



THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Security Council

8896<sup>th</sup> meeting

Debate on the Report on the implementation of the  
Peace agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Ambassador Nemanja Stevanović  
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia  
to the United Nations

New York, 3 November 2021

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to address the Security Council today on behalf of the Republic of Serbia and to present my country's position on the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region of the Western Balkans.

Mr. President,

This meeting is being held at a very delicate moment not only for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but for the whole region. Recently, my country has been facing the unilateral actions by the Provisional Institutions of Self Government in Pristina - actions that pose a direct threat to peace and stability that we have been building together in the region over the last couple of decades. In that context, Serbia once again calls upon all sides in Bosnia and Herzegovina to lower tensions and rationally, through dialogue, address open issues. Above all, Serbia wants peace and stability in the region. We believe all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina want the same.

We call on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to act in a responsible manner in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement as the only legal framework for functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is of the utmost importance that the key actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina - both domestic and international - exhibit restraint and responsibility for the situation in the country. The mechanism for a potential change of the Dayton Agreement is clearly defined and well known - it requires consent of both entities and three constituent peoples. Therefore, any attempt by any other party to impose a solution is unacceptable for Serbia.

The Republic of Serbia expects the international community to have an unbiased and balanced approach to this issue. We believe that the dialogue within the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only way to build trust and reach a compromise solution on the issues important for the future development of the country, and thus for the stability of the wider region as well. Furthermore, in the interest of peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we believe that decisions related to the work of the Office of the High Representative should be reached in the spirit of cooperation, mutual respect of all involved actors and with the consensus of the Security Council members, in line with the long-standing rules and practice. For its part, Serbia will continue to engage in the most constructive way, as it did in the past.

Mr. President,

As the guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Serbia supports territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In accordance with the Agreement, we want to have good and productive cooperation with both the Central government and the authorities of two Entities. We support any agreement reached between two entities and three constituent peoples. We are strongly against the imposition of decisions which have not been reached by consensus. We believe that such actions pose a threat to the stability of not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the wider region as well.

For Serbia, the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina is of the utmost importance. We are convinced that a balanced relation between its Central government and Entities is the precondition to such

stability. In that respect, besides its good relations with Sarajevo, Serbia maintains harmonious relations and good cooperation with Republika Srpska, in accordance with the Agreement on Special Parallel Relations of 2006. This Agreement provides a base for a dynamic high level political dialogue and active cooperation between Serbia and Republika Srpska. Allow me to reiterate - the road to the future we want is paved by good neighborly relations and active cooperation in the region in various areas of mutual interest. Serbia will continue to call on all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to further engage in that direction.

Mr. President,

Serbia strongly supports all countries of the Western Balkans in their efforts to join the European Union. We are especially interested in expediting the process of European integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and we stand ready to offer our maximal contribution.

We are convinced that the “Open Balkans initiative” is the prime example of a successful regional cooperation and joint efforts towards common goals. As such, it represents the best way for our countries to prepare for the EU membership.

Serbia fully respects the right of every country to independent foreign policy, including its right to join the military-political alliances, as well as concrete individual steps which may or may not lead towards the membership in those alliances. As one of the guarantors of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Serbia will support any agreement or arrangement reached by two entities, i.e. three constituent peoples in a legal and legitimate way.

Mr. President,

We are strongly convinced that, together, we can prosper if there is mutual trust and respect for diversity - which has been, too often, a stumbling block in our history. Today we have the historical opportunity to bridge our differences and to build lasting peace and prosperity for our citizens, which all of us in the region deserve.

In closing, allow me to make a brief remark on the resolution on the renewal of the EUFOR/Althea Mission mandate, which was just adopted by the Council.

My Government notes new language introduced in PP1 of the resolution – a reference to the “situation in the region of the Former Yugoslavia”. We believe that this language is not appropriate in the current context, since it was used during the 1990s and contains negative connotations. War and conflicts are long behind us – that chapter of our history is closed and all countries have moved forward. Therefore, we believe that this new language should not be used in relation with the current security situation in the region.

Thank you.