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**STATEMENT BY
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RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS ON MILITARY
SECURITY AND ARMS CONTROL, AT THE 1130th PLENARY MEETING OF
THE OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

11 March 2026

Agenda item: Security Dialogue

Subject: Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control in accordance with Article IV of Annex 1-B of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Madam Chairperson,

We are grateful for the convening of a Security Dialogue devoted to a topic traditionally falling under the politico-military mandate of the Forum for Security Co-operation, namely regional security issues. We welcome His Excellency Mr. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu, Secretary General of the OSCE, and thank the panellists for their insightful presentations. The Russian Federation, as a guarantor of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (“Dayton Agreement”) and a member of the Contact Group, believes in the importance of implementing the Florence Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, concluded on the basis of the provisions of Article IV of Annex 1-B to the Dayton Agreement.

The parties to the Agreement – Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska) – undertook to establish balanced and stable defensive arms ceilings at the lowest possible level consistent with their security needs. As one of the guarantors of the Dayton Peace Accords, Russia supported the delegation of authority to the parties to the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control, viewing this as an important step towards transferring responsibility for the disarmament situation to the Balkan States themselves.

We continue to regard this instrument of treaty law as an effective tool for maintaining stability and security and building trust in the Western Balkans region.

We note the importance of the smooth operation of the monitoring mechanisms provided for by the Florence Agreement, including inspection visits by representatives of the national verification centres of the defence ministries of the States Parties and member countries of the Contact Group, not least Russian representatives.

As one of the States that witnessed the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, which was endorsed by United Nations Security Council resolution 1031

(1995), we note that, in terms of the Security Council's mandate (on threats to peace and security), the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not give rise to immediate concern.

At the same time, we are obliged to point out that the overall crisis-ridden nature of the domestic political situation there continues to be shaped by the destabilizing role of several Western countries, which are interfering in the affairs of sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby artificially provoking inter-ethnic tensions. We note how Western circles are seeking to dismantle the balanced Dayton system whereby the equal interests of the three constituent peoples and two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are taken into account by virtue of their being endowed with broad constitutional powers. It is evident that the root of the problems besetting Bosnia and Herzegovina lies in the desire of certain States to refashion that country in their own mould, in violation of the legitimate interests of its peoples.

Responsibility for destabilizing the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina rests primarily with the self-styled "High Representative", Christian Schmidt. In 2021, this retired German politician was "appointed" to the post of High Representative in violation of relevant procedures and international practice, bypassing the United Nations Security Council. We are convinced of the need for this institution amounting to an external protectorate over Bosnia and Herzegovina to be shut down as soon as possible and unreservedly.

The substantial rift among members of the international community regarding matters related to Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a cause for concern. Through Western countries' efforts, co-operation with Russia within the framework of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council has been disrupted. It is clear that such a practice is unacceptable in terms of the rules governing multilateral co-operation when it comes to a situation under the purview of the United Nations Security Council. Nevertheless, we remain ready to engage constructively with a view to putting the settlement process in Bosnia and Herzegovina back on a positive track, based on the Dayton principles of equality among the three constituent peoples and the two entities with broad constitutional powers, facilitating the promotion of dialogue, seeking compromises and reaching consensus among them. We see this as being key to the comprehensive development of a multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are monitoring the progress of the EU military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) very closely. We recall that its mandate is strictly defined by the United Nations Security Council. We caution against the involvement of an international contingent in domestic political processes. We consider the increase in EUFOR-Althea troop numbers to be unjustified.

At the same time, we should like to stress that NATO's military and political activities in the Western Balkans continue to be deeply concerning. They clearly undermine the Dayton Accords, and in particular Article IV on disarmament.

The trend towards militarization has fully left its mark on the countries in the region that are members of the Alliance. They are raising their military spending to 5 per cent of gross domestic product by 2035, ramping up the manufacture and procurement of weaponry and military equipment, and becoming actively involved in increasingly frequent and ever larger-scale NATO military exercises, during which not only defensive but also offensive operations are rehearsed. Contingents are being assigned to form part of multinational combat battlegroups deployed to "contain" Russia on the "eastern flank", including in the Balkans. For the purposes of military mobility, the corresponding infrastructure is being expanded and various logistics arrangements for the movement of troops are being tested. The Alliance makes no secret of the fact that the Balkans as a whole, and the Western Balkans in particular, are intended to serve as an important forward-operating base as NATO prepares for an outright military confrontation with our country within the next three to five years – a scenario for which preparations are in full swing in Brussels.

In addition, at the instigation of their Western instructors, the combat capabilities of the “Kosovo Security Force” continue to be actively strengthened. They are being transformed into a fully fledged army, in violation of the requirements of United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, which calls for the demilitarization of all armed groups in that province. In September 2025, the authorities in Pristina unveiled a four-year programme to “strengthen” the “Kosovo Security Force”, which includes, in particular, the allocation of over 1 billion euros in funding for that purpose. Reservists are being trained and military infrastructure prepared. The personnel strength of the “armed forces” of Kosovo is being increased to 5,000 troops by the end of 2026 and to 8,500 by 2028.

Contrary to the aforementioned United Nations Security Council resolution, Western countries are systematically plying the “Kosovo Security Force” with weapons. Over 500 million dollars has been spent on the procurement of Western weaponry and military equipment since 2021, including M1117 armoured personnel carriers, Vuran armoured vehicles, FGM-148F Javelin anti-tank missile systems and Bayraktar TB2 unmanned aerial vehicles. Plans have been announced to acquire Black Hawk helicopters this year. Construction of an ammunition production facility by the MKE corporation is nearing completion, with commissioning scheduled for late 2026. It is also planned to start production of unmanned combat aerial vehicles.

We should like to draw particular attention to the issue of subregional military blocs, which pose a serious threat to peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

In the spring of 2025, the authorities in Zagreb, Tirana and Pristina signed an agreement on defence and security co-operation. As part of this initiative, the joint procurement of Western weaponry and military equipment has been announced, as have plans by the authorities in Kosovo to create a joint military unit with the Albanian armed forces. It is planned to establish intelligence-sharing mechanisms, to integrate systems for the processing and transmission of military information, to synchronize analytical centres and to co-ordinate the armed forces’ cyberwarfare units. These steps run counter to United Nations Security Council resolution 1244, which reaffirms Serbia’s territorial integrity with regard to Kosovo and prohibits the presence of any military formations in that province other than an international contingent tasked with maintaining security – the NATO-led Kosovo Force.

Furthermore, in the autumn of 2025, Croatia and Slovenia signed a military co-operation agreement, which also provides for the deepening of military and technical co-operation and the joint development of weapons.

The participants in militarized subregional formats such as those we have just mentioned claim to be committed to maintaining peace and stability in South-Eastern Europe. However, in reality they are sparking a further rise in tensions and an arms race in the Balkans.

We should like to emphasize in particular that, as a signatory to the Dayton Agreement, Croatia has a special responsibility for safeguarding security in the post-conflict region of the Balkans. So far, though, its actions aimed at escalating tensions are in clear breach of the relevant provisions of the Dayton Agreement, in particular Annex 1-B, including Article IV thereof on measures for subregional arms control. We expect the guarantor States of that instrument, which played an active role in the negotiation process, to take a firm stand against these actions.

It is also worth noting that pressure has generally been mounting of late on the regional players that remain outside NATO – on Serbia, the Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, we can see that the bloc is focused on strengthening its presence in Serbia, stepping up its outreach work to ensure

that the country stays on the Euro-Atlantic track, and forcing Serbia to choose between the West and co-operation with other countries, above all Russia and China. NATO has made it quite clear to Bosnia and Herzegovina that it is expected to take “substantive steps towards membership of the Alliance”, despite the well-known lack of consensus on this issue both within the country’s leadership and among the population.

It is telling that this is happening with the support of NATO and EU countries, notably Germany, which is playing an increasingly destabilizing role in the region.

The range of factors we have just outlined are leading to further aggravation of the military and political situation both in the Western Balkans and across Europe as a whole. They are by no means conducive to achieving the overarching objectives of the Dayton Agreement, namely regional stability, disarmament and peace.

We should like to warn Western countries not to foment mistrust among the Balkan States and turn the region into an arena of geopolitical confrontation.

We are convinced that the Dayton Agreement remains the sole possible framework for the settlement process in the Western Balkans.

As one of the guarantor States of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords, Russia stands ready to engage constructively with a view to achieving a genuine post-conflict settlement in that region.

Thank you for your attention.