



**СТАЛНА МИСИЈА РЕПУБЛИКЕ СРБИЈЕ ПРИ УЈЕДИЊЕНИМ НАЦИЈАМА
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS
854 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK, NY 10065**

SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM: SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

As delivered

S T A T E M E N T

by

**H.E. MR. NEMANJA STEVANOVIĆ
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE**

New York, 4 May 2020

Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the Security Council,

Regrettably, yet another Security Council meeting on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is convened against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more than a year now, the world, including the Western Balkans, has fought the invisible enemy. During this time of global hardship, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their people, have demonstrated strong friendship and solidarity between them. Our two countries cooperated intensely in fighting the pandemic and its catastrophic consequences: they secured, among others, a functional ‘green corridor’ within the CEFTA region to facilitate the flow of goods, particularly of products humanitarian in nature and adopted measures for a free movement of citizens without the obligation to take PCR tests. It is with pride and pleasure that I point out that, at the time of its own vaccination efforts, my country never hesitated in its resolve to help its neighbors, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, by sending them substantial quantities of vaccines. On 2 March, President Vučić flew to Sarajevo Airport to personally deliver 10 000 doses of vaccines. Following his meeting with all three Members of the country’s Presidency on that occasion, the Government of Serbia granted an additional 20 000 doses on 8 April to be administered to the people of the Sarajevo Canton in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the last week of March, citizens of our neighboring countries were presented an opportunity to get vaccinated in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš free of charge, without prior registration, and the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed great interest in this option. Serbia’s vaccine donations to Bosnia and Herzegovina, largest by far among its donations to other countries, continue unabated and are reflective of my country’s readiness to support and contribute, through active engagement, to that country in its fight against COVID-19. In addition to alleviating the problems and the gravity of the challenges, our cooperation in these testing times will help us strengthen and develop our work together as good neighbors in the days to come.

Mr. President,

As we have shown repeatedly, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a very important partner for my country. We continue to support the process of strengthening our bilateral relations and good-neighbourly cooperation, just as we do with other countries of the region. We are committed to political dialogue and the building of trust and solidarity. The high-level dialogue has been intensified and a number of visits by high-ranking officials of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have taken place lately. The cooperation between our two countries is the most fruitful in the field of economy. This is manifested, in particular, in the investment field: Serbia is the third largest investor in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are indeed appreciative of the progress made with regard to infrastructure projects and pleased that work commenced therein has not been ceased during the pandemic. One of such projects is the construction of the highway between Belgrade and Sarajevo.

We trust and believe that regional cooperation is not only necessary, but also achievable only if we all demonstrate our readiness to work together on the realization of the strategic vision of a better region for all in the spirit of good-neighborly relations. Through its constructive and active engagement within the region, Serbia is making every effort to positively influence the

pursuit of common interests and prove, in the process, that sharing common values will help us reach the same goals, i.e. bring us closer to the membership of the European Union. We support Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration processes and welcome each and every step it takes in that direction.

Serbia's priority is to maintain peace and stability and, in that context, I would like to reiterate that, as a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, my country respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its three constituent peoples and two Entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska, with which Serbia has special relations under the Dayton Agreement. It will continue to develop good and active cooperation with the central and Entity authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina alike. Sovereign equality of States, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, peaceful solution of disputes and the respect of differences are the principles that Serbia upholds in its relations with all States. To that end, it supports all agreements that may be reached between the two Entities and among the three constituent peoples and, in that context, welcomes the holding of local elections on 15 November 2020, as well as those in Mostar on 20 December 2020.

Mr. President,

The Agreement in Dayton was reached by compromise and reflects a delicate, but hard-won balance among opposing concepts of the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each and every attempt, therefore, to put one model prevalent more than 25 years ago in front of another is less than conducive to the full and lasting stabilization of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is of paramount importance that we ensure peace and prosperity in the region and we are opposed to any action that is contrary to the principles of the Dayton Agreement. We therefore recall that the mechanism to alter the Agreement is well-known: it calls for relevant agreement by the two Entities and the three constituent peoples. The Republic of Serbia cannot accept interference and imposition of solutions by anybody within or without Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia fully respects the right of every country to conduct its foreign policy independently, including to join military-political alliances. Yet, it is equally respectful of their right to conduct such individual activities as may or may not lead to the membership of those alliances. As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Serbia will support every agreement or arrangement reached by the two Entities and the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina in a legitimate way.

Serbia calls on all the actors in the political processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina within the country, as well as on the representatives of the international community, to demonstrate an ever greater level of responsibility. In that connection, Serbia considers that dialogue within the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only way to heighten the level of confidence and achieve a compromise solution of issues relevant for the future development of the country and, by the same token, for the stability of the entire region. What is needed is to continue the policy of dialogue, good-neighborly relations and cooperation which have no alternative. As it did in the past, my country will continue to render its maximum and constructive contribution to these endeavors.

Thank you.