



Security Council

Sixty-eighth year

*Provisional***7057**th meeting

Tuesday, 12 November 2013, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Liu Jieyi (China)

Members:

Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
Australia	Ms. King
Azerbaijan	Mr. Mehdiyev
France	Mr. Araud
Guatemala	Mr. Rosenthal
Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
Morocco	Mr. Atlassi
Pakistan	Mr. Masood Khan
Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
Russian Federation.	Mr. Churkin
Rwanda	Mr. Nduhugirehe
Togo.	Mr. M'Beou
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Tatham
United States of America.	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 5 November 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/646)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

13-55965 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 5 November 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2013/646)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Thomas Mayr-Harting, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2013/646, which contains the text of a letter dated 5 November 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the forty-fourth report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now give the floor to Mr. Inzko.

Mr. Inzko: Allow me to begin by thanking the members of the Security Council for their ongoing commitment to our common goal of irreversible peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina still merits close attention if we are to ensure that the gains made after the war in terms of stability, rebuilding the country and reconciling its people are not lost. In my address to the Security Council in May (see S/PV.6966), I described how the political situation had reverted to the negative trends of the past seven years and how the country's elected leadership had failed to make a serious effort towards progress on Euro-Atlantic integration.

I regret to say that six months later, with less than a year left until the next general elections, that is still the case. In the past six months, the political leaders have again missed a chance to take a decisive step forward by agreeing to correct discriminatory provisions in the electoral system. Those changes are required by the *Sejdić-Finci* judgement of the European Court of Human Rights. Such changes are not only a condition for the country to move forward towards European Union candidacy but also a test of the country's ability to apply basic human rights standards in the conduct of elections and to live up to its international obligations.

Similarly, progress has remained elusive in regulating the question of the ownership of military property, which has kept Bosnia and Herzegovina from activating its membership action plan with NATO.

At the beginning of the reporting period, the public expressed its dissatisfaction with the inertia of elected leaders in demonstrations throughout the country, the most dramatic of which were seen outside the building of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where, in June, several thousand demonstrators surrounded the building over nearly two days, with employees and visitors kept inside for several hours.

At the end of the reporting period, Bosnia and Herzegovina again saw protests of a different nature on a much smaller scale, related to the ethnic divisions in the education system. I believe that the international community as a whole has underestimated the significance of education as part of the process of post-war reconciliation and reintegration.

While those two protests were of a very different nature and about very different issues, they reveal the fundamental dissatisfaction that is present in many different segments of the country both with the unresolved divisions within the country and with the lack of urgency among the country's leaders in reaching compromises to address those divisions and to move forward.

They also reveal, in my view, that the public has understood something that many Bosnian leaders have still failed to grasp, namely, that democracy is something to be exercised not only every four years through elections but also in between.

Turning to the main political developments of the past six months, the general trend has been negative but there have been some exceptions. Significantly,

the country managed in October to conduct its first population census since 1991. For 20 years, there had been no census. It was conducted successfully in October. That is a significant development and is vitally important for providing statistical information on social and economic issues. It is important that the results of the census not be used to promote divisions or to exacerbate ethnic tensions.

Generally, the economic situation has been difficult. In addition to its own resources, Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to rely on external budgetary support over the past year to pay its bills. The official unemployment rate is still 44 per cent. That is of course another indication of the serious economic hardship suffered by a large portion of the population. At the same time, it should be stressed that there have also been some positive developments, for example in the areas of exports, where we have seen an 8-per-cent increase this year, and of industrial production, where we have seen a 7-per-cent to date.

From the point of view of my mandate to uphold the Dayton Peace Agreement, which includes the State Constitution, I remain concerned by the readiness of the entities, in particular the Republika Srpska, to challenge the competencies of the State provided for under the Peace Agreement. An area of particular concern is the rule of law, where rhetorical attacks against the judicial institutions established to exercise the constitutional responsibilities of the State have continued. This political interference in the work of the judiciary was taken a step further in October, when the Republika Srpska National Assembly issued another set of conclusions against the State-level judiciary.

Another concern with the rule of law is the ongoing failure of the domestic institutions to implement the verdicts of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court, which are final and binding under the terms of the Peace Agreement. Over 80 decisions remain unimplemented.

During the reporting period, the dispute continued among the parties in Government in the Federation, which is a bigger entity, but its intensity diminished and the Government went back to work. My Office also facilitated a resolution to fill long-standing vacancies on the Federation Constitutional Court to ensure that that important institution could continue its work. Nonetheless, the crisis in the larger entity's Federation has continued to reveal functional deficiencies and

gaps in the entity's system of Government and the ongoing need for reform in the Federation to make the system more functional, efficient and cost-effective. In this context, I welcome the initiative of local experts, supported by the United States Government, to reform the Federation Constitution in order to improve the functionality of the entity, which is a process my Office strongly supports.

The functional inefficiency of the Federation stood again in some contrast to the institutions of the Republika Srpska, which functioned very smoothly. During the reporting period, they met on a regular basis — they also had some changes of ministerial posts — and the Government continued its efforts to tackle the economic and social challenges facing the entity. However, from the point of view of future threats to the stability of the country, I remain concerned about the continued statements by some of the most senior officials from the Republika Srpska advocating the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a country.

The Republika Srpska President remains the most frequent and vocal critic of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, recently boasting again that he will lead the entity to independence. During the reporting period, the Serb member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina presidency, Mr. Radmanović, also raised the possibility of an independence referendum should half the States Members of the United Nations recognize Kosovo. He presented this as the official policy of the Republika Srpska, previously adopted by the entity Assembly.

In this context, I believe that the continued presence of the European Union and NATO military missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina still plays a vital role in reassuring the public that the country remains safe and secure despite the difficult political situation. In my view, the deterrent effect of a relatively small force with an executive mandate is well worth the investment. Given the difficult political circumstances and the chance for further challenges in 2014, I consider their continued presence to be a critical reassurance, and I therefore warmly welcome the adoption of resolution 2123 (2013), prolonging the mandate of the military mission for another year.

I want to conclude my remarks today on a more positive note, for while we cannot ignore the ongoing limited progress or the political instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we must also remember that the

country, its leaders and its people still have every chance to work together, to succeed and to prosper.

The European Union (EU) has demonstrated its commitment to assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in meeting the country's EU aspirations time and again, engaging at the highest levels and reinforcing its presence on the ground with one of its most experienced and skilful diplomats, Ambassador Peter Sørensen. He is doing an excellent job and has brought the European Union to centre stage in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Peter Sørensen and I and our offices are cooperating closely, respecting our different but complementary mandates, in order to achieve synergies for the country.

As we are at the United Nations here today, I should also mention the very good work that the United Nations family is currently doing on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the able leadership of United Nations Country Resident Coordinator Yuri Afanasiev.

To see the potential of what Bosnia and Herzegovina could achieve, we need only observe how the processes of Euro-Atlantic integration have already transformed Bosnia's neighbours and brought with them enormous gains. In this sense, Bosnia and Herzegovina has the benefit of the best regional situation in the past 20 years. The country has benefited from good relations with Croatia, which is now a State member of the European Union, under the capable leadership of President Josipović, Prime Minister Milanović and Minister for Foreign Affairs Pusić. Croatia also has 1,000 kilometres of common border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, which means that the European Union now has 1,000 kilometres of common border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. The country also benefits from good relations with Serbia, which is a future candidate country, and the constructive policies of President Nikolić, Prime Minister Dačić, Deputy Prime Minister Vučić and Minister for Foreign Affairs Mrkić. Ultimately, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to benefit from good relations with its third neighbour, Montenegro. We should remember that exactly the same opportunities are being offered to Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders as to the countries in the region that I just mentioned.

At the same time, the past few years have shown that the international community should not ignore, in its approach, some of the specificities of Bosnia and Herzegovina's history, its post-war settlement — it has been exactly 18 years since the war ended — and risks to its future stability. Again, this should be cause not

for despair, but rather for the international community to step back and consider whether there is a need to recalibrate our approach and how we can best help Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens on the track towards prosperity and political stability.

In this context, we need to stand together to support all those in Bosnia and Herzegovina who are ready to help the country progress and stand against those who would take the country backwards towards further division and disintegration. With the sustained attention and goodwill of this body and the international community as a whole, I am sure that we can help Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders and its wonderful leaders to reach their common goals.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Inzko for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Azerbaijan): Let me start by congratulating you, Mr. President, and your delegation on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish you and your team every success. I would like to thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for presenting the forty-fourth report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2013/646, annex). We welcome the adoption earlier today (see S/PV.7055) of resolution 2123 (2013), authorizing the renewal of mandate of the European Union-led force Operation Althea.

We note that the security situation in the country continued to remain stable during the reporting period. According to the report of the High Representative, the intensity of the political crisis in the Federation entity diminished. It is particularly encouraging that the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities have continued their path towards completing the "5+2" agenda, which is necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. In that regard, we note the regular meetings of the ministerial working group established earlier this year with the purpose of solving the State- and defense-property issue and the drafting of legislation on the matter. We encourage the Government to continue its efforts to that end.

Among the achievements registered were also regular meetings of the Federation institutions, the adoption of a number of new laws and amendments to existing laws by the Government and the Federation

Parliament, and the holding of the first post-war census of population and households in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the reporting period, important progress was made towards unblocking the long-delayed appointments to the Federation Constitutional Court and its Vital National Interest Panel. We commend the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina for his efforts in that regard. There were also some positive developments on the economic front during the reporting period, although the overall economic situation remains complex, with a high number of persons unemployed and a difficult fiscal situation. We agree with the High Representative that much more should be done to realize the country's full potential for significant growth.

Despite the aforementioned positive developments, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face a number of challenges. We once again express our concern about the continuation of direct and open challenges to the fundamentals of the Dayton Peace Agreement, including in particular the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Azerbaijan condemns divisive rhetoric advocating the dissolution of the State and any action or attempt to challenge the functionality of the State, its constitutional responsibilities and the core provisions of the General Framework Agreement. We would like to emphasize in that regard that neither the General Framework Agreement nor general international law contains any provision invoking the claimed right to self-determination for the purpose of unilateral secession from or dissolution of the State. We agree with the High Representative that those issues deserve the special attention of the international community.

Another issue of concern requiring attention is non-enforcement of the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That constitutes a violation of the General Framework Agreement, undermines the rule of law and erodes respect for the authority of the highest judicial body in the country.

In conclusion, we reiterate our call on all stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage in constructive dialogue with a view to addressing the pressing challenges, overcoming the political stalemate and strengthening the stability and unity of the country. It is also important that the Security Council and the broader international community continue to support

progress towards stability and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the efforts of the country's political leadership to that end.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing. I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your country's assumption of the presidency of the Council, and thank the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan and his delegation for the way in which they led our Council in October.

I endorse the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union (EU).

We have just adopted resolution 2123 (2013), reauthorizing the action of the European Union-led peacekeeping force (EUFOR) Operation Althea, which maintains a residual executive mandate to support the capacity of the authorities of the country to preserve the security environment if the situation so requires. However, the Operation also continues to be evaluated regularly, in particular based on the situation on the ground, so as to achieve progress towards meeting the conditions that will enable it to complete its mandate. Indeed, the security situation on the ground has remained consistently calm and stable for several years. Furthermore, as the military authorities of the European Union have pointed out, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities have to date proved able to cope with any threats to the security climate.

The reconfiguration of the mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina therefore should continue. It has already led to a decrease in the forces deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and enabled them to refocus their role on capacity-building and training. The action of EUFOR Operation Althea in the drawdown phase must remain complementary to that of other stakeholders on the ground, in particular the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Duplication of efforts would lead only to confusion and be counterproductive.

Despite a calm and stable situation on the ground, as I have just mentioned, we remain nonetheless concerned by the stalemate in the political situation. The successive political crises distract the Bosnian authorities from their Euro-Atlantic integration goal. Nationalist rhetoric continues to fuel tensions and suspicions. We regret those excesses, especially because other States of the region have overcome and continue to overcome historic stages in the Euro-Atlantic integration process. The Council therefore urges the Bosnian Government

to resume its efforts towards reform, above all with by respecting the *Sejdić-Finci* ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, which is a decisive question for progress towards EU membership, as the Council has chosen to underscore in its resolution.

We should like to see the current Government bring the Constitution into line with the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. We also call on the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to continue their cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the residual mechanisms. That is a crucial criterion for Bosnia and Herzegovina's being accepted within the European family.

However, the absence of action by the Bosnian authorities is slowing movement towards accession. We are of course committed to the prospect of seeing Bosnia and Herzegovina joining the European Union as a unified, sovereign country enjoying full territorial integrity. However, it is up to the Bosnians and their leaders to find historic compromises that would endow the country with effectively functioning institutions. That clearly would not allow for the current usage of the current institutional framework inherited from the Dayton Peace Agreement. A country that is under supervision and deeply divided cannot as such become part of the European Union.

Nonetheless, political tensions have never undermined the security climate. High Representative Inzko, a guarantor of the peace agreements on behalf of the international community, has our full support. But the current governmental crisis reminds us that it is high time to empower the Bosnian political class to reclaim its unity for the sake of the singular priority of the European Union membership being extended to the country. The functions of the High Representative must therefore also significantly evolve. The consideration of how to reconfigure the Office of the High Representative has been initiated. Those efforts must continue in order to make that Office more effective based on the key role of the European Union. We hope that the relevant decisions will be taken shortly.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): We thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing and commend his valuable work. We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2013/646, annex). We welcome in our midst the Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms. Mirsada Čolaković.

Pakistan fully supports the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity to strengthen its State and to protect the rights of all communal entities. We have noted that, as in previous reports, the negatives exceed the positives. While the rest of the region seems to be forging ahead, internal dissension and disagreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina seem to be holding it back. The good news on the economic front and the end of the political crisis in the Federation entity are welcome signals. We hope that this momentum will be maintained.

Lack of progress on the implementation of the five objectives and two conditions necessary for the closure of the Office of the High Representative is an indication of Bosnia and Herzegovina's weak commitment to the future. While the efforts of the High Representative are appreciated, we urge leaders on all sides of the political divide to engage constructively to break the impasse.

Pakistan remains deeply concerned at the increasing challenges to the Dayton Peace Agreement and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Actions by the leadership of the Republika Srpska, including advocating the dissolution of the State, characterizing entities as States, and challenging the functionality of the State and its responsibilities under the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina amount to challenging the core provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Unilateral action of the Government of the Republika Srpska has also led to the crisis on citizen identification numbers. Such conduct creates unrest and instability and is a matter of serious concern. We believe that angry and aggravating rhetoric does not serve the interests of any community; it vitiates the atmosphere and undermines prospects for long-term peaceful coexistence. It is vitally important that all parties recognize international and legal frameworks for the division of power in the country. The leadership of the country needs to resolve its differences through dialogue. Pakistan will continue to support all efforts to ensure a safe and secure Bosnia and Herzegovina working for the improvement of the lives of the people. The Office of the High Representative should continue to play its role in that regard. We wish Mr. Inzko success.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I would like to join previous speakers in thanking the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin

Inzko, for his report (S/2013/646, annex) and for the work he is doing in the service of the Bosnians.

Luxembourg associates itself with the statement to be made on behalf of the European Union.

In his most recent report, the High Representative highlights the continuing gridlock that prevents reforms that are nevertheless crucial for achieving the goals that the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have set for themselves in terms of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. The ongoing discord between political officials continues to impede the proper functioning of Bosnian institutions. Legislative work at various levels has been insufficient, and the authorities have been unable to respond to the legitimate aspirations of their citizens who are demanding an effective system of governance. The demonstrations in June in the streets of Sarajevo to protest against the authorities' inability to issue identification numbers to its citizens also testifies to the discontent of the population as regards that situation.

On a more positive note, the intensity of the political crisis in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has waned, particularly following the intervention of the High Representative. Like Mr. Inzko, we also welcome the fact that last month the Bosnian authorities were able to carry out a population and household census, with the support of the European Union. It is the first census organized since the end of the war.

Despite the political difficulties and a worrisome level of unemployment, the security situation has remained calm and stable. The European Union-led force Operation Althea did not need to intervene in order to restore peace given that the Bosnian authorities were able to address potential security threats. That is a fact that should be welcomed. It fully justifies the decision of the European Union to focus the Force's main efforts on capacity-building and training while preserving the means to contribute to the deterrent capacity of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ongoing efforts to prosecute the perpetrators of war crimes is an key component of reconciliation efforts. Luxembourg attaches particular importance to that issue. We share the concerns of the High Representative as regards the manner in which the leaders of the Republika Srpska are using the decision issued on 18 July by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Maktouf and Damjanović v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* for the purposes of calling into question

the Court and the Office of the Prosecutor of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is the duty of the Bosnian State to ensure that justice is done and that perpetrators of serious crimes under international law are prosecuted, tried and punished; that faculty cannot be called into question. In the same vein, we call upon all communities and their political representatives to respect the authority of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, whose work remains crucial.

The European aspiration of Bosnia and Herzegovina was solemnly reaffirmed by President Željko Komšić in his speech to the General Assembly on 24 September (see A/68/PV.6). To fulfil that aspiration, the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina must make tangible progress, including by fully implementing the decision rendered on 22 December 2009 by the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

On 1 July, Croatia became the twenty-eighth State member of the European Union. For their part, Serbia and Kosovo have taken significant steps on their path to European integration by continuing the implementation of the 19 April 2013 agreement. We deeply believe that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united, stable and multi-ethnic State lies in a European perspective. As a member State of the European Union and as an elected member of the Security Council, Luxembourg will spare no effort to help Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve its European future. It is in that spirit that we have lent our full support to resolution 2123 (2013), which was facilitated by our colleagues from Azerbaijan and adopted unanimously this morning by the Security Council.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation has consistently advocated in favour of strict compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement, with its State structure for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its plan for the country's unity and territorial integrity. We wish to see the establishment and the normal functioning of a central Bosnia-wide authority while preserving aspects of the status and mandate of its entities as well as the equality of all three constituent peoples. We are carefully following the internal political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We see no reason for its being dramatized; whatever fundamental threat may exist, we see none to its stability.

Unfortunately, the report (S/2013/646, annex) of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Mr. Inzko, to the Security Council on the situation in the country is once again not objective. First of all, we would like to point out the biased criticism of the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs, alleging that they are the source of all Bosnian ills and that they are undermining the fundamental bases of the Peace Agreement. In order to ensure a more objective representation of the events unfolding in Bosnia, we would recommend that the members of the Security Council also read the latest report of the Republika Srpska to the Security Council, in which the commitment of the Bosnian Serbs to international law and the letter and spirit of Dayton is made clear.

The Russian Federation calls upon all parties to the settlement process to refrain from counterproductive emotions and controversy in order to foster inter-Bosnian dialogue. We are particularly concerned by the calls to arms sounded by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Željko Komšić. The High Representative must establish constructive dialogue between the constituent peoples and not provoke enmity between them.

We are not just talking about rhetoric, however; we continue to hope for an improved political situation for Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Federation level. The Bosnian-Croat problems run quite deep. The ongoing conflicts between the Bosnian parties have led not only to paralysis in the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also to a hampering of the activities of the central Bosnian institutions.

In his report, the High Representative notes that the demonstrations that took place in Sarajevo in June confirmed that Bosnians are tired of the political crisis. In that context, we would like to underscore the unacceptability of external interference in such actions.

With respect to the reform of the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the time has come to address the matter. However, we need to work strictly on the basis of the consensus of the entities.

We are seriously concerned by the radicalization of Muslim circles within Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the recruitment of fighters into the ranks of anti-Government groups in Syria. It is strange that the High Representative did not talk at all about that in his report.

Of particular relevance recently has been the ongoing work of the Bosnians, with the support of the international community, in the disposal of military

equipment and munitions left over from the Yugoslav conflict.

It is clear that the institutions of the Serbian entity are working effectively. The economy is also showing hopeful signs, with growth in industry and exports.

At this stage of the settlement in Bosnia, we believe that the international community's main task is transferring responsibility for the fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bosnians themselves. In that regard, we support the abolition of the Office of the High Representative and a reversion to implementing the "5+2" programme agreed on by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board. In particular, the issue of State property should be comprehensively addressed, encouraging an entire package of the parties' agreements rather than isolating its individual components. In our view, the situation in Brcko District is developing pretty well along Dayton lines, thus confirming the validity of the 2012 suspension of the Supervisor's mission as a step towards abolishing the protectorate in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We welcome the separation of the posts of the High Representative and the Special Representative of the European Union (EU). One of the absolute conditions for the work of these two international presences in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be strict adherence to their mandates. They should not interfere with each other's responsibilities, let alone duplicate their functions. This has particular relevance with respect to issues connected to the further promotion of a structured dialogue between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU on justice, where they will work together to build independent and impartial courts and prosecutors at every level in Bosnia, in order to rectify the serious anti-Serb distortions in investigating war crimes during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995.

At the current stage of the Bosnian settlement process, the most important thing is to encourage a full-on intra-Bosnian dialogue and a search by the parties themselves, without outside interference, for generally acceptable options for socioeconomic and structural reform that comply strictly with the Dayton mechanisms. At the same time, we must work on drawing down the Office of the High Representative, which includes continuing the practice of annual budget and staff cuts, based firmly on the 5+2 plan and admitting no new criteria for ending the protectorate regime. We believe that decisions on key issues of the settlement

should be made in agreed-on international forums such as the Security Council and the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, whose consensus-based work is crucial.

While not a participant in the EU-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia supports some of the aims of its mandate for ensuring security in Bosnia and Herzegovina and helping to train and instruct staff for the country's Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces. In that regard, we once again supported the resolution extending the mission's mandate this year (resolution 2123 (2013)).

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to welcome High Representative Inzko to the Council once again and to thank him for his comprehensive report on developments over the past six months in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2013/646, annex). We greatly appreciate his commitment to implementing his mandate under the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

The United States congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina on completing its first census since 1991. Reliably quantifying the demographic changes that have occurred over the past 22 years is essential for formulating effective social and economic policy. We hope the census results will be used constructively to inform policy decisions as the results are released in coming months. We also welcome the initiative under way in the Federation to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of governance in that entity. We were proud to be a sponsor of the Federation Reform Conference in May, and we hope that the Federation Parliament will soon consider the amendments and other legislative changes proposed by the Federation reform experts group, with a view to implementation of the reforms by next year's elections.

The United States strongly supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations for its integration into the European Union (EU) and NATO. In spite of recent blockages, we continue to view the Euratlantic integration process as the surest and most expeditious path to the long-term stability and prosperity of the country and the region. We hope the interests of all citizens will be placed above narrow personal or ethnic agendas. We strongly support the EU's efforts to facilitate an agreement among Bosnians that will lead to implementation of the 2009 judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić-Finzi* case, a prerequisite for Bosnia and Herzegovina to

apply for EU candidacy. Four years after the Court's ruling, this case should not hold the country's EU future hostage. We also look forward to progress on registration of defence properties in order to meet NATO's condition for activating its membership action plan. With last summer's Constitutional Court ruling confirming State ownership of all former Yugoslav State property, including defence properties, a path was cleared to register those properties necessary to meeting the map condition with the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina as soon as possible.

While some Republika Srpska politicians continue to make divisive, anti-Dayton statements, it is important to underscore that State institutions such as the State Court and Prosecutor's Office are crucial to strengthening the rule of law and meeting European integration standards. In addition, a focus on developing and implementing sustainable economic policies will assure continued progress for the Republika Srpska.

Finally, we continue to stand by Bosnia and Herzegovina as it overcomes the past. The continuing discovery of mass grave sites and the ongoing politicization of war-crimes cases are further reminders of the importance of maintaining progress on reconciliation. In the light of the ongoing challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the United States continues to strongly support High Representative Inzko and his Office, as well as renewal of the mandate of the EU-led military force under Chapter VII, which we sponsored this morning (see S/PV.7055). It remains essential that the international community retain those stabilization instruments, given the work that remains to assure progress on the Euratlantic reform agenda and to see the continued and full implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords.

The international community must remain committed to supporting the aspirations of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina for a peaceful and prosperous Euratlantic future, and their efforts to promote reconciliation. We look forward to continuing to work closely with our partners on the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, among others, in order to do so.

Ms. King (Australia): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Council. I would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan for his successful presidency in October.

I also thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Inzko, for his report (S/2013/646, annex). We support the important work done by his Office to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement, strengthen the rule of law, monitor compliance with the rulings of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, facilitate reforms to ensure the economic prosperity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and monitor the safe return of displaced people.

Australia fully supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call on those political leaders in the Republika Srpska who have made corrosive political declarations or used inflammatory rhetoric to work constructively for the good of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to fully respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also call on all political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work productively to reach the compromises necessary to achieve the five conditions and two objectives set by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

Mr. Inzko's report provided yet again a frank depiction of the protracted political difficulties in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which continue to hinder further political, economic and social development there. We note the concern conveyed in his report that the State-level Parliamentary Assembly has not been able to fully adopt a single new law this year. It is regrettable that the citizens of Mostar continue to be denied the democratic right to elect their local representatives, since the 2010 ruling of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the city's electoral system has not been implemented. It was disappointing that the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina were unable to craft a timely solution to the citizens' identification number issue in the early summer, although we note that in recent days progress has been made to resolve that issue. As Mr. Inzko said, the protests in the summer over that issue reflected widespread disillusionment with poor governance and clearly indicated that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were demanding results from their political leaders.

We acknowledge recent positive developments. The holding of the 2013 census of population, households and dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a significant step, given that it was the first census taken since 1991. Its results will provide essential information for the purposes of economic and social planning and the delivery of services to the people.

The easing — albeit partial — of the political crisis in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and recent encouraging economic data are also positive

Mr. Inzko has reported that during the period under review, Bosnia and Herzegovina failed to make concrete progress on European Union and NATO integration. We are concerned that the lack of momentum contrasts starkly when considered against the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina's neighbours. We hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will embrace the new era of political compromise and constructive engagement emerging in the Western Balkans region.

Amending the country's constitution to implement the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić-Finci* case obviously remains a threshold issue on the path towards European integration. We encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to make progress in that regard.

We acknowledge that the security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has remained stable over the reporting period, and that is important. We recognize the valuable work being done by the European Union-led peacekeeping force (EUFOR) and NATO missions, including in improving the country's management and disposal of surplus arms and ammunition. EUFOR should not stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina forever, but at this stage it remains an essential component of the efforts to ensure stability, confidence and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Our hope remains that the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina will take further decisive action to overcome their political differences and work towards a more stable, peaceful and prosperous future for the people of their country.

Mr. De Antueno (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for presenting his report on the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2013/646, annex).

Argentina reaffirms its support for the Dayton Agreement and the protection and preservation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We underscore their importance, as well as respect for the rule of law, in ensuring durable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

First of all, we deplore the fact that the negative trend of previous years has not been curbed, as underscored in the High Representative's prior report (see S/2013/263). We are worried about reports on the ongoing challenges to the Federation's institutional capacities, as well as the non-implementation of rulings of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We highlight the functioning institutions of the Republika Srpska and the Government's further efforts to resolve economic and social difficulties. However, there is ongoing concern over reports of statements made by high-ranking officials of the Republika Srpska advocating the future dissolution of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby challenging the basic provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the country's territorial integrity.

My country also welcomes the fact that despite tensions during preparations, the ceremony to commemorate the victims of the 1995 Srebrenica genocide took place without major incident.

With regard to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Argentina welcomes the fact that the extended political crisis has ebbed and that tangible progress has been achieved towards reaching agreement in the appointment of judges to the Federation Constitutional Court and the subgroup responsible for matters of vital national interest. We hope that pending matters in the way of the group's resuming its work will be resolved promptly. In that regard, we highlight the good offices efforts undertaken by the Office of the High Representative.

We are concerned about the possibility that the lack of significant and tangible measures to implement the pending prerequisites of the five benchmarks and the two conditions that are necessary for the closure of the High Representative's Office will not be met. For that reason, we welcome the legislative proposals linked to State property and defense property. We call upon the political parties to show commitment in seeking consensus.

Of persistent concern is the fact that it has been impossible to hold elections in the city of Mostar to elect local authorities due to lack of implementation of the 2010 ruling of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court on the city's electoral system. Argentina reiterates its call to the political parties to redouble efforts in order to achieve agreement on the

implementation of the ruling of the Constitutional Court, ensuring respect for the rule of law and thus enabling the holding of local elections.

With regard to implementation of the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić-Finci* case, we reiterate the appeal made to the political leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to renew the efforts on reaching an agreement to ensure the protection of the rights of non-constituent peoples.

Finally, Argentina reiterates its support for the work carried out by the Office of the High Representative in support of the implementation of the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the efforts made to ensure that the governmental entities are able to fulfil the provisions of the Agreement and the State Constitution. We consider it necessary to continue to provide support and sufficient political resources to the Office of the High Representative to enable it to fulfil its mandate under the framework of the Dayton Agreement.

Mr. Tatham (United Kingdom): I join other speakers in welcoming High Representative Valentin Inzko back to the Council, and express the United Kingdom's thanks for his tenth report to the Secretary-General (see S/2013/646, annex). Once again, it is a detailed and sobering report that documents objectively the serious challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face. Against that difficult political backdrop, the United Kingdom extends its gratitude to the High Representative for his continued commitment to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords.

The disappointing lack of political progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the reporting period contrasts starkly with the historic developments that have taken place elsewhere in the Western Balkans region. In April, Serbia and Kosovo reached a truly significant agreement that created momentum for both of their European Union (EU) perspectives. In July, we saw the accession of Croatia to the European Union, marking an important step forward for the region's future stability and prosperity. That vital progress could not have been achieved without political leaders showing commitment, determination and a willingness to compromise. The results of such political leadership are apparent in terms of the further progress towards European integration structures helping to deliver tangible benefits for their citizens.

It is unfortunate that there has been no sign that regional progress has influenced Bosnia and

Herzegovina's leaders. There has been no progress on the EU and NATO paths and no movement towards delivering the conditionality of the "5+2" agenda needed for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

While we welcome the conduct of the October census — the first in Bosnia and Herzegovina in over 20 years — it is disappointing that many chose to use it as an opportunity for yet more divisive rhetoric, rather than focus on its potential benefits for the country in terms of generating accurate data to inform economic and social planning.

Politicians have shown throughout the reporting period that they are unwilling to put the needs of their electorate and their country above their own interests. That is typified by the continued failure to resolve the longstanding *Sejdić-Finci* constitutional issue. That judgment has now remained unimplemented for nearly four years. It is a judgment crying out for rapid implementation, both to tackle a discriminatory provision in the electoral system and because it is needed to unlock Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU Stabilization and Association Agreement.

Yet, despite the tireless work of EU Special Representative Peter Sørensen to facilitate a solution through the EU high-level dialogue on the accession process, Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders have once again failed to reach agreement in October.

It is now becoming increasingly difficult to justify supporting continued pre-accession, given the absence of progress towards pre-accession. We support, as a regrettable necessity, a decision by the European Union Commissioner, Stephan Fuller, to begin cutting Bosnia and Herzegovina's funding for 2013 by €47 million. The failure to establish an effective mechanism for coordination with the European Union is now calling into question future tranches of sizeable pre-accession assistance funds. Furthermore, the unwillingness of political leaders to adapt Bosnia Herzegovina's Stabilization and Association Agreement following Croatia's accession could have a negative impact on trade between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union.

There is a pattern underlying all of those political failures. Instead of working to improve the prosperity and welfare of their citizens by making progress towards the European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders seem locked in short-term, narrowly focused zero-sum-game mindsets. That is a road to

nowhere in terms of the country's future; indeed, it risks undermining the hard-earned gains of the past 18 years.

We are also deeply disappointed at the failure of political leaders to complete the registration of defence property. That failure continues to block the implementation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership action plan. In spite of promises in February to the NATO Secretary General and to the Assistant Secretary General in September, political leaders must swiftly work together to fulfil their commitment to the March 2012 agreement and agree a solution.

Protests in June over the single identification number issue show that citizens are dissatisfied with Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders' inaction. That this issue was not resolved until earlier this month demonstrates the elected representatives' unwillingness or inability to engage with issues of significant public concern. The United Kingdom urges the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to move forward from this stagnant political context. They need to understand they are responsible for the growing anger and frustration of the public, whose interests are steadily suffering from a succession of political failures outlined in the High Representative's latest report.

We share the High Representative's concern and condemnation of those in the Republika Srpska who continue to challenge the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We join other Council members in condemning such statements, which are pointless and irresponsible. There can be no redrawing of the map, nor can Bosnia and Herzegovina join the European Union as anything other than a single sovereign State.

We are also concerned at the continued non-enforcement of constitutional court decisions, particularly in Mostar, where local elections have now been delayed for over a year. Political pressure has been exerted on State level judicial institutions on a number of occasions this year, and we welcome the recent statement by the European Union, the Office of the High Representative and the United States calling on the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska to respect and observe the independence of the judiciary.

Many of the underlying political challenges and tensions that remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina are at risk of worsening as we approach the elections in October 2014. We support the High Representative's

assessment that the European Union Force-Operation Althea continues to play a crucial role in efforts to maintain a safe and secure environment. We welcome the Council's agreement to renew its mandate for a further 12 months.

Mr. M'Beou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his presentation. His briefing underscores the ongoing political impasse in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the little progress that has been made in terms of the reforms necessary for promoting development in the country and shaping a multi-ethnic Bosnian society.

Togo regrets that no tangible progress has been made on the five objectives and the two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the revision of the country's Constitution. Moreover, when it comes to numerous other areas, the political parties sharing power in Bosnia and Herzegovina are struggling to reach an agreement on reforms to help the country move ahead. The report of the High Representative (S/2013/646, annex) notably points out that, as a result of the ongoing paralysis in Parliament, no new legislation was adopted during the period under review.

However, in 2012 the Bosnian authorities committed to implementing the country's Constitution along with the recommendations made by the European Court of Human Rights in order to end political discrimination against minorities. It is essential that those reforms be launched before general elections in October 2014.

That is a worrying situation for the international community, which has made significant efforts to bring peace and stability to this country, as well as to the Bosnian people. The demonstrations that took place in June related to the failure to issue of identification numbers for newborns, a situation resulting from a dispute between the Federation and the Republika Srpska on the implementation of a decision by the Constitutional Court, point to the disquiet of the people at the procrastination of their leaders in terms of building the central State.

We remain concerned by statements and defiant actions on the part of political leaders of the Republika Srpska in terms of central State institutions, which undermine national cohesion. Togo criticizes such an attitude, which seeks to block the decision-making

process of the central State and weakens the country when it comes to the possibility of partition.

In spite of all sorts of obstacles, the report indicates that in October, for the first time in 22 years, Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out a population census. We hope the main aim of the census was not to establish a balance of power between the various communities or to reopen old wounds that have barely healed but, rather, to implement a reliable system of statistics to help plan and guide public policy.

While Bosnia and Herzegovina's neighbours are progressing towards European integration, Bosnian political leaders have no choice but to meet the expectations of their people by tackling the challenges of national development and shaping a truly functional, multiethnic State, as stipulated in the Dayton Accords. In that regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina should draw on the positive aspects of its different peoples, rather than trying to deny the existence of one group or another. It is essential that all Bosnian political stakeholders overcome their differences in order to fully join in that vision. Only then will they be able to undertake a full set of reforms that will allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to make progress towards joining the European Union, allowing its institutions to function more effectively in order to ensure peace and development in that country.

We call on countries neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, which have historic ties with different communities, to work constructively towards the unity of the Bosnian State. However, it remains the responsibility of the main political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to shoulder their responsibilities and to take the initiative of forging harmonious coexistence among the various ethnic groups.

At this stage, the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina still requires the support and assistance of the international community. That is why my country still considers the international presence necessary, in accordance with the Dayton Agreement.

I would like to reiterate Togo's support for the efforts of the High Representative during his mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as for the civilian and military personnel, in particular those working for the European Union Force-Operation Althea, who are striving to ensure that parties abide by the Dayton Agreement and working for the stability of the country.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I would like to thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and

Herzegovina, for presenting the forty-fourth report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2013/646, annex). We commend his continued efforts to ensure the full implementation of the Dayton Agreement. Resolution 2123 (2013), which was unanimously adopted this morning and which authorized the extension of the mandate of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) for another 12 months, represents the clear support of the international community, and is a clear signal of how the international community, including the Council, is committed to assist the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards finding a lasting solution.

In his most recent briefing (see S/PV.6966), Mr. Inzko addressed the Council on the political and constitutional crisis that had frozen governance in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is unfortunate that the current report indicates the same worrying impasse and lack of progress. We have noted that disagreements and inflexibility among political parties are one of the main reasons for the continued stalemate. We therefore call upon the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels to put national priorities above their interests and to be more flexible so as to advance the implementation of outstanding issues.

We are strongly concerned at the continued negative trend being followed by some representatives of the Republika Srpska who continue to envisage and advocate the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independence of the Republika Srpska. We believe that the continued challenge to State judicial institutions and the constitutional State authority pose a serious threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, not to mention that it violates the provisions of the Dayton Agreement. We call upon the authorities in the Republika Srpska to refrain from this kind of rhetoric.

It is our view that abiding by the Dayton Agreement, the constitutional framework and rule of law is a prerequisite for long-term stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that regard, we urge political parties to participate positively in the amendments to the Election Law, which will enable the preparation of national elections next year. All parties must overcome political gridlock and resolve their differences on that issue in order to ensure legitimate national elections. We call on the international community to redouble its support to Bosnia and Herzegovina in that process.

On a positive note, Rwanda welcomes the appointment of judges to fill vacant seats in the Federation Constitutional Court under the facilitation of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also hoped that this will enable the Court to resolve the underlying political dispute in the Federation. Furthermore, we call on all stakeholders to support Bosnia and Herzegovina to resolve the outstanding issues in the implementation of the objectives of the "5+2" agenda as prerequisites for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

The visits made by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the wider region, including to the trilateral meeting of the Heads of State of Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, held in Ankara on 14 and 15 May, are a very encouraging step towards the implementation of bilateral relations between that country and its neighbours, especially Serbia. In that regard, we commend the statesmanship shown by President Nikolić of Serbia during his visit by apologizing for Srebrenica and other crimes committed during the war. That constitutes a good contribution to improving the bilateral relations between the two countries, and to bringing about reconciliation between their respective peoples.

On the economic side, we welcome the positive reports showing that exports are up by 8.5 per cent, and the increase of industrial production by 6.9 per cent. However, the high rate of unemployment and the difficult fiscal situation show how much the continued support of the international community to Bosnia and Herzegovina is needed. We also believe that the progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards integration with the European Union and NATO is one of the key opportunities for its economic recovery.

However, the recent statement by the European Union that Bosnia and Herzegovina would lose its 2013 pre-accession funding, totalling €47 million, is worrisome, and we hope that this will not slow down the economic recovery of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the same vein, Rwanda welcomes the census conducted by the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which we believe will improve economic and social planning. In that regard, the census is a socioeconomic development factor rather than an ethnic one.

I cannot conclude my statement without saying a word on the issue of refugees and their return, which is central to the full implementation of the General

Framework Agreement for Peace. We condemn any ethnically-motivated attacks on refugees that may hamper their return. While we commend the reaction by authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina against those incidents, we also find it very necessary for the authorities to make more efforts to create an environment conducive to their return.

Finally, as Bosnia and Herzegovina, like Rwanda, has faced a dark history of genocide, I would like to emphasize that justice and reconciliation, marked by equal access to resources, services and equality before the law, are the key prerequisites for reaching a lasting peace and a better future for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that the continued cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia can help to achieve that goal.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his excellent briefing today.

We welcome the successful holding of the first post-war census in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and note improvements in its economic performance, including its export and industrial production growth. As the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina comments in his report (S/2013/646, annex), we hope that the census can help bring economic and social benefits to the country. However, the negative trend that concerns the Security Council also persists. In that regard, I would like to make the following three points.

First, it is worrisome that the political gridlock continues to hinder stable governance. The sustained political stalemate and the resulting failure to provide basic governmental services not only affect people's daily life, but also threaten the stability of the country.

Secondly, the political crisis has also led to continuing delays in Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We note that the country lags behind, while other countries in the Balkans that shared the same experience of war are moving towards regional integration. In that regard, we would like to call on the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take a forward-looking approach and make necessary reforms to address the needs of people. The long-overdue implementation of the European Court of Human Rights *Sejdić-Finci* ruling will also be an important step in that direction.

Lastly, we are concerned about the recurring and divisive rhetoric against and challenges to Bosnia and

Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are particularly troublesome as they undermine trust among the country's diverse ethnic communities and hinder their genuine national reconciliation. Commitment to the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one sovereign country is the very foundation of the peace agreement that brought the country back to life 18 years ago. Such genuine reconciliation and commitment to a shared future are critical to building the country's future. We therefore call upon all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to refrain from divisive rhetoric, and to make every effort towards national integration and reconciliation.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea welcomes the extension of the mandate of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the continued role of the international community. We would also like to reiterate our support for a democratic, stable and unified Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to welcome Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We take note of the presentation of his report (S/2013/646, annex), to which we listened with concern, given the relative lack of progress achieved in the period under review. We should like to make five observations.

We reaffirm our firm support for the Dayton Agreement and for the defence and preservation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is critically important, in our view, for political leaders and the international community to continue to focus on recognizing the balance achieved by the Dayton Agreement and the political structures subsequently put in place. In that regard, we remain concerned by the negative rhetoric of certain leaders who continue to attack the accords and to question the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular because their words are accompanied by efforts to undermine and, in some cases, to interrupt the functionality of the Federation and its institutions.

Secondly, we welcome the first census completed since 1991. We consider it important to take into account the large number of displaced persons in the aftermath of the war. The census also contributes to better economic and social planning. The significant progress made in unblocking the naming of judges to the Constitutional Court of the Federation is also good news. In addition, we welcome the proposed constitutional reform put

forth following the governmental crisis of 2013. We will closely follow that process and we support changes aimed at making the Federation more functional and efficient.

Thirdly, we note the ongoing situation in Mostar, where it has been impossible to elect local authorities since last year because of non-compliance with the decree issued by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court. At the same time, we are concerned by the problem with respect to the assignment of citizen identification numbers due to the failure to implement the ruling of the Constitutional Court. The greatest impact of that situation has been on newborn children, and it has led to large-scale protests. Both instances reveal a greater problem identified in the report, which is the persistent failure to implement decisions of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court. The failure to comply with the final, legally binding decisions of that Court represents a violation of a key provision of the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

Fourthly, we deeply regret that during the reporting period the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not achieve a single concrete advance concerning the list of goals established by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council as a prerequisite for closing the Office of the High Representative. We will keenly await the results of the next meeting of the Council on 4 and 5 December, which we hope will come up with specific recommendations on the path to follow.

Fifthly, we recall the application of the judgement of the European Court of Human Rights in the case of *Sejdić-Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*. We stress the importance of protecting the rights of ethnic minorities and, hence, of movement on this important commitment.

Finally, we congratulate Mr. Inzko on his work and efforts to resolve challenging matters. We believe that the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization need to maintain their presence in the country for the time being. Likewise, respect for the General Framework Agreement for Peace and for the relevant resolutions of the Council is an indispensable precondition for achieving long-term stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Atlassi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I would like at the outset to thank Mr. Valentine Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his tenth report covering the period from 20 April to

21 October. One cannot help but notice the contrast between the dynamic of regional integration at the European level and the persistent political crisis that confronts the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Indeed, the implementation of the Dayton accords, the basis for stabilizing the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, remains a daily challenge due to dissent among the political parties, the paralysis of political life, non-compliance with the rulings of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court, and above all to the secessionist rhetoric of the Republika Srpska, which overtly threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the unity of the Federation.

In that regard, regrettably, the prospective rulings of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court will be subject to continued questioning and viewed as unilateral acts adopted in violation of the Dayton Accords. The negative impact of that impasse can be measured by the scale of the demonstrations in June that were triggered by the inability of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to adopt amendments that would allow unique individual identification numbers to be issued to citizens of the Federation. This trend threatens to return the country to the torment of the past and to destroy all that has been laboriously built over decades with the support of the international community. The parties' sense of responsibility to their respective communities and to the very survival of the Federation is immense. It must lead them towards the compromises required to ensure that, in the interests of all concerned, institutions are able to function.

Despite those major challenges, some measures taken offer grounds to hope for a return to constructive dialogue, including the pursuit of discussions on State and defence property; the regular meetings of the Council of Ministers of the Federation, which have allowed for the designation and the adoption of laws in various areas; and the possibility of a compromise solution that would permit local elections to be held in Mostar and the naming of judges to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court.

In the sphere of economics, growth of almost 7 per cent in industrial output and 8.5 per cent in exports, and a steady, low rate of inflation are encouraging signs despite a record rise in unemployment to roughly 44 per cent and a 61 per cent drop in foreign investment.

The Dayton accords were the fruit of an exceptional effort that allowed for the stabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region after a murderous war that still haunts the memory of the populations involved. The accords have allowed peace and stability to be maintained for the past 17 years, and represent an achievement that all the peoples of the region should preserve and which they should definitively cease to undermine. We hope that, in the interests of all the communities involved, through the efforts of the High Representative, of NATO and of the European Union, all parties will demonstrate political will and renew their faith in the ability of the federal institutions to find equitable compromises and pragmatic solutions to the complex issues before them.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

I thank High Representative Inzko for his briefing and his report.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has remained stable, and good progress has been made in economic development and the rule of law. China welcomes that progress and respects the independence, sovereignty, national unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also respects the choice made by the Bosnian people with regard to the future of their country.

We support the harmonious coexistence of all ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their joint efforts for development. We hope that Bosnian people of all ethnic communities will consolidate the results achieved in the political process, solve their differences through dialogue, comprehensively implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and continue to advance the work ahead in various fields.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important country in the Balkans. Maintaining the peace and stability and promoting the economic and social development of Bosnia and Herzegovina are in the common interests of the international community, especially of the countries of the region. The international community should take a balanced and prudent approach with regard to the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina and seek and heed the views and concerns of all parties concerned.

China welcomes the efforts made by High Representative Inzko in advancing the political process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and hopes that he

acts according to his mandate and continues to play a positive role in promoting the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

China welcomes the adoption by the Council of resolution 2123 (2013), which extends the mandate of the multinational stabilization force — the European-union-led Operation Althea, which we hope will continue to closely cooperate with the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and play a constructive role in maintaining the peace and stability of the country.

China is willing to work with the international community and continue to make its due contribution to the realization of lasting peace, stability and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): In its transition towards becoming a functional, reform-oriented and modern European country, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress towards European integration, despite all the complexities present within its society.

A genuine commitment to the European path still remains the highest priority for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that regard, we welcome the European Union's increased engagement and reinforced role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the enhanced combined presence of the European Union Special Representative and the European Union delegation.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a potential candidate for European Union membership. The Stabilization and Association Agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union was ratified in 2011, but has not yet entered into force. However, the Interim Stabilization and Association Agreement, the trade-related part of the Stabilization and Association Agreement, came into force upon its signing and has been successfully implemented ever since 2008 in all its domains.

Nonetheless, political dialogue aimed at finding solutions for all open questions has continued so that the Stabilization and Association Agreement could come into force, which in effect would enable our country to submit a credible application for membership to the European Union. Also, we continue to make additional

efforts necessary for completing the “5+2” agenda, which is necessary for closure of the Office of the High Representative and the resolution of all other outstanding issues.

We can state with confidence that the security situation in the country remains calm and stable. Our authorities are fully capable of dealing with threats that could impair a safe and secure environment in the country. Let me remind the members of the Council of the fact that, during the end of 1990s, around 60,000 international forces were deployed and present in my country. Today, that number is only 600. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Member States that participated in the multinational stabilization force established in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

We are aware that national reconciliation and trust are basic prerequisites for building a functional State and society. We still insist on our common goal of investigating crimes that were committed and adequately prosecuting the perpetrators of those crimes, regardless of their ethnicity. Additional efforts have been made in order to enhance cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, as well as the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.

We remain dedicated to further promoting regional cooperation, which is in the common interests of the countries in the region as well. We are certain that the protocol on the exchange of evidence and information on war crimes, signed between the Prosecutor’s Offices of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, is serving as an impetus in strengthening communication and further enhancing coordination.

Moreover, the implementation of the existing human rights instruments and the sustainable return and local integration of refugees and internally displaced persons remain the priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We continue to maintain good cooperation between partner countries in the framework of the Sarajevo process on refugees and internally displaced persons and believe that the comprehensive and coordinated return of refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the region is crucial to lasting peace.

We are making additional efforts to solve the remaining border and property issues with neighbouring countries. Regional cooperation and good-neighbourly relations form an essential part of Bosnia and

Herzegovina’s process of moving towards the European Union. We continue our active involvement in regional initiatives and are further developing our bilateral relations with other enlargement countries and neighbouring European Union member States.

Bosnia and Herzegovina had the honour to serve a two-year term as an elected member of the Security Council from 2010 to 2011. Our experience is proof that a growing number of countries are willing and capable of contributing to dealing with issues regarding the maintenance of the international peace and security. We are fully determined to promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina has moved from being a host country to peacekeeping operations to a country that is now participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as in NATO and its member countries’ International Security Assistance Force operation in Afghanistan.

As for the platform for the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the General Assembly, as mentioned in paragraph 27 of the report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2013/646, annex), we are surprised by the lack of understanding by the High Representative with regard to that issue. We need to point out that the platform for the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s delegation in the General Assembly does not represent a legally binding document, but rather serves as a kind of a plan that is guiding the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the General Assembly. To be more specific, a platform for the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the General Assembly is not required by any constitutional or legal provision. Therefore, it does not in any way discredit any foreign policy decision of the Presidency, the work of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s representatives in international organizations and institutions or the participation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the United Nations framework.

Taking all that into consideration, we need to remember that, according to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Presidency, among others, is responsible for conducting the foreign policy of the country. Moreover, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina decides by consensus on all key foreign policy issues. That mechanism proved effective during two-year non-permanent membership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Security Council. Therefore, we

believe that paragraph 27 of latest report can create numerous misconceptions among Council members and cause harmful interpretations that, we believe, are unnecessary and counterproductive.

In the light of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy activities, we express our regret that the report does not clearly emphasize the obvious improvement in regional cooperation, as one of the foreign policy priorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region. At the same time, we are happy that the High Representative mentioned this in his oral statement today. Regional cooperation is an important element regarding the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. It also points to the capacity of our country's foreign policy. The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by maintaining good-neighbourly relations and exchanging visits at the highest level, making efforts to resolve outstanding bilateral issues and participating in the Brdo process, has confirmed its commitment and dedication to the development of friendly relations, the process of European integration and the resolution of the outstanding issues in the European spirit. We encourage the High Representative to consult ahead of time with the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to acquire precise information on the work of the Presidency and the foreign policy activities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, so as to avoid any harmful and counterproductive interpretations in future.

In spite of all of the positive developments, we are aware of the current standoff in the political process. In that light, it is necessary to develop a positive atmosphere that will foster constructive political dialogue and lead to a resolution of the outstanding issues.

I would also like to point out that all the changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be based on the rule of law. The full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement is therefore imperative.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Drobnyak (Croatia): At the outset, please allow me to extend my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on the occasion of your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November.

Let me also extend a welcome to High Representative Valentin Inzko and thank him for his briefing, his report (S/2013/646, annex) and his important work.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU), but I would like to add several remarks in my national capacity.

The territorial integrity, stability and functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a sovereign and united country, are of the highest importance to Croatia. They are also fundamental prerequisites for the stability and prosperity of the whole region of South-East Europe.

The specific political system rooted in Dayton Peace Accords is, in many aspects, based on ethnic representation, which rests on genuine equality between three constitutive peoples. At the same time, that equality is a prerequisite for the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It provides the three pillars on which the country rests under the present circumstances. Removing any one of the three pillars would destabilize relations and increase the danger of pulling the country apart and of conflict among the ethnic groups.

At the moment, Serbs have the advantage of relative ethnic homogeneity in the Republika Srpska; Bosnians have the advantage of the biggest numbers; and Croats are in danger of losing representation at the level of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Those are the facts of which we have to be mindful.

It is in the interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina and our region, as well as Europe as a whole — something we are reminded of particularly on the eve of the hundredth anniversary of the First World War — to achieve a stable and functioning Bosnia and Herzegovina. That will inevitably lead in future towards a civic State. But Bosnia and Herzegovina is not there yet; as a matter of fact, it is still far from it. Nevertheless, our goal is the same, and we plea for a strategy that has a chance of achieving that goal. We have to start by recognizing the facts on the ground and work gradually towards achieving a civic State.

Acting as if the goal of a stable, functioning State in which everybody felt comfortable and represented already existed would be a little like pretending in the manner of the well-known fairy tale of the emperor's new clothes. Instead of pretending, we need to select the best strategy for achieving that goal. We believe that recognizing the need for stability based on three pillar, instead of two-pillar instability, has the biggest chance of success.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a State of all its citizens, regardless of ethnicity or faith. As such, it

must implement the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić-Finci* case. The fact that citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who do not belong to one of three constituent peoples are discriminated by the election process, as well as the fact that Bosniaks and Croats in the Republika Srpska and Serbs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina suffer the same type of discrimination, is an unfortunate legacy of the Dayton Peace Accords. The equal constituent status of all three peoples is of key importance for the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as is implementing the verdict of the European Court for Human Rights as a way towards a Bosnia and Herzegovina that belongs to all its citizens.

As a strong supporter of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia is concerned that some representatives of the Republika Srpska continue to challenge the territorial integrity of the State they are an integral part of. As noted in the report, there continues to be a

“long-running negative trend of some representatives from the Republika Srpska predicting and advocating for the dissolution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the independence of the Republika Srpska” (*S/2013/646, annex, para. 6*).

That must not be taken lightly.

Croatia welcomes the fact that in October the census was conducted — the first in the post-war period. However, according to the reports from the ground that we have received, it appears that the results of the recent census in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be carefully examined in order to make sure that every citizen of that country had the opportunity to express his or her national, religious and other identity.

Croatia strongly supports, and will continue to support, the European and Euro-Atlantic integration process of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a fully functional State of its three constitutive peoples and other citizens. That is a crucial element for the stability not only of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also of South-East Europe. The more Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the better.

We welcome the facilitation efforts of the European Commission to help political parties to come to an agreement regarding the constitutional changes. Bearing in mind the importance of an effective coordination mechanism in achieving the European future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we hope that that

issue will also be solved in the days to come so as to ensure that the available EU funds can be used.

It is in our interest and is our responsibility to encourage further reforms and the implementation of the *Sejdić-Finci* ruling. Bosnia and Herzegovina must not be left behind the whole region in the EU integration process.

Regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina’s advancement towards NATO membership, we urge the political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to make additional efforts for the implementation of the six-party political agreement regarding the issue of military property and to work constructively to implement the agreement without delay in order to start the first cycle of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s membership action plan as soon as possible.

Regarding the negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the trade regime with the European Union after Croatia’s EU accession, we regret that the additional protocol to the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina has not yet been concluded. We particularly regret the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not accept the negotiating principle on the basis of traditional trade. We therefore urge the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to come to a viable and sustainable agreement on that issue as soon as possible.

Croatia wishes to continue the Euro-Atlantic partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina. We stand ready to cooperate closely with Bosnia and Herzegovina on all issues relating to Croatia’s EU membership and to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with firm political and robust technical support in the process of European integration.

Let me conclude by saying that Bosnia and Herzegovina is an important State that needs our full attention. Unfortunately, its rich and often troubled history is at present a source of tensions and dispute rather than the springboard for a better future. But things can be changed for the better. We need a flexible, tailor-made approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina that is methodically somewhat different from the approach to other European countries.

Recently, Bosnia and Herzegovina proved that it can compete with the best and secure its place in the top tier: it qualified for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. One might say that football is only a sport but there is no

reason why such a remarkable accomplishment could not be repeated in other fields, not just on the football pitch. It is up to all of us to help Bosnia and Herzegovina to secure its proper place in the architecture of a new Europe and the world of the twenty-first century.

Croatia, as a close neighbour and friend that shares a 1,000-kilometre land border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, stands ready to be at the forefront of those efforts.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Allow me to start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency for this month. On behalf of my delegation, I wish you every success. Allow me, of course, to extend our appreciation to the delegation of Azerbaijan for its excellent presidency for the month of October.

First of all, I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Valentine Inzko, High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank him for his report to the Council (S/2013/646, annex).

As a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Republic of Serbia continues to be strongly committed to respecting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be decided by its citizens and political leaders without outside interference and, in that context, we support any agreement accepted by the two entities and the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia considers Bosnia and Herzegovina to be one of its closest partners and has a very strong interest in promoting mutual relations to the highest possible level on the basis of good-neighbourliness. We shall work for the promotion of those relations at the central level, as well as for the expansion and intensification of cooperation with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the further deepening and enrichment of special relations with the Republic Srpska. Since the formation of the new Governments in the two countries in 2012, bilateral cooperation has improved, as evidenced by the frequent meetings at the highest level. Cooperation within international organizations and in regional forums has been promoted, too. Particularly noteworthy is the promotion of cooperation between the Parliaments of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina,

which is best reflected in the friendship groups that were formed in both Parliaments in 2012 and by last week's visit of the high-level delegation of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia. Also last week, the Serbian Government and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed a security agreement in Belgrade that will provide for even better cooperation between the two countries in that field.

In the forthcoming period, cooperation will be exemplified by a number of practical steps and measures. On 26 and 27 November, the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina will convene for a joint session in Belgrade. The President of the Republic of Serbia, Mr. Tomislav Nikolić, is expected to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina soon. The Interstate Border Commission will meet. The Standing Joint Committee on Succession is also expected to meet. Furthermore, Serbia is interested in activating the work of the Interstate Council for Cooperation.

Serbia is a firm supporter of Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration and the strengthening of mutual cooperation in that process, particularly in the area of the work of the commission for the implementation of the action plan of the memorandum for cooperation in the field of European integration. We share the interest of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the exchange of experiences on fulfilling the Copenhagen criteria for EU accession and the readiness for coordination on the road to the European Union. Serbia is ready to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina by making available to it the part of the questionnaire of the European Commission for Serbia related to foreign affairs. We also stand ready to help in respect of the other technical conditions for membership with which we have already complied.

We support cooperation within the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance programmes for cross-border cooperation. A total of €11.52 million has been made available to the two countries for the 2007-2013 period. Projects worth €3.24 million have been agreed upon so far, while projects worth €4.68 are currently being negotiated.

In the field of economic cooperation, Serbia has a special interest in promoting trade, investment and military-economic cooperation and ranks the establishment of the Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation as a very good step in the right direction.

Serbia is ready to address all outstanding issues, now significantly reduced in number, in good faith and in mutual interest. That is particularly true of the questions of demarcation, refugees and missing persons, as well as those related to succession. We particularly welcome the concerted position on the need to have direct contacts and exchanges of views without outside mediation.

My country firmly supports comprehensive development and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has taken a number of important steps towards promoting reconciliation in the region. We are committed to extensive regional cooperation and, by extension, a politically and economically stable South-East Europe, which we perceive as a basic precondition for our own sustainable development. To that end, we are committed to the strengthening of cooperation, and welcome the successful cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina that is being realized within many organizations and processes, including the South East Europe Cooperation Process, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Central Europe Free Trade Agreement, the Central European Initiative, the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative and other forums.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Mayr-Harting.

Mr. Mayr-Harting: As this is the first occasion that I have had the chance to speak under your presidency of the Council, Sir, I would like to congratulate you and China on assuming the presidency this month and to thank Azerbaijan and its Permanent Representative for their work last month.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate country Montenegro; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

I join other speakers in welcoming my friend High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Valentin Inzko back to the Council. I thank him for his work and would like to reassure him of our continued support.

While Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to enjoy a clear European perspective, which has been repeatedly reaffirmed by the European Union, its institutions have thus far failed to achieve the necessary progress in meeting key European Union requirements. The

European Union will continue its efforts to facilitate the necessary domestic political agreements, but it is up to the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to make the necessary progress.

The lack of political will among local political forces to work out compromises in the interest of the common good continue to have a negative impact on the overall reform process. Regrettably, the country remains unable to consolidate itself as a viable democracy and make progress on its EU path. Indeed, the persistent domestic political stalemate is cause of disappointment for all who wish to see Bosnia and Herzegovina succeed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has come far since the end of a tragic war almost two decades ago. The security environment is now calm and stable, and the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have thus far proven capable of dealing with threats to the country's safe and secure environment. Nevertheless, in spite of a stable security environment, the political environment remains complex. Inter-ethnic reconciliation in general is slow, and the country's politics remain driven by ethnic rather than civic principles. It seems difficult for the political leadership of the three constituent peoples to reach out across ethnic lines and attempt to build a broader political consensus. In addition, the fragile socioeconomic situation of large parts of the population has the potential to further increase political instability.

A transformation of the country's politics is long overdue, as political parties remain entrenched in local political perspectives and unwilling to see that, as a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina is increasingly lagging behind its neighbours in the region.

In accordance with the objectives set out by the Security Council, the European Union continued to further strengthen its engagement with Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to facilitate stability and progress, using a broad range of political and technical instruments. The strengthening the European Union's field presence in the Brcko district, Mostar and Banja Luka has also facilitated communication and exchanges on EU priorities with citizens throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The EU-led force (EUFOR) Operation Althea — the European Union's military operation — continues to support the competent Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment in the country. EUFOR Althea focuses on

capacity-building and training, but also maintains the means to contribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina's own deterrence capacity. The European Union will keep the Operation under regular review, including on the basis of the situation on the ground, with a view to making progress on the conditions conducive to the delivery of its mandate.

The successful holding last month of the first phase of the public census, which is the first in the post-war period, needs to be recognized. The census will, among other results, provide important statistical data, including as regards the future needs of Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession process.

While that progress is welcome, the key requirements for progress on the EU path remain unchanged and have not yet been met. As the Council has also pointed out, the European Court of Human Rights ruling in the *Sejdić-Finci* case still needs to be implemented. That ruling embodies the principle of ethnic non-discrimination, a core value of the EU and the United Nations. Despite the strong facilitation efforts of both Commissioner Füle and European Union Special Representative Sørensen, political parties have thus far been unable to come to an agreement on the relevant constitutional changes. Personal, party and ethnic agendas continue to block progress on achieving a compromise on that important question.

The implementation of the ruling and the subsequent entry into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement would allow the European Union to consider as credible a possible application by Bosnia and Herzegovina for European Union membership. Furthermore, it would also generate positive momentum

in the overall process of political, economic, social and cultural modernization.

The continued non-compliance with the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, along with a persistent failure to establish effective internal coordination on European Union affairs, is putting a strain on Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards the European Union, and in this context the EU is currently reviewing its pre-accession assistance.

Through Croatia's accession, as the Permanent Representative of Croatia just pointed out, the European Union now has a 1,000 kilometre-long land border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. This represents an opportunity to strengthen mutual cooperation and further promote European Union values. We call on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to resolve outstanding adaptation issues as a matter of priority.

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country. We remain ready to provide the necessary assistance in all required areas in order to take the country forward on its reform agenda towards the European Union. At the same time, we call on all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to acknowledge their responsibilities and to show greater leadership in taking the country forward on the European path, in line with the expectation of its citizens.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.