and professional standards. We are also deeply concerned about the increasing attacks on freedom of expression and assembly and freedom of the press over the past few months. We reiterate the importance of guaranteeing those freedoms without discrimination of any kind.

A just, stable and lasting peace is not possible if justice is not done. In the context of a transitional justice process, true reconciliation is only possible if concrete measures are taken to combat impunity by guaranteeing the prosecution of war criminals. The victims and survivors must be at the heart of these

efforts. Their rights must be assured, as must their substantial participation in defining the Government's reconciliation efforts. There can be no reconciliation without reparation. We stress the importance of including civil-society organizations, young people and women in this process so that it has broad support throughout society.

Finally, in that connection, we reiterate our profound concern about speech that seeks to deny the Srebrenica genocide, glorify war crimes and their perpetrators and incite hatred. Such rhetoric reinforces a climate of mistrust and undermines the reconciliation process. Rather than sowing seeds of discord, we call for the planting of seeds to grow a just, stable and lasting peace.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking High Representative Valentin Inzko for his important briefing. I would also like to thank Ms. Selma Korjenić for the information that she has given us today. Indonesia would like to assure the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina of its support in fulfilling its mandate. We also welcome the extension of the Office's mandate as provided for in resolution 2496 (2019), which we just adopted.

Though there has been no significant progress towards achievement of the five objectives and two conditions necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, we hope that it can find a creative solution that can assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing the current stagnation on the ground. After hearing High Representative Inzko's statement, we are now quite concerned about the issues of genocide denial, ethnicity rules for representatives elected to the Presidency, the lack of commitment to the rule of law and the ongoing absence of municipal elections. I think these are very bad indicators for progress. I would like to focus on several points.

The first is the need to put an end to the destabilizing rhetoric. All parties should refrain from such rhetoric and statements, which can lead to nothing but destruction and instability. We are quite alarmed by the High Representative's mention of separatist statements, expressions of separatist tendencies and of course support for the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a country that highly values sovereignty and territorial integrity, we find that very alarming. Such allegations and rhetoric will only make the tensions even more critical, and it is

the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who will pay the price. It is the people whom we are struggling and fighting for in the first place, with a view to making their lives as peaceful and prosperous as they can be in the world. Indonesia strongly believes that if the issue is to be resolved, all parties must use peaceful means and dialogue. But we need more than goodwill to start a dialogue. We need sincerity to build trust, not inflammatory accusations that disrespect previously agreed policies and agreements. Trust and confidence can be built only if past agreements and commitments are faithfully implemented.

My second point is on the implementation of the rule of law. We support the High Representative's view on the necessity of maintaining the rule of law, particularly with regard to the status of the many unimplemented court decisions. The rule of law should be respected in order to maintain and further strengthen the basic structure of democracy. The lack of commitment to the rule of law throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina is a fundamental problem that must be addressed immediately.

My third and last point is unity. Differences in political views and interests should not cause people to suffer. We must not forget that our main purpose is to build a stable and prosperous community, not the opposite. We have to find strength, stability, and prosperity in being together. Unity is important, and although the differences are real, we must act for a better future. Progress will be a distant prospect until there is unity in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Indonesia calls on all the parties to respect the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the existing legislation and the integrity of State-level institutions. And of course we call on the international community to continue to help Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve peace and stability. In that regard we also believe that regional organizations and neighbours know best what to do.

I have one question for the High Representative regarding the concern he expressed about the possibility of backsliding. The question is what can we, the Council, do? Does he have a concrete suggestion for what can be done to avoid further backsliding? I do not really know, but I wonder whether including regional organizations, for example the European Union or other regional organizations in Europe, could improve

stability and peace. That is perhaps another option that could save more lives.

I would like to conclude by expressing Indonesia's long-standing support for the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their quest to find a lasting solution that can accommodate the needs of all stakeholders as peacefully as possible. There is talk of reconciliation. Reconciliation is not a choice, but the only option for achieving peace for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Let us not forget that what our discussion in this Chamber today is all about is the people.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time in November that I am taking the floor at a Council meeting, allow me to begin by congratulating the United Kingdom on its assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. I would also like to commend South Africa, one of the three African members of the Security Council, for its excellent and very successful presidency of the Council in October.

My delegation joins others in welcoming Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, back to the Security Council, and in thanking him for his comprehensive briefing and his informative presentation on the fifty-sixth report (S/2019/843, annex) on the implementation of the peace agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our thanks also go to Ms. Selma Korjenić for the enlightening information she provided.

My delegation duly notes the High Representative's report on the achievements and progress made over the past six months in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the simultaneous adoption of a package of measures related to the European Union reform agenda, which demonstrates the commitment and the remarkable efforts that have been made towards Euro-Atlantic integration, as well as mutual interest in the common objective of stabilizing the country.

While my delegation recognizes and applauds the positive advances that have been made in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the reporting period, we are equally concerned about the lack of progress in the formation of a Government following the general elections of 7 October 2018. It is in that regard that we urge the parties to work together for political stability and to address these problems as soon as possible, with a view to ensuring a promising future for the country and achieving reconciliation among its various ethnic

groups and communities. We believe that there is still much to be done. We must therefore continue to work to build a common vision of the future that will help to foster lasting national unity and cement the role of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Balkans, Europe and the world. We encourage the parties to amend the laws relating to the Federation House of Peoples, strengthen the rule of law, ensure the full implementation of election results and continue efforts to contain and eliminate ethnic divisions, crime, corruption, violent extremism and terrorism, which continue to be the key issues in the quest for stability and prosperity in the country and the region.

My delegation advocates full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend the commitment of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina within his mandate, and emphasize our support for his efforts to promote the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Equatorial Guinea stands ready to work with the international community to support lasting peace and security and sustainable development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We would like to conclude our brief statement by welcoming the unanimous adoption of resolution 2496 (2019) submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany, which extends the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea by a further 12 months.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China listened carefully to High Representative Inzko's briefing and the statement by Ms. Korjenić, the representative of civil society.

We welcome the Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2496 (2019), on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important country in the Balkans. China welcomes its successful holding of general elections in October 2018 and notes that the Council of Ministers has not been formed. We hope that all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to arrive at a consensus through dialogue and consultations to form a Cabinet as soon as possible, actively consolidate the political process, comprehensively implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and accord further attention to, and support for, economic and social development so that that they can all share the peace and development dividends.

Maintaining peace, stability and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and ensuring harmony among its various ethnic groups is in the common interests of the international community and the countries of the region. China has always respected the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, respected the right of its people to choose the future of the country and supported its various ethnic communities living in harmony while seeking common development.

When it comes to the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the international community should be attentive to the views and concerns of all parties and adopt a balanced and prudent approach. While supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina in advance of the reform process, the international community should fully consider the specific characteristics of the country and its level of resilience, focus on helping people overcome their problems independently and step up support for the country's economic development.

China has noted the efforts of High Representative Inzko to move the political process forward in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that the High Representatives will work in strict accordance with his mandate to play an active role in promoting the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We also hope that the multinational stabilization force led by the European Union in Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to strengthen engagement with the parties concerned to help maintain security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. China stands ready, together with the rest of the international community, to do its part in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve lasting peace, stability and development.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina gave a detailed account of the various challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face. I should like to return to three of them.

First, more than a year after the general elections of October 2018, the failure to form Governments and operationalize institutions is of great concern in several respects. First, it is indicative of an environment of persistent mistrust among the various communities that make up Bosnia and Herzegovina. Secondly, it prevents the implementation of the reforms necessary for the country, in particular in achieving European rapprochement, whether in terms of the economy,

social aspects or strengthening the rule of law and human rights.

France calls on all political parties and movements to allow for the country to function, especially so that it can form Governments at the state and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation levels, as well as in several cantons. We also stress the importance of the holding of local elections in Mostar next year for the first time in more than 10 years, as the High Representative underscored. I recall that the European Court of Human Rights recently ordered Bosnia and Herzegovina to allow the holding of those elections.

My second point concerns the way in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is addressing its past, with regard to which I thank Ms. Korjenić for her very detailed briefing. What was laid out for us was alarming. France strongly condemns the glorification of crimes and war criminals, regardless of their community of origin. National and international justice has done an outstanding job in prosecuting and convicting those responsible for the atrocities committed during the conflict. Any attempt to call into question or reinterpret the decisions of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia — I am thinking in particular of those relating to the genocide in Srebrenica — is unacceptable.

In that regard, I echo the questions asked earlier by the Permanent Representative of Germany. What can we do so that all political actors of Bosnia and Herzegovina rise up to the duty that falls upon them in that area, and how can we assure that the justice system of Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to effectively investigate the many cases left over from the war, in particular war crimes? The stalling in transitional justice and reconciliation processes is adding to the lack of trust among the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the judicial system and undermining the cohesion of the country.

Thirdly, I return to the European perspective on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans, which requires more than ever redoubling efforts to adopt the reforms that the country needs. In that regard, France aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. The prospect of integration into the European Union, when the conditions are met, is an indication of the European Union's massive and multifaceted engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union-led Operation Althea, the one-year extension of the mandate of which

was authorized by the Security Council's adoption of resolution 2496 (2019) today, attests to that support. Beyond that support, it is the responsibility of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt far-reaching reforms to make progress on European rapprochement. Such reforms in the areas of the rule of law and economic and social development will make it possible to provide new opportunities to the younger generations and encourage them to contribute to the country's development.

At the summit held on 29 April in Berlin, President Emmanuel Macron, together with Chancellor Angela Merkel, reaffirmed France's willingness to contribute to the stability of the Western Balkans. That re-engagement focuses on economic and social development, security, justice and defence — four pillars of the French strategy, which was presented prior to the summit. Bosnia and Herzegovina has its rightful place in that strategy, which supports the actions of the European Union. It is to this European future that the political leaders must turn their attention.

Mrs. Craft (United States of America): I thank High Representative Inzko for joining us today. I also thank Ms. Selma Korjenić. I really appreciate the cautious optimism that she shared with us.

The United States is fully committed to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as they strive towards a more just, free and democratic society. A generation has passed since the historic signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, but we must continue to think about today's young people to give them a glimmer of hope, no matter what side they are born on.

The present generation faces challenges that have plagued Bosnian society and the Balkans for decades. Nationalistic rhetoric sows troubling divisions. Leaders exploit a fragile political landscape for personal and financial gain, and young people leave the country on a daily basis seeking the economic opportunity that they wish they could find at home. If it wants to move forward, Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot tolerate the destructive narratives that have foreclosed stability and opportunity for so many years. Its leaders must embrace political reconciliation to move beyond the legacy of war, and they must accept the necessary reforms to set the country on the path towards Euro-Atlantic integration. The Bosnian people deserve democratically elected leaders who will govern with integrity, practice accountability and deliver on their

promises. They deserve leaders who will put the needs of their people first.

The United States is actively strengthening those endeavours in several ways. We support the Dayton framework to ensure peace and stability in the region. We support programming and non-governmental organizations that promote media freedom, equal access to education and a judicial system free from corruption. And we support efforts aimed at reducing air pollution and fostering sustainable economic development. But beyond support for institutions and economic opportunity, we seek accountability for those who threaten peace and stability in the region. I agree with the representative of France that convicted war criminals being honoured in any way is very disturbing.

We anticipate a strong partnership with the country's Government and leaders, but we also expect them to do their part to implement reforms now. I say to High representative Inzko that we strongly affirm the role of his Office, especially as the country implements electoral reforms and prepares for the holding of the 2020 municipal elections. We also commend the continuing and essential contributions of European Union-led Operation Althea, which plays a crucial role in preserving a stable environment, and we support the renewal of its mandate for another year.

We will know that we have achieved something of lasting significance when all generations and ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are able to enjoy the blessings of a democratic, stable and prosperous nation. The United States looks forward to that day's arrival for its people, and we will not cease in our efforts to hasten its coming.

Mr. Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Valentin Inzko and Ms. Selma Korjenić for their briefings.

The Dominican Republic expresses its recognition for the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also acknowledge the efforts of the High Representative and his Office in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, we regret that no progress has been made in meeting the objectives and conditions of the 5+2 agenda for the definitive closure of the Office of the High Representative. This slowdown in the process has become a matter for the Council's consideration.

It should be remembered that where there is a unified will for the benefit of the great majority, differences take second place. The political representatives are determined to make their positions more flexible so that they can provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with the tools to carry out reforms that will strengthen the rule of law, pave the way for integration into the European Union and expedite the path towards the consolidation of unity, peace and development.

We support the mandate and management of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. In that regard, we understand that all efforts should focus on consolidating the progress made, redirecting efforts towards integration with the European Union and, at the same time, overcoming challenges such as the fight against organized crime and corruption, among others.

We understand that the mere action of refraining from any unilateral measure that could stall or jeopardize the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding is a sign of goodwill and cooperation to improve the situation in the country and support the efforts of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is appropriate for the political leadership to act openly in favour of unity, accepting that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a single, sovereign State.

A year ahead of the elections, it is important to complete the process of establishing the new authorities. In that regard, we recommend taking the necessary steps to strengthen the rule of law, support multilingualism, ensure the participation of young people and women in the political processes and protect the rights of refugees and internally displaced persons in order to create the conditions for their voluntary and safe return to their homes.

It is necessary to acknowledge the important role of the press in a free and democratic society. To that end, it is vital that the relevant measures be taken to ensure those freedoms in a safe environment.

In conclusion, we welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2496 (2019), which extends the mandate of the European Union-led peacekeeping force EUFOR-Operation ALTHEA. Furthermore, the Dominican Republic takes this opportunity to call on all political leaders and stakeholders to cooperate in a genuine spirit of commitment with the Office of the High Representative so that together we can achieve a Bosnia and Herzegovina that will enable an

atmosphere of inclusion, the reconciliation of ethnic and religious diversity, accountability, access to justice, the empowerment of young people and women, the security of civilians and effective policies to reduce poverty to prevail.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): *I would to thank today's briefers. We listened carefully to the briefing by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and must once again note that the information he provided, as well as the report (S/2019/843, annex) circulated in the Security Council, do not provide an objective and balanced picture of what is happening on in the country. There is continuing bias against Bosnian Serbs and Croats, whose leaders the High Representative unjustifiably blames for all the difficulties that the country is facing.*

The report mentions only briefly the correct notion that the main reason for most of the Bosnian problems are the serious differences in views on the way forward in development the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina between the three sides — the Bosnians, Serbs and Croats. In such circumstances, the efforts of the Office of the High Representative should focus on promoting a culture of dialogue, providing, if necessary, good offices to resolve disputes among the Bosnians themselves.

Instead, almost all the time, the energy and resources of the Office of the High Representative are spent on attempts to justify the labelling Bosnian Serb and Croat leaders as anti-Dayton. In that regard, we cannot fail to note that both the current Serbian member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Dodik, and the President of the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Čović, have repeatedly publicly stated their commitment to the peace agreement and regularly confirm that in practice. It is important to be guided by the Dayton principles of equal rights for the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to provide the two entities with broad powers to respectfully conduct a proper dialogue with their Bosnian partners.

We are concerned about the report's reference to an alleged setback in the implementation of the 5+2 agenda established by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, which contains the conditions for closing the Office of the High Representative. Despite the difficulties, we do not share this interpretation of the situation in the country. Rather, it is to further artificial

arguments to preserve the outdated international protectorate in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that regard, we call on our colleagues in the Security Council and the Steering Committee to step up their efforts for closing the Office of the High Representative. A positive example is the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been functioning normally since 2012, when the Steering Committee supported the decision to freeze international supervision of the region.

We draw attention to the urgent need for the Office of the High Representative to respect its mandate. Mr. Inzko is not authorized to lobby for the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of Sarajevo, of which much mention is made in the report. We have spoken about that more than once.

The new head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina hastened to do the same by organizing a seminar at which she advocated for country's early accession to NATO. It seems that Bosnia and Herzegovina has no other concerns but to join NATO as soon as possible.

Ironically, the European agenda has been overshadowed. Surely, it is clear that there is no consensus in the country on that issue. We consider it unacceptable to ignore the principle of consensus-based decision-making by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of foreign policy.

I would like to say a few words about the work of the independent international commissions established by the Republika Srpska Government to investigate crimes against all peoples in the Srebrenica region and against Serbs in Sarajevo in 1991-1995. It is unclear why the High Representative almost demonizes them. We assume that their formation is the direct result of known shortcomings in the work of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, about which the Russian Federation has repeatedly voiced serious concerns. The conclusions of the commissions are intended to shed light on many of the most serious war crimes, which, for inexplicable reasons, were not dealt with by the ICTY. I would like to take advantage this opportunity to urge all members of the Council to read the next report of the Republika Srpska Government on the situation in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, which contains important information on that and other relevant topics.

For our part, we will continue to do our utmost to ensure that the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians address all the problems in Bosnia and Herzegovina together, in line with the robust and balanced Dayton Peace Agreement, which provides for the equality of the three constituent peoples, all of whose interests it is important to represent. Assurances were specifically given in that regard by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev of the Russian Federation during his meeting in Belgrade on 19 October with Mr. Milorad Dodik, member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are open to mutually respectful cooperation with the representatives of all political forces, and we hope that our joint work with the Bosnians will help to promote the post-conflict settlement, socioeconomic development and preservation of cultural diversity in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Balkans as a whole.

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

I thank the High Representative and Ms. Korjenić for their briefings.

I think we take a different view of the importance of the Office of the High Representative than the Russian representative has just set out. We believe that the Office of the High Representative continues to play an essential role in Bosnia and Herzegovina; it has the United Kingdom's full support, including, as other countries around the table have mentioned, for the use of the Bonn powers if and when the situation requires. I think that the reason for that is obvious. Some people, including some leaders, in Bosnia and Herzegovina want to do all they can to stop Bosnia and Herzegovina from being a flourishing, normal State.

Dayton requires Bosnia to be an independent State with two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, but it does not place the entities above the State. Therefore, as long as there are leaders in Bosnia who refuse to acknowledge or who work against that very important statehood aspect of Bosnia and Herzegovina — which is enshrined in the Dayton agreements, codified by the Council and implemented for very many years through the Peace Implementation Council and its Steering Board — and as long as that antagonistic approach to Bosnia as a State continues, the Office of the High Representative will continue to be necessary, as will the Bonn powers.

I therefore want to put on record the United Kingdom's very firm support for the High Representative and his team. I also want to thank Ms. Korjenić, of TRIAL International. We in the United Kingdom support TRIAL's work to secure justice for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, and we pay tribute to all the work that it does; I will come back to that in a minute, if I may.

We join other colleagues in welcoming the unanimous adoption of resolution 2496 (2019), which authorizes, for a further 12 months, the European Union to continue Operation Althea. This demonstrates the continued commitment of the international community to Bosnia's security and stability, but, as the French representative said, it also underscores Bosnia's European and Euro-Atlantic direction and trajectory.

I want to say in that regard that it is my understanding that there are certain laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina that codify this Euro-Atlantic integration, both in respect of the European Union and in respect of NATO, and there are certainly resolutions of the Council that codify it as well. There are also numerous decisions by the Peace Implementation Council and by its Steering Board that codify such integration. That desire on the part of the Bosnian people has never been overturned in law, so while leaders may argue against that because they have changed their minds or it does not suit their political rhetoric, the law of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the corpus of decisions supported and adopted by the international community are in favour of supporting Bosnia for as long as it wants to go down the road of Euro-Atlantic integration. These are battles that need to be fought democratically, not undemocratically through polemic and demagoguery.

I wish to recall that nearly 30 years ago, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the big issue for the Council; our predecessors adopted many resolutions day after day to try to stop the fighting and restore stability and peace to the country. The war lasted for four dreadful years and changed forever the way in which the United Nations does peacekeeping. As we heard today, in 1995, during the war, the massacre in Srebrenica claimed the lives of 9,000 Muslim men and boys, the worst massacre in Europe since 1945.

These are not insignificant events for Europe or for Bosnia and the Balkans. The reason why the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was set up was to try people for

those crimes. We therefore very much agree with Ms. Korjenić that people should not be trying to undermine what the ICTY discovered. The ICTY was a legitimate Tribunal, established by the Council, and its judgments still stand.

I am running out of time, so I will simply say that on reconciliation, I endorse what the German and Indonesian representatives said; that is a very important part of what is happening. I also want to stress the vital importance of the rule of law for all Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens.

Ms. Korjenić exhorted us not to despair. I do not give up on Bosnia. I have worked on the issue of the Balkans since 1991. We are not going to despair, because if we despair of Bosnia, it fundamentally means that the bad guys have won, and we are not going to let that happen. So the United Kingdom and Euro-Atlantic institutions can be relied on to continue to help Bosnia as long as all of Bosnia's citizens want such help.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I am going to invite the High Representative and then Ms. Korjenić to respond to any points they have heard from Council members. A number of questions were asked, and then, if the rule 37 or rule 39 speakers will forgive me, we will come to them in a few moments.

I give the floor to Mr. Inzko.

Mr. Inzko: Mr. Heusgen asked me some very difficult questions about the rule of law, the *Sejdić and Finci* case and other issues, and on how to improve the situation. Of course, there is no magic wand or magic solution, but I think that certain procedures can be simply copy-pasted from our experience. Who is on the Supreme Court in our countries? Who sits on the constitutional courts in our countries? The best. That should also be a simple solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina; for example, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council should appoint simply the best people — not party people, not people who are related to someone, but based on merit.

I think that we will soon learn about the report of Mr. Priebe, a highly respected German lawyer who also worked in the European Union. Mr. Priebe will make some recommendations; he made some for Macedonia a few years ago, and now he is working on the issue of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I believe that once we have a better High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council and

a better and more independent judiciary, we will be speaking about a different country. It is not only about money or about the economy; it is about the rule of law and justice.

One of the methods that has also been used by the international community is vetting. In Albania, judges and candidates for the Prosecutor's Office underwent a vetting procedure, and quite a few were eliminated because they were not competent enough. We now have a situation where the Constitutional Court of Albania has only one person, because after the vetting procedure only one person was left who was competent enough and who was not involved in a conflict of interest or in any corruption. But we hope that by next April, Albania will have a normal Constitutional Court once again, through vetting procedures and Mr. Priebe's recommendations.

One anniversary that I did not mention: exactly 10 years ago, regretfully, I would say, we sent home international judges and prosecutors. I can say that because the Allied Forces were present in my own country, Austria, for 10 years. We had a large number of Nazis. We also had no Parliament before the Second World War, as it had been eliminated. All of that then changed. We introduced democracy under the control of the Allied Forces; the Nazis did not return and the Marshall Plan was a success. The Allied Forces then left after 10 years. They stayed longer in other countries. That is a good model that could work.

That also touches on other issues, which we discussed, such as war criminals, gratitude marches when Mr. Kordić returned. I am Catholic, but I am ashamed that a gratitude march was held for him. As we know, he is a convicted war criminal. We have heard that a student dormitory has been named after Karadžić. We have heard about concerts being held in support of war criminals in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All of that must stop. There is no place for convicted war criminals in public life. There are quite a few countries around the table that solved that issue after 1945.

With regard to the *Sejdić-Finci* issue, Mr. Stephan Fuller is the former European Union Commissioner who worked for three years in an attempt to resolve it. Regrettably, he did not succeed, but, needless to say, every citizen who has a passport can be elected for any function. The President of Romania, Klaus Werner Iohannis, is of German heritage. There is a Mayor in London with foreign roots, but he is a citizen. In Bosnia and Herzegovina it is not enough to be a citizen. There

is no *égalité* — one of the most sacred principles of the civilized world.

As I said earlier, Mr. Alkalaj, a respected Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, cannot even be a candidate, in theory, for the Presidency of the State. That is outrageous. It is equally outrageous that for 10 years the decision of the European Court of Human Rights has still not been implemented. I also believe that we, as the international community, must be ashamed that we are turning a blind eye to the situation. We should ensure that human rights are implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that double standards are not allowed. If in our own countries any citizen can be a candidate for any job, it must be the same in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is the essence of *Sejdić-Finci*. Of course, to a certain extent, it would also change the Dayton Peace Agreement. But we have a judgment from the European Court of Human Rights, and we must respect it. In that connection, I would like to mention two minor issues. First, it is about implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; we have so many verdicts now. Secondly, there is a sense of urgency.

With regard to women and development and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I am fully in favour of not only 40 per cent, which is provided for in law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but of 50 per cent. However, that quota must be implemented. It is not enough if there is a mention of 50 per cent only on paper. The quota is now 40 per cent, but even that is not implemented. If a year after a Government is formed I say that women should be part of the Government, people would say that Valentin Inzko is a disturbing factor and a nuisance in asking for women to be in the Government. But there are no women — only men — in the Government, and that is a great injustice.

I will not comment on Euro-Atlantic integration. I would just like to say that it is the self-declared foreign policy goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As you, Madam President, have said, article 84 of the Law on Defence refers to the future of NATO. I am not the one speaking about the future of NATO; it is in the Law on Defence. Of course, one could change the Law on Defence and declare neutrality at the State level, but that law does not yet exist. It exists in my own country; we have declared neutrality. But in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is the Law on Defence and its article 84 that address NATO membership. It is true that, politically, there are those who disagree and those who agree with the

law. Nonetheless, it exists. It is codified and must be implemented.

As far as the Office of the High Representative is concerned, I agree with the Russian Ambassador that it should be shut down. However, after a successful mission, we should not repeat the mistake we made in other countries when the international presence left too early. We should leave behind a monitoring or supervision mechanism. We should not leave too early or abruptly, as the foreign judges and prosecutors did 10 years ago. Withdrawal should be done gradually.

The President: I thank the High Representative for his response.

I now give the floor to Ms. Korjenić to respond to questions and comments.

Ms. Korjenić: There were no questions directed at me, but I would like to say that I agree with what the High Representative just said. I would like to add, very briefly, that the rule of law is the only way towards justice and a peaceful future. It is critical that the country's elected political leaders start defining an environment of dignity and mutual respect for everyone, especially for all of the survivors and victims of genocide and war crimes.

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

Mr. Alkalaj (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November and wish you and your delegation great success. We also welcome Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and took note of his report on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2019/843, enclosure) and his briefing.

We welcome the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2496 (2019), which extends the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea, which has been present in Bosnia and Herzegovina for many years. It is important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a host country, has enjoyed respectable and fruitful cooperation with Operation Althea, in particular in the areas of capacity-building and the training of its armed forces.

Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to play an indisputably constructive role in the United Nations and other multilateral institutions, and we aspire to

membership of the European Union (EU) and bilateral partnerships with their individual member States. Having said that, I would like to inform the Council that the Presidency agreed on a number of issues, including the path of Bosnia and Herzegovina to EU accession and the disposition of State property in Croatia and other issues. Numerous challenges lie ahead on our path towards integration in European and Euro-Atlantic structures. However, our commitment and dedication to facing and overcoming those challenges remain.

EU membership remains one of main strategic goals of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is a subject of focus by all political actors in the country. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are fully committed to overcoming challenges and implementing reforms required for full-fledged integration into the European Union. We have increased efforts in a number of areas relevant to achieving that goal, including the implementation of the reform agenda and socioeconomic reforms as a matter of priority, as well as our continuing determination to strengthen the rule of law and good governance.

As we heard today, the rule of law is extremely important for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for any other country, established by the principle of equality before the law for every citizen in the country, without exception. With regard to processing war crimes in domestic courts, we would like to reiterate that the effective processing of all war crimes, regardless of the national or religious origin of the perpetrators and victims, is essential for reconciliation and long-term stability.

The fostering of friendly and constructive cooperation among the countries of the region on issues of mutual interest remains a top priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy. Bosnia and Herzegovina plays an active role in regional initiatives through the South-East European Cooperation Process, the Western Balkan Fund, the Central European Initiative, et cetera. The summit of the Heads of State and Government of the participating countries of the South-East European Cooperation Process was held in Sarajevo on 8 and 9 July. The Cooperation Process is one of the leading political formats for dialogue in the region. As a good example of regional cooperation among three partner countries, namely, Serbia, Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina, I would also like to mention the Sarajevo-Belgrade highway construction project.

During the reporting period, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to fulfil its international obligations with regard to countering terrorism and violent extremism. The framework action plan to implement the strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for preventing and combating terrorism for the period 2015 to 2020 is being implemented.

With regard to the economic situation, it is always important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy, like those of other countries in the region, has been increasingly dependent on global economic performance. We must also emphasize that our focus and top priority in economic reform programmes remains the creation of a legal framework to improve the business environment and job creation for young people. Currently, the main concern is the significant outflow of young, skillful and educated people, which could have a very negative impact on future economic development. Massive investments in infrastructure, health care and education are needed to reverse that trend.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has also started a very important planning, monitoring and evaluation process in the field of social and economic development that is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina's voluntary national review was presented at the High-level Political Forum in July. Allow me also to express our gratitude to the United Nations country team in Bosnia and Herzegovina for its outstanding contributions and tireless efforts in assisting our institutional development agenda.

I would like to draw the attention of the Council to the issue of illegal migrants. During the reporting period, Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced a significant increase in refugees and migrants on its territory, most of whom crossed the border illegally. In response, Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities have undertaken a set of comprehensive measures, including in the humanitarian and security areas.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to contribute actively to international peace and security by deploying its military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Currently, we have approximately 45 personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide.

In his report, High Representative Inzko notes that, in the face of significant obstacles to accomplishing his

mission, he has declined to fully invoke the executive powers of his Office. We realize that such an approach can broaden confidence in his judgment for the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a democratic nation and for peace, stability and security.

I would like to address a few words to Ms. Selma Korjenić, following her deep and thorough analysis of the situation and positive perspective on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. To her, I would like to say that yes, we can do it — together and with the help of our friends from around the world.

In conclusion, we would like to express the readiness of Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to continue their work in securing a better and prosperous future for its citizens, as well as our gratitude to our international partners for supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina on that path.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Gonzato: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (European Union) and its 28 member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Albania, as well as Ukraine, align themselves with this statement.

I join other speakers in welcoming High Representative Valentin Inzko back to the Security Council and in assuring him of the European Union's continued support. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina and thank him for his statement.

A year has now passed since the holding of the country's general elections, and we note with grave concern that governments are still not formed on the state and Federation levels, and that the state Parliament is not fully functioning. This state of affairs seriously hinders the implementation of much-needed reforms, which would allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward on its EU path. It further raises questions regarding the willingness of political leaders to fulfil the aspiration of their fellow citizens to join the European Union.

In that context, the European Union once again urges all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to uphold their responsibilities and proceed with government formation without further delay. We strongly encourage them to start showing a spirit of compromise and a determination to reach an agreement

on the remaining areas of discord. The agreement reached last August contained positive elements in that regard.

Moreover, we reiterate our call on all political leaders to refrain from nationalist and provocative rhetoric. We also recall that revisionism and glorification of war criminals contradicts EU values and is incompatible with the prospect of integration into the European Union. The European project is built on reconciliation; Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions and leaders need to uphold their commitment to lasting reconciliation.

(spoke in French)

We recall once again that Bosnia and Herzegovina was clear in its desire to become a member of the European Union. The publication of the European Commission opinion in May, with its key priorities covering the Copenhagen political criteria, demonstrates our profound commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina as long as it resolutely pursues the reform agenda. The European Union expects the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, once in place, to actively and seriously proceed with those reforms.

(spoke in English)

The European Union insists on the need for the authorities to work towards strengthening the rule of law, in particular the independence and impartiality of the judiciary, fighting corruption and organized crime, countering radicalization, guaranteeing the independence of the media and the safety of journalists, promoting youth employment and education, and ensuring the full and effective implementation of socioeconomic reforms.

In order to prevent a humanitarian crisis during the winter ahead, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to take urgent measures to ensure the management of migration and access to the asylum system, including closing the unsuitable site of Vucjak and increasing reception capacities across the territory on the basis of technical feasibility and security criteria. Coordination among all competent authorities is key in order to make good use of all the resources made available by the European Union.

The European Union also reiterates that election-related issues, including provisions for holding local elections in Mostar and for the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, should be addressed as soon as possible, while taking into account the situation in

the country and in line with European standards and decisions of the Constitutional Court in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The European Union underlines that no legislative or political steps should be taken that would make the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights *Sejdić-Finci* ruling and related rulings more challenging. Bosnia and Herzegovina also needs to implement the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in order to improve the democratic quality of its electoral processes.

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective as a single, united and sovereign country. With regard to the political and security situation on the ground and the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment, the European Union also reiterates its firm support for Operation Althea and the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

In conclusion, five months after the Commission adopted its opinion, the focus is now on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the credibility of its commitment to the EU path. To make that commitment credible, we need counterparts with whom to speak and engage concretely on the reforms needed to advance towards the EU. Beyond words, we now need tangible proof that Bosnia and Herzegovina is willing to do what it takes to become, one day, a member of the European Union.

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

Mr. Dogan (Croatia): At the outset, allow me to welcome High Representative Valentin Inzko and thank him for his comprehensive briefing today, as well as for his report (S/2019/843, enclosure). I also thank Ms. Selma Korjenić for her valuable contribution to today's meeting.

Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU). I would like to take this opportunity to make some remarks in my national capacity.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is for Croatia not only a neighbouring State with which we share our longest border but also a friendly State where Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina are one of the three constituent peoples.

The political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the October 2018 elections has been dominated by unsuccessful government formation on a state level

as well as entity level. This increases the risk of legal insecurity and also contributes to additional political and institutional instability, thus seriously imperilling much-needed reforms. Regrettably, that means that a year has been lost for Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU integration path, a process in which the country was already lagging behind its neighbours in the Western Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina should, as a priority and without further delay, proceed with the formation of a Council of Ministers and other State and Federation governing bodies.

A spirit of consensus, dialogue and compromise should finally prevail over the infighting with a zero-sum based logic. This complex process requires political vision oriented towards the future of the country for the benefit of its peoples and citizens. The current situation, as well as the rhetoric by some of the politicians, is counterproductive. It is holding the country back, and political leaders must finally acknowledge their responsibility. They owe it to their country, its peoples and citizens. They need our wholehearted support in that endeavour.

Croatia remains the staunchest supporter of the European path of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We truly believe that progress in European and Euro-Atlantic integration is the only fruitful and possible path for Bosnia and Herzegovina. That path guarantees security, stability and economic prosperity for all. We see no viable alternative for Bosnia and Herzegovina or other countries in the region.

Croatia strongly supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's ambition to accelerate progress on its European path. We must be aware that for Bosnia and Herzegovina progress in European integration is also a way of achieving full State functionality. Of course, it will be necessary to carry out a series of reforms along that path in order to build a truly functional State, with structures of Government and competencies enabling a more efficient decision-making process and its implementation, especially in the context of the ability to adopt and implement the *acquis communautaire*.

In that context, the Republic of Croatia has been providing technical and expert assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina on an ongoing basis. Croatia has also supported the submission of Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership to the European Union. In that regard, Croatia is looking forward to the

next step — the granting of candidate status for EU membership.

Our commitment to the European path of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole Western Balkans region is visible through the priorities of the forthcoming Croatian presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2020. We will strive to keep the enlargement of the European Union as a key topic on the European agenda. In that regard, The EU-Western Balkans summit in May 2020, in Zagreb, will take place exactly 20 years after the first Zagreb summit, which opened the European perspective to the Western Balkans region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a historically multinational country with a long-standing constitutional concept of the equality of its three peoples, which has been a part of its constitutions since 1963. The Republic of Croatia was the first country to recognize the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and has always been the strongest and most sincere advocate of its sovereignty as a State of three equal constituent peoples and all its citizens. The full equality of three constituent peoples and all Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens should undoubtedly remain the basis of the institutional set-up of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it is an issue of the highest importance for the future of the country. Croatia, as a neighbouring State and guarantor of the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, will certainly continue to insist on proceeding on that basis.

The principle of legitimate political representation is an important element that contributes to Bosnia and Herzegovina's internal political stability. We therefore consider it crucial for Bosnia and Herzegovina to embark, without delay, upon a comprehensive reform of the election law in order to ensure legitimate representation in institutions at all levels. This is becoming an even more pressing issue with local elections taking place next year.

In that context, it is necessary to find relevant legislative solutions that adequately address this issue. Those solutions should aim at preventing the imposition of the election of political representatives of one constituent people by others at all levels of Government. That should be done in accordance with the judgments of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the *Ljubić* case and in the case of the city of Mostar. It is of the utmost importance that all political parties and actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina

reach agreement on the issue based on the principles of inclusiveness and in a spirit of dialogue and consensus in the State Parliament.

In addition to those structural problems, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a new challenge. The migration wave on the Western Balkans route has increased significantly in 2019 and the EU's longest external land border is under significant pressure from illegal migration.

The President: Could I ask the Croatian representative to bring his remarks to a close in order to keep within the time limit? I would ask him to take one more minute to finish his statement.

Mr. Dogan (Croatia): Croatia remains determined to continue its constructive approach of partnership towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the occasional unconstructive slandering and divisive rhetoric of some individuals will not affect that. Such attacks, as the EU statement stresses, only raise doubts regarding the real commitment of those politicians to the EU integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its European future.

Let me conclude by stressing that Croatia remains a staunch supporter of Bosnia and Herzegovina in building a better future for its citizens.

I am sorry for a lengthy statement.

The President: The full statement of the Croatian delegation has been circulated. I am sorry that I had to cut off the Croatian representative due to time constraints.

I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Ms. Ivanovic (Serbia): I thank the members of the Security Council, the High Representative and the other speakers for their statements today.

Serbia's position in respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is widely known, confirmed time and again and not in dispute. So is its position in respect of the Dayton Peace Agreement — after all, Serbia is a guarantor of that Agreement. My country supports Bosnia and Herzegovina as one State with two entities — the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina — just as it supports the decisions taken by that country in accordance with the competencies and agreements of its three constituent peoples, namely, the Serbs, the Croats and the Bosniaks.

On many occasions, Serbia expressed its support for the speedy formation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions at all levels, in accordance with the results of the parliamentary elections held in October 2018, which would make a significant contribution to the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region. As more than a year has elapsed since the elections, there is no justification for postponing the formation of its institutions any longer, especially its Council of Ministers, which should be constituted without preconditions, on the basis of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the democratic will of its citizens.

Serbia shares the concerns of the High Representative over the destabilizing rhetoric in statements of many political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and calls on all the actors, inside and outside the country, to demonstrate the necessary level of responsibility and to refrain from mutual accusations. We are worried in particular by the taking of, or the threat to take, one-sided actions contrary to the letter and spirit of the Dayton Agreement. I note that the Agreement is the result of a compromise and reflects a delicate balance, achieved painstakingly, from among opposing concepts of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, attempts to unbalance the model set up 25 years ago are hardly conducive to this country's full and lasting stabilization.

Serbia calls on all participants in the political processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as on the representatives of the international community, to demonstrate greater responsibility and refrain from the use of rhetoric aimed at disqualifying other political actors, especially those elected democratically. Dialogue within the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only way to raise the level of confidence and achieve a compromise solution to the issues relevant for the future development of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, by extension, to the stability of the region. As in the past, my country will do all it can to make a constructive contribution in that regard.

Bilaterally, Serbia continues to intensify political dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina. A number of visits have been made recently in the context of my country's endeavours to promote cooperation with its neighbours, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. The two countries have thus demonstrated their commitment to building bilateral relations and upgrading regional ones while proceeding from European and universal

values and based on understanding, compromise and cooperation.

For many years now, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been one of Serbia's most important foreign trading partners. From January to September of this year, the trade exchange amounted to over €1.5 billion, which is indicative of the rising trend in strengthened economic cooperation between the two countries. With over €1. billion, Serbia is the largest foreign investor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That cooperation takes place in accordance with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA). In that context, I would like to point out that the two countries have been affected by the 100 per cent increase of the destabilizing tariffs on their goods by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government in Pristina. It is a senseless act contrary to all regional processes and commitments, including CEFTA. The international community is expected to exercise influence on the Provisional Institutions of civil Self-Government in Pristina to remove the tariffs and normalize trade in the region.

Regional cooperation and European integration based on stability, democratization, economic development and social prosperity are Serbia's pre-eminent foreign policy priorities. Bosnia and Herzegovina is among my country's key bilateral partners and, in that context, Serbia is firmly committed to the vision of good neighbourliness. As an EU candidate-country, Serbia renders selfless support to other candidates and potential candidate countries on their reform road towards the European Union. We welcome each and every one of Bosnia and Herzegovina's successes along that road, in line with the European Commission's establishment of 14 priorities that Bosnia and Herzegovina must meet in order to open accession negotiations.

In that connection, Serbia is ready to share its experience accumulated from its own accession negotiations in hopes that our neighbour, too, will commence those negotiations soon. We believe that, just like with other aspiring countries in the region, the negotiation process will not be burdened by the ongoing challenges within the European Union, and that the EU will instead demonstrate its firm resolve to continuing the process by keeping the question of the Western Balkans' accession high on its agenda. Serbia has a lasting commitment to peace, stability, security and cooperation at both the regional and international levels. To that end, it continues to

contribute to strengthening stability, democratization, economic development and social prosperity, based on the principles of reconciliation, good neighbourliness, dialogue and compromise. We trust and believe that those can be achieved by way of mutual respect and the exclusion of counter-productive partisan politicking.

The President: The representative of the Germany has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Heusgen (Germany): I do not want to prolong the meeting — but briefly. During my intervention, I took up what the High Representative had said earlier with regard to the atmosphere in the region concerning the denial of genocide and the glorification of war criminals. I also asked how much the neighbours could really contribute to the fight against genocide denial and the glorification of war criminals. I did not hear anything about that in their responses. My question to the representatives of Serbia and Croatia concerns what they think can be done from their perspective. Can they make a contribution to the points that I mentioned? I would also like to say, concerning the representative

of Serbia, that the Serbian President, Mr. Vučić, made the gesture of going to Srebrenica. With the influence that he has, would he be ready to publicly ask for the Karadžić dormitory in Pale to be renamed, for instance?

The President: The representative of Serbia has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Ivanovic (Serbia): I thank the Permanent Representative of Germany, Mr. Heusgen, for his question. Related to the statement we heard today by Ms. Korjenić, one of our briefers, I would like to express my support of what was said by the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The message was that all the war crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be prosecuted and all victims and survivors respected, regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation. We believe that that is the right path, that of approaching perpetrators and victims in an impartial and unbiased way. That is the right path to reconciliation.

The meeting rose at 12.15 pm.