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Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY
MR. MAXIM BUYAKEVICH, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE 1511th MEETING OF THE
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

6 March 2025

On the crisis situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mr. Chairperson,

Today, we are witnessing how the actions of certain political functionaries are jeopardizing the progress made in the settlement for Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past 30 years. The guilty verdict handed down by the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the fabricated case against the legally elected President of the Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, is a clear and flagrant violation of Bosnia and Herzegovina law, going against the spirit and letter of the Dayton Accords and undermining the fragile balance of inter-ethnic harmony in the country.

The absurdity of the situation lies in the fact that the representatives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina judiciary, relying on documents provided by the so-called “High Representative” that have no legal force, sentenced the legally elected leader of the Bosnian Serbs to a prison term for the conscientious fulfilment of his official duties.

I should like to recall that Christian Schmidt, who calls himself “High Representative”, lacks legitimacy in view of the gross violation of the procedure for his appointment to that post. His candidature was not approved either by all members of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council or by the three constituent peoples. In addition – and this is the most important thing – the approval of Mr. Schmidt for such a responsible post was not secured by a decision of the United Nations Security Council, as required by the provisions of the Dayton Agreement. Although without a mandate, he has repeatedly interfered in Bosnia and Herzegovina’s lawmaking and law enforcement practices, creating legal chaos and destabilizing the internal political situation. The illegal decisions taken by this illegitimate functionary have ultimately led to the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is obvious that the persecution of the President of the Republika Srpska, Mr. Dodik, instigated by the High Representative on behalf of external forces, is an act of reprisal aimed at eliminating Serbian patriotic forces from the political arena.

The resulting wave of public outrage in the Republika Srpska is an entirely predictable reaction to this kind of unconcealed arbitrary action. Not surprisingly, the idea of exercising the right to self-determination and of holding a referendum on becoming an independent State within its borders is

gaining popularity among the residents of the entity. The situation is escalating and risks having the most serious consequences.

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated the preservation of the Dayton architecture, whose sustainability depends on respect for the principle of the equality of the two entities and the three constituent peoples. We are convinced that if the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be preserved, its citizens must be allowed to determine the fate of their country on their own. In that regard, we believe it necessary to put into practice the fundamental decision taken by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council back in 2006 to abolish the post of High Representative.

There are serious questions about the position of the OSCE field operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the statement issued by the Mission in support of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is no mention of the destructive actions of the so-called "High Representative". Instead, the legislative initiatives of the constitutionally elected Republika Srpska leadership are described as being basically the primary threat to the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We demand that the Mission correct the distortions in its interpretation of developments in the Republic. OSCE staff should not become complicit in fuelling inter-ethnic strife.

We are compelled once again to stress that the work of the field operations should take into account the positions agreed upon by the participating States, be conducted in an equitable manner, avoid bias in favour of any of the internal political forces and reflect a desire to help resolve crisis situations on the basis of consensus. This approach is the key to the successful functioning of the entire OSCE system.

We draw the attention of the representatives of all participating States to the extreme danger of attempts to implement selfish geopolitical objectives in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Balkans as a whole, with the potential for large-scale regional destabilization. The tragic history of the 1990s must not be repeated. Instead, urgent action is needed to advance a unifying agenda in the Balkan region. The Russian Federation is ready for dialogue in the OSCE with a view to harnessing constructive efforts to that end.

Thank you for your attention.