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**STATEMENT BY MR. DMITRY BALAKIN,  
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1143rd MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 April 2017

**In response to the report by the Head of the OSCE Mission to  
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Mr. Chairperson,

We welcome Mr. Jonathan Moore, as he makes a final statement to the Permanent Council. We are grateful for his close attention to and consideration of the positions of the host country and the other participating States during his term as Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, his straightforward and objective evaluations of the activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his proposals on OSCE assistance to resolve the outstanding issues.

As one of the guarantors of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement and a member of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, Russia supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the decentralized decision-making system, and the fundamental rules of equality, compromise and consensus among the country's constituent peoples.

We are in agreement with the assessments of the gradual progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the establishment of statehood and a legal framework, socio-economic development and reforms, including in the defence and security sector, and the return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of residence before the war. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are successfully designing an accountable foreign policy and aiming to develop good relations with their neighbours in the region. The stabilization process continues on the basis of the partnership approach set out in the Peace Agreement as the only means of overcoming inter-ethnic and interreligious divisions and consolidating society. This approach is the key requirement for strengthening mutual trust among the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are opposed to contrived politicization and attempts to dramatize isolated incidents in the internal political life of the country. The referendum held in the Republika Srpska on the main entity holiday was organized within the frameworks provided for in the Dayton Agreement for the extensive authority of the country's two entities, including in

relation to the establishment and designation of the dates of holidays. It is incorrect to view this as a step towards undermining the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its established decentralized constitutional architecture. We consider that the Republika Srpska National Assembly stressed the secular and non-discriminatory nature of the holiday, as established by a ruling of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and this matter is now closed.

We share the view of Mr. Moore on the destabilizing impact on the situation in the country of one-sided attempts to obtain a revision of the International Court of Justice judgment in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia concerning the application of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Such actions that bypass the Presidency and other joint Bosnian bodies run counter to the declared aims of strengthening the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina and undermine its capacity to function and its authority.

We are certain that all the sensitive issues for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its entities can be effectively resolved through a constructive intra-Bosnian dialogue involving the constitutional and legal and political and consultative mechanisms that exist in the country to these ends.

External intervention in the internal affairs of a sovereign State is not in the interests of increasing stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main issue here is the unilateral restrictive measures brought in by the previous US administration in relation to the President of the Republika Srpska. The desire to lay all the blame for the erratic course of the stabilization process in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the door of Mr. Dodik and the Bosnian Serbs is obviously detrimental to the intra-Bosnian dialogue and is not in keeping with the Dayton principles. We support a balanced and impartial approach on the part of the international community, including the OSCE Mission, to judging the actions of the constituent peoples.

In principle, we consider that international oversight is becoming a severe impediment to the harmonious development of the country. We stand by the approach of handing over full responsibility for what happens in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bosnians themselves. We support the closure of the Office of the High Representative with its outdated protectorate methods. The High Representative's attempts at unilateral intervention to the detriment of the dialogue among the participants in the internal political process merely artificially destabilize the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More than 20 years of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina can attest to the fact that the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats are perfectly capable of resolving issues of vital importance to the country's future while taking common interests into account.

We trust that the OSCE Mission will take the complete political independence and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the starting point for organizing its work. The main objective of the OSCE field presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains to support the peaceful coexistence of the ethnic groups based on the principle of mutual respect, strengthening interreligious harmony and tolerance in accordance with the principles of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The contribution of the field presence to attaining these goals is incontestable. We value projects aimed at overcoming discrimination in education, advancing interreligious

dialogue, preventing hate crimes, support for the process of returning refugees and internally displaced persons, and the conclusion of legal proceedings on war crimes. It is undoubtedly appropriate to step up assistance to the host authorities for combating cross-border threats. The programmes on arms control and assistance in providing appropriate storage conditions for surplus ammunition and weapons have made a meaningful contribution to increasing stability in the country and the Western Balkan region as a whole. We support the emphasis on the encouragement by the OSCE field presences in the Western Balkans of closer co-operation with host States on their common problems.

We are grateful to the leadership of the OSCE Mission for its constant attention to increasing its effectiveness. We are certain that in view of the level of the host States' development, a transition to targeted assistance on the part of the OSCE is relevant for the majority of field presences. The surplus resources must be freed up and used to solve problems in other areas. Overall, we stress that the true purpose of OSCE field missions as an instrument for assisting interested OSCE participating States should not be forgotten. This assistance should have clear goals and time-frames; if these are not met, this indicates that the OSCE assistance is not very effective.

In conclusion, we should once again like to thank Mr. Moore for his statement today and for his years of co-operation through the OSCE, and wish him success in his work in new and undoubtedly no less demanding areas.

Thank you for your attention.