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**STATEMENT BY  
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1514th MEETING OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

27 March 2025

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

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Aggeler,

We thank you for your comprehensive report on the activities of the OSCE's field operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which also provides a detailed description of the recent alarming developments in that country.

Having said that, we cannot agree with your perspective, Mr. Aggeler, on how these are due to legislative initiatives by the leadership of the Republika Srpska – initiatives that are aimed at preserving the guarantees for the rights of the Serb population enshrined in the Dayton Agreement. Let me remind you that the drastic exacerbation of tensions in the relations between the authorities in Sarajevo and those in Banja Luka was triggered by the guilty verdict handed down on 26 February to the President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik. It is obvious that, in this case, justice cannot be said to have triumphed at all. Criminal proceedings were fabricated around the non-implementation of Christian Schmidt's decisions by the lawfully elected head of that entity.

Now, it is necessary to bear in mind that German citizen Christian Schmidt is not a "High Representative" – his appointment was not approved by the United Nations Security Council, as required by the Dayton Peace Agreement. All his so-called "activities" over the past few years are nothing but arbitrariness and unlawful interference in the affairs of a sovereign European State, which have resulted in yet another domestic political crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina. No one can be held liable in any way – let alone criminally liable – for not complying with his so-called "decisions".

We believe that the ensuing legitimate measures taken in response by the authorities in Banja Luka are within the law and aimed at protecting the original Dayton architecture from encroachments by an illegitimate "High Representative" and the authorities in Sarajevo, which are in effect under his thumb. This refers, above all, to protecting the entity's status and its constitutional powers as provided for by the Dayton Agreement.

The authors of the report are, by the looks of it, trying to convince us that the actions by the authorities in Sarajevo are intended merely to hold a specific political figure accountable and are by no means directed against the Serb population, who are purportedly distancing themselves from the political crisis in that country and do not consider their rights to be trampled underfoot by what is decided by the so-called “High Representative” and the Sarajevo officialdom, which is fully answerable to him. At the same time, in the text of the report itself, reference is made to a 25,000-strong rally in support of the institutions of the Republika Srpska and its leadership that took place in Banja Luka on 25 February, the day before the verdict against President Dodik was announced. In effect, out of the politically active citizens of the entity’s capital, one in two took to the streets. That is a clear illustration of what the inhabitants of the Republika Srpska really feel about what is going on, of their rejection of the essentially anti-Serb policy of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The entity’s leadership is also being charged with failing to comply with the rulings of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is not only the authorities in Banja Luka who have their doubts about the Constitutional Court’s impartiality and coherence, but also the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Without making an assessment of the quality of the justice administered in Strasbourg, I should like to cite as an example the ECHR judgment on the complaint filed by Dervo Sejdić and Jakob Finci, in which the Court pointed out, in no uncertain terms, how the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina had interpreted the provisions of the country’s Constitution in utterly contradictory ways in two different judicial proceedings.

The report presents the celebration of the Republika Srpska Day as a further act undermining the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is fair to ask what is wrong with the public order in that country if it can be so easily unsettled by popular festivities. Or does it all come down to the fact that it is a Serb holiday?

If the answer to that question is in the affirmative, then we are dealing here with overt discrimination against the Bosnian Serbs, with curtailment of their rights on ethnic grounds, which is in direct violation of the Constitution and the principle enshrined in the Dayton Agreement regarding the equality of the two entities and the three constituent peoples.

The report also mentions a statement issued by the OSCE Mission on 13 March this year about the draft Constitution of the Republika Srpska undermining the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I should like to point out that neither the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina nor the Dayton Accords prohibit the Republika Srpska from having its own Constitution and amending it in accordance with that entity’s legislation. The proposed text of the new version of that document is currently at the public discussion stage; the constitutional process has not yet concluded. Moreover, even the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been in a hurry to pronounce itself definitively on this matter. Against this backdrop, the premature categorical assessments published by the OSCE field operation are not only not conducive to stabilizing the situation but, on the contrary, are widening the rift within the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We must recall the unsavoury instances forming part of the OSCE’s history in which our Organization’s field operations have been involved in actions to destabilize the Balkans. This week we are commemorating a sad date, namely the 26th anniversary of the start of NATO’s aggression against Yugoslavia. The events in the village of Račak served back then as the formal reason for bombing that country, as did the imprudent assessments by the Head of the OSCE Kosovo Verification Mission, William Walker, who, before an official investigation had been concluded, pinned the entire blame for those events on the authorities in Belgrade, doing so publicly and in violation of his own mandate. The leadership of the North Atlantic Alliance would subsequently admit that the air operation had been in the works long

before the events in Račak, which were merely a convenient pretext for conducting it. Furthermore, it remains a most telling fact that, as an upshot, four Balkan States that had previously been part of Yugoslavia would go on to join NATO: Slovenia in 2004, Croatia in 2009, Montenegro in 2017 and North Macedonia in 2020.

Nowadays, too, political functionaries are at work who flout their own mandate for the sake of forced Euro-Atlantic integration of territories that have not yet been assimilated by the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union, disregarding the rights of the people living in those territories, regional security interests and the norms of international law along with fundamental OSCE principles and documents. Among other places, we are currently seeing the manifestations of such a policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where a self-styled “High Representative”, abetted by the OSCE Mission, is overstepping all acceptable boundaries in order to make it possible for that country to be hauled into the European Union and NATO.

We call upon the Mission to distance itself from this destructive course. We reiterate that the work of this field operation must take into account the directives agreed upon by the participating States, be conducted in an even-handed manner throughout, avoid bias favouring any of the local players and involve seeking to facilitate the resolution of crises on the basis of consensus. It is essential to prevent the promotion of an anti-Serb scenario, to stop the Mission’s involvement in actions that may be regarded as undermining the Dayton Peace Agreement and as threatening to destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans as a whole.

Thank you for your attention.