



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8810th meeting
 Tuesday, 29 June 2021, 3.40 p.m.
 New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Jürgenson	(Estonia)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Geng Shuang
	France	Mrs. Gasri
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Mr. Kelly
	Kenya	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Niger	Mr. Maman Sani
	Norway	Ms. Juul
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Gonsalves
	Tunisia	Mr. Cherif
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Ms. Farrey
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Dang

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Hervé Lecoq, Officer-in-Charge, Europe and Central Asia Division, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

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

I give the floor to Mr. Lecoq.

Mr. Lecoq: I thank you for this opportunity to brief the Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While there has been progress in certain areas, we remain concerned at the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to the consolidation of peace and reconciliation. Above all, we continue to witness practices that, far from dealing with the scars of the past, contribute to polarization and hinder the prospect of prosperity and stability, not only for Bosnia and Herzegovina but also for the region. These include persistent instances of revisionist narratives, divisive rhetoric, denial of genocide and war crimes, glorification of convicted war criminals and hate speech.

During her 10-day visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina earlier this month, the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Ms. Wairimu Nderitu, expressed concern about that trend and called for an increased commitment to trust-building and reconciliation, starting with mutual understanding and respect for the grief of all victims as a basis for constructive dialogue on moving the country forward.

While on the ground, the Special Adviser highlighted the important role of all those in leadership positions in bringing people together, fostering mutual understanding and trust, and working towards reconciliation.

She also paid tribute to the important work of local peace champions across the country, who are working to build trust within their communities, including in the field of education. Their work in bringing people together in their immediate community constitutes hope for the future and merits full recognition and support from the authorities, the media and the international community.

As the Secretary-General said in December last year, political, religious and community leaders, educators, civil society, the media and all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have a critical role to play in moving forward together from a difficult past and towards a brighter future.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, like the rest of the world, continues to face the unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its consequences. Now is the time to come together and work jointly and at all levels to overcome this health crisis and build back better. The United Nations will continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its COVID-19 response and socioeconomic recovery.

The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals continues to drive the work of the United Nations on the ground, in support of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the people of Bosnia. Under the new five-year United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, signed in May, the United Nations committed to supporting the Government and all people in Bosnia and Herzegovina to live longer, healthier, more prosperous and secure lives. As agreed with the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, our support over the next five years will focus on sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth; quality, accessible and inclusive education, health and social protection; people-centred governance and the rule of law; and citizen and community engagement for social cohesion. In all those areas, we continue to work closely with our partners, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.

Amid divisions and lack of consensus, progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has proved challenging over the past period. More needs to be done to advance much-needed reforms, including in the area of the rule of law and electoral reform.

Over the past years, many people — including youth — have been leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina to search for a better future elsewhere. Young people have

an important role to play in shaping the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their voices must be heard. The United Nations has been working with the Government, municipalities and civil-society organizations in support of the empowerment of women and youth. The United Nations has also been supporting the work of the Tirana-based Regional Youth Cooperation Office, which aims to enhance regional cooperation and foster reconciliation among young people in the region, including in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

With regard to recent developments in the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board in Sarajevo related to the appointment of a new High Representative, the United Nations is not a member of the Steering Board and therefore did not participate in the process. Let me also add, for the sake of clarity, that the United Nations was not a signatory to either the Dayton Peace Agreement or its annex 10.

The United Nations remains committed to supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path towards sustainable peace and development and looks forward to continuing its work with all stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as regional and international partners towards the achievement of peace and stability in the country and the wider region.

The President: I thank Mr. Lecoq for his briefing.

I should like to draw the attention of speakers to paragraph 22 of presidential note S/2017/507, which encourages all participants in Council meetings to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, in line with the Security Council's commitment to making more effective use of open meetings.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mr. Hervé Lecoq for today's briefing. We welcome the participation in this meeting of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ms. Bisera Turković.

We have gathered here at our initiative in order to discuss the letter circulated in the Security Council stating that on 27 May Christian Schmidt, a citizen of the Federal Republic of Germany, was supposedly appointed to the post of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Russian Federation, as a member of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina, would like

to categorically disagree with the confirmation of that appointment.

It is well known that the procedure for the appointment of High Representatives that has developed over the years is quite logical, transparent and democratic. Candidates are confirmed by the Steering Board with the consent of the Bosnian sides and then approved by the Security Council, usually in the form of an adopted resolution.

However, nothing of the sort happened in the case of Mr. Schmidt, not even close. Today we see a completely different picture. The name of the only candidate, who appeared out of nowhere, was confirmed by the Steering Board right away without any kind of discussion. The Board also chose to ignore the views of not only the Russian Federation but of all the Bosnian sides. A logical question has therefore emerged: can we begin work on national reconciliation by provoking an inevitable conflict that threatens to compound the existing differences among the various entities?

Fuel to the fire was also added by manoeuvres by some of our colleagues in the Security Council, who, for some reason, decided to bypass the matter in the Council. The letter of 3 June by the current High Representative Valentin Inzko was sent to the Secretary-General and the President of the Council, stating that he would be replaced as of 1 August by Christian Schmidt, but, for some reason, this letter was not circulated. It was circulated only after we raised the matter and insisted on it. For three weeks, it was as if this letter did not exist even though everyone knew about it. Such occurrences serve only to strengthen the overall unpleasant sensation on this matter.

Russia seeks to support the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina — the Dayton Peace Agreement — because this issue cannot be examined without historical perspective. As is well known, at the beginning of the 1990s, Bosnia and Herzegovina was torn apart by a bloody war that affected all of its society. Many lost loved ones, their homes and their work. In 1995, the Dayton Peace Agreement put an end to this terrible tragedy. It was signed by the parties as well as by guarantor States. The Agreement remains the foundation for peace in Bosnia.

Our duty as members of the Security Council is to do everything possible to keep this fragile achievement from being destroyed. This is precisely why we have put forward the initiative to hold today's meeting.

Our position on the High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina — the procedure for creating this post — was in fact clearly defined in annex 10 of the Dayton Agreement and is well known. We should not forget that it is the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina who hold the country's sovereignty. The fate of the country and its development path should be determined by the people rather than a High Representative or any external force.

We are always ready to engage in honest discussions on the most important issues with our colleagues in the Security Council. Indeed, an exchange of views and an attempt to find compromise is one of the goals of the Security Council. Only in this way can we find a solution to problems. But in this specific case, we are seeing a completely different picture: an attempt to avoid the discussion of the candidature of the High Representative or to assess the activity that of the Office of the High Representative in general. The question then can therefore be asked: why try to deceive and play hide and seek when it is not necessary?

It is clear that any candidate for the position who does not have the support of the Security Council and the Bosnian sides will lack not only legitimacy, but also the political support needed to truly contribute to promoting a peaceful settlement. Quite to the contrary, that candidate's actions will lead only to greater chaos, compound existing differences and ultimately destroy all the positives that have been achieved over the past quarter century. Is this the scenario that we wanted to see when we signed the Dayton Agreement?

The President: At this moment I will possibly abuse my privilege as President of the Council to respond once again to the allegation that we heard just now that the letter in question was not distributed to Council members. As I explained the last time when we met on this topic, the letter had been addressed to the Secretary-General. We talked to the Office for Legal Affairs in the Secretariat and had the strong feeling that as the Secretary-General was the addressee of the letter, it was up to him to circulate it. When it took such a long time for him to do so, we decided that we could perhaps do it informally. But no ill intention was behind our adopting this approach.

Ms. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks The Officer-in-Charge of the Europe and Central Asia Division of the Departments of Political

and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Hervé Lecoq, for his briefing. We also recognize the presence of Ms. Turković, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We begin by expressing our appreciation to the outgoing High Representative, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his work and contribution to the security and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as for promoting the political process and the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Agreement remains a fundamental pillar to peace and stability, including through the creation of an environment conducive to the voluntary return and integration of refugees into communities.

We take note of the recent decision of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board to appoint Mr. Christian Schmidt as the new High Representative. We also take note of the difficulties the Office of the High Representative has had in fulfilling its mandate, and we hope that a climate can be created for all parties to work together and overcome these problems. We recognize and cannot understate the significant role that the members of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council have played and will continue to play in contributing to ensuring international support for the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The value of the work of the Security Council to the stability and long-term security of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina also cannot be overstated. We have seen the value of our united and coordinated efforts over the past 25 years. This work is needed now more than ever, as the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are trying to recover from the massive socioeconomic disruption caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic. In this regard, my delegation encourages the members of the Peace Implementation Council to work in a spirit of mutual collaboration and coordination and engage in constructive dialogue with all parties. Consensus in decision-making is desirable and should be our aim.

Given the critical role the Security Council plays in the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it would have been prudent to consult the Council on this most recent matter. At the same time, we fully appreciate that lack of consensus should not derail progress and that the legal requirements for the appointment of the new High Representative have been met. We hope that all parties can move past the differences surrounding the recent

appointment of the newly selected High Representative and work together.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our full support for the stability, political independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the role of the Office of the High Representative. It is crucial for all parties to work together to fully implement the Peace Agreement, as this represents the path towards stability in the region.

Mr. Geng Shuang (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank the representative of the Secretariat for his briefing. China takes note of Mr. Inzko's letter to the Secretary-General on the selection of the next High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Dayton Peace Agreement has outlined the role of the Security Council in the appointment of High Representatives. In practice, the Security Council endorses the appointment either through a resolution or in the form of a letter from the President. This has become an established practice, and this practice should continue to be respected when appointing the next High Representative.

The High Representative assumes the important responsibilities of supervising the implementation of the Dayton Accords. The High Representative's work affects the fundamental interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people and has an important impact on the situation in the country.

On the issue of the appointment of the High Representative, the international community must take into full account the views of all Bosnia and Herzegovina parties. China takes note of the differences with regard to the procedures for the appointment of the next High Representative. China encourages all the parties concerned to fully engage in consultations in that regard in order to find a reasonable and feasible solution, help the High Representative to perform his duties, uphold the authority of the Security Council and contribute to maintaining peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans region.

In March this year, the Parliament of the Republika Srpska adopted a resolution calling for the immediate closure of the Office of the High Representative. That resolution should be taken seriously. Since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement 25 years ago, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has significantly changed. The international community should reassess the role

and the mandate of the High Representative in order to ensure that the Office adapts to the current reality and the needs of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, the rights of all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be ensured.

China has always respected the sovereignty, independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the choice of its people with regard to the country's future. China encourages all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continuously enhance mutual political trust, promote national harmony and advance nation-building. China is willing to continue to work with other countries to provide support and assistance to that end.

The peace and reconciliation process in Bosnia and Herzegovina has always benefited from the attention and assistance of the international community, especially the Security Council, and it would not have been possible without the sustained concern and support of other countries. We hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, engage in foreign relations in a spirit of friendship and goodwill, genuinely respect the sovereignty of other countries and refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of other countries.

Mr. Ragutthalli (India): Let me begin by thanking the Officer-in-Charge of the Europe and Central Asia Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Hervé Lecoq, for his briefing on Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also acknowledge the presence of the Honourable Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina at today's meeting.

The Dayton Peace Agreement remains important to building enduring peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To this day, the Agreement continues to define the framework for finding solutions related to interethnic conflict settlement through dialogue between parties on the basis of equality, mutual respect, compromise and consensus.

The Office of the High Representative (OHR), as an ad hoc international institution mechanism, has been overseeing the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Agreement. We believe that it is incumbent on the OHR to continue to work with all parties in an objective manner in order to build trust to overcome all impediments. The expeditious implementation of the 5+2 agenda should remain the top priority.

We take note of the recent appointment of Mr. Christian Schmidt as the next High Representative. We hope that the incoming High Representative will act to build cohesion among all parties.

It is unfortunate that the new appointment has brought to the fore differences among the constituent entities of the confederation. We are of the view that disagreement among members of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council over the appointment of the new High Representative needs to be resolved through consensus, in line with the Peace Agreement.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way in building a multi-ethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multireligious society. The problems that the country faces are similar to those encountered on the path to building a nation comprising people of different faiths, ethnicities and languages. We hope that the Bosnian parties will continue their engagement in a spirit of compromise and maturity to address all outstanding issues.

Mrs. Gasri (France) (*spoke in French*): I too thank Hervé Lecoq for his briefing. We also welcome the presence of the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina among us today.

The biannual meetings of the Security Council show that, while Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress in its stabilization over the past 25 years, the situation remains fragile. There are worrisome dynamics at play. Intercommunal tensions remain high. Some leaders are calling for secession, thereby challenging the territorial integrity of the country, which is contrary to the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The Dayton Peace Agreement, which France witnessed, established the position of High Representative to facilitate the implementation of the civilian component of the Agreement. The High Representative is not intended to continue beyond the necessary point. The objective, defined by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in 2008, is the closure of his Office, which will indicate the normalization of the country's functioning. But that closure will be beneficial to Bosnia and Herzegovina only if it meets the conditions and objectives set out in the so-called 5+2 agenda in 2008. The Security Council has consistently endorsed that agenda. However, it is clear that all those conditions have not yet been met, as affirmed by the periodic reports of the High Representative to the Security Council. In particular, the

political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains too fragile for the Office of the High Representative to be closed.

Twelve years since he was appointed to the post, Mr. Valentin Inzko has asked to step down. We thank him warmly for his tireless commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 27 May, the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council decided to appoint Mr. Christian Schmidt as his successor. The appointment procedures were followed. Mr. Schmidt will take up his duties on 1 August.

France remains determined to continue to work with its partners, particularly Bosnia and Herzegovina, the signatories and all witnesses to the Dayton Agreement, the members of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board and regional partners in support of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and its economic and social development on the path to European integration.

Mr. Dang (Viet Nam): I thank Mr. Hervé Lecoq for his briefing. I welcome the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina to our meeting this afternoon.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to show a complex picture. The divisive rhetoric, political instability and disagreement among entities and communities pose a serious challenge to the sustainable peace, unity and prosperity of the country and all its people. The terrible coronavirus disease pandemic has further increased existing tensions. It is therefore important that Bosnia and Herzegovina step up its efforts to address the ongoing challenges, stabilize the sociopolitical situation, promote economic development and improve the well-being and livelihood of the people.

In doing so, we believe that all parties need to engage in a constructive dialogue and confidence-building measures. Trust and confidence can pave the way for overcoming difficulties, narrowing differences and strengthening national reconciliation. The international community should continue to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in its constructive and meaningful manner, in accordance with international law and the aspirations of the country and its people. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Viet Nam strongly promotes respect for international law, including the implementation of international treaties. We have consistently supported the role played by the regional arrangement, as well as an international and a regional agreement, in contributing to the maintenance of regional peace and security and, at the same time, in order to build sustainably, the regional issues and the positions and views of the countries directly concerned must be taken into consideration.

It is also our position to support the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Mediation is an important and effective means; yet it can be very challenging and complex. It requires not only personal capacity but also trust, good relations and cooperation with all sides.

On the question at hand, we consider that the Dayton Peace Agreement and past practices, including Security Council resolutions and decisions, are an important basis for the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing emerging issues.

We hope that all sides will commit to reaching an agreement for long-lasting peace, stability and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole region.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Lecoq for his briefing. We recognize the presence at this meeting of the Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The information provided by Mr. Lecoq is genuinely valuable and timely. We would appreciate more detailed background information, as well as any other information considered relevant to Security Council members, including the distribution of documents by the President in due time and form.

Mexico recognizes the importance of the work of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Peace Agreement. From the information shared at the most recent meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/2021/436), it is clear that progress on the 5+2 agenda has been limited. Progress on that agenda is fundamental and a requirement for both the European integration project and for the eventual closure of the Office of the High Representative.

Mexico insists that dialogue is the only way to resolve any disagreement and reiterates its willingness to continue working for a peaceful Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Maman Sani (Niger) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Hervé Lecoq, Officer-in-Charge of the Europe and Central Asia Division, for his excellent briefing. I also welcome the participation in this meeting of Ms. Bisera Turković, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My delegation followed with interest the process leading to the appointment of Mr. Christian Schmidt as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that, in accordance with his mandate under the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Schmidt will work with the various parties to promote lasting peace and stability and to achieve the 5+2 agenda.

The post-election period in Bosnia and Herzegovina is an opportunity to carry out the constitutional and electoral reforms necessary to ensure not only the effectiveness of the rule of law but also the transparency and inclusiveness of the electoral system. Furthermore, as the international community mobilizes for vaccination against the coronavirus disease pandemic, we urge the various levels of Government to increase their cooperation and coordination to advance the vaccination programmes and strengthen the health-care system.

In addition, we call on all parties to demonstrate a constructive political commitment to finalize the formation of a Government and appointments at all levels of authority, which would make it possible to avoid a potential institutional paralysis.

The return of refugees and displaced persons is of the utmost importance. Therefore, we call on actors at all levels to work for a sociopolitical climate that is favourable to the voluntary return of refugees and their integration into their communities.

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its support for the appointment of Mr. Christian Schmidt as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it is appropriate to point out the relevance of the established practice of the Security Council on the matter, which consists of endorsing that appointment

through a Security Council resolution, which the Council has always done by consensus in the past.

Mr. Cherif (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Hervé Lecoq for his valuable briefing on the developments in the situation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also welcome the participation in this meeting of Ms. Bisera Turković, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My country's delegation welcomes once again the various positive developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which we discussed during the previous Security Council meeting on this subject in May (see S/2021/436). We reiterate our support for all efforts made to strengthen stability and build peace in the country. In that regard, we call on all political parties to refrain from divisive rhetoric that exacerbates ethnic tensions and dangerously jeopardizes the entire peacebuilding process. We also call on all the political leaders to prioritize the national interests of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to pave the way for the younger generations to build a better future based on ethnic and cultural unity.

My country's delegation reiterates our support for the efforts of the Office of the High Representative in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as the efforts of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina pursuant to its mandate. We call on all parties to redouble their efforts in order to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My delegation has taken note of the letter addressed to the Secretary-General from the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning the nomination of Mr. Schmidt, who will succeed him starting 1 August. We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Inzko for his efforts throughout his 12 years in office. In that regard, my delegation encourages all parties to abide by their obligations to ensure the full self-independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning the implementation of 5+2 agenda, the closure of the Office of the High Representative and an end to international supervision.

In conclusion, I would like to express Tunisia's support for all the efforts to bring stability to the Bosnia and Herzegovina and establish reconciliation among its various ethnic groups. We are ready to work with all

partners to support lasting peace and security as well as sustainable development, with a view to meeting the aspirations of all the citizens of the country for a better future.

Ms. Juul (Norway): I thank Mr. Lecoq for his useful briefing. We also appreciate the presence at the meeting of Ms. Bisera Turković, Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Let me start by reiterating what we said when we discussed Bosnia and Herzegovina less than two months ago (see S/2021/436). Norway fully supports the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its ongoing work. It is important that the High Representative can continue the task of overseeing the implementation of civilian aspects of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement.

We also use this opportunity to thank Mr. Inzko for his commitment and hard work over many years in his role as High Representative.

The Security Council has repeatedly stated its commitment to the principles of the 5+2 agenda as the condition for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, most recently in November last year in resolution 2549 (2020), which was adopted unanimously. Norway gave its support to those principles in its statement at the Council meeting on Bosnia and Herzegovina held in May (S/2021/436, annex X). The authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina must take the necessary steps to complete the 5+2 agenda. Again, prior to the closure of the Office of the High Representative, the well-established requirements from 2008 need to be met.

As elaborated in May, we call for continued reforms to secure stability and the welfare of all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All parties must prioritize the implementation of comprehensive reforms in a manner benefiting all citizens. That requires political will and leadership. We also encourage the Government to make further efforts to improve the rule of law to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina develops as a State based on that fundamental principle. That includes abiding by its international commitments on human rights and implementing decisions by the European Court of Human Rights.

Norway welcomes the continued work of the European Union military operation in Bosnia

and Herzegovina. Its contribution to maintaining stability and a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina is important.

Let me end by once again confirming that we fully support the sovereignty, territorial integrity and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign State comprising two entities. On the procedure for appointing the High Representative, it is our understanding of the Dayton Accords that such decisions rest with the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): I thank Mr. Lecoq for his briefing, especially on such short notice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is currently at peace, but its stability cannot be taken for granted. The country has yet to realize its full potential, as we heard from Mr. Lecoq, especially in strengthening its economy, the rule of law and democratic institutions. The Office of the High Representative plays an essential role in monitoring and supporting the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Accords, and the Office has been critical to the stability we have seen over the past 25 years. The Office is needed to guide Bosnia and Herzegovina towards its own self-identified goals. A secure, stable and forward-looking Bosnia and Herzegovina, undergoing continued work towards unity and reconciliation, is in the best interests of the citizens of that country, as well as the international community.

As the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board established, and many other Security Council members before me have affirmed, Bosnia and Herzegovina must meet specific criteria — and agenda of five objectives and two conditions — in order to graduate from international supervision. I note, in that regard, that Russia agreed to that agenda in 2008. In contradiction to the 5+2 agenda it has previously supported, Russia now appears to maintain that the Office of the High Representative should be closed. Russia's opposition to the new High Representative is not based in law, but it is because Moscow does not agree with the appointment of a new High Representative as a matter of principle. Let us therefore be clear on why we are here today: Russia seeks the immediate closure of the Office and is using some spurious legal arguments to advance that goal.

On 27 May, the Peace Implementation Council appointed Christian Schmidt as the next High

Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the sole exception of Russia, all Steering Board members — Canada, France, Germany, the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, represented by Turkey, the United States and Japan — agreed to his appointment. Decisions of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board do not require unanimity. Based on the conclusions of the 1996 Peace Implementation Conference, there is no determinative role for the Security Council in the appointment process. There is no requirement that the Security Council take action to confirm Mr. Schmidt's designation. High Representative-designate Schmidt has the support of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, barring only Russia. Therefore, his appointment as High Representative is a closed matter.

The United States opposes any effort to negotiate a change to the 5+2 agenda or a time line for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. The conditions of the agenda include urgent reforms for a stable Bosnia and Herzegovina. As was made abundantly clear to the Council from the briefers that Russia itself selected for the informal Arria Formula meeting discussion last November to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the Dayton Accords, nationalistic rhetoric continues to divide the country and inhibit real progress on reform. The United States remains committed to the principles of the Dayton Peace Accords. There is no future for either of the entities outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Peaceful dissolution is not an option. The redrawing of borders in the Western Balkans is not on the table.

Let me respond, if I may, to some of the earlier remarks by other delegations. The United States view is that no one is trying to undermine the Council's authority or to circumvent its procedures here. We welcome the Council's support for the appointment of the High Representative, and we look forward to a productive relationship, we hope, between the High Representative and the Council. However, the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, not the Security Council, appoints the High Representative. The letter from Representative Inzko has now been shared with the Council. In the past, as some have indicated, there was consensus in the Security Council on the appointment of the High Representative, and the Security Council chose to explicitly welcome and support the appointment. However, that was not required.

Let me end by saying that the United States affirms our unwavering support for a Bosnia and Herzegovina that is democratic, multi-ethnic and sovereign and for an independent State with unquestioned territorial integrity, destined for fuller integration into the Euro-Atlantic community.

Mr. Kiboino (Kenya): I would like to thank Mr. Lecoq for his briefing and to recognize the presence of Ms. Turković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We would like to reiterate our earlier call for constructive and open dialogue among all the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We encourage them to continue making efforts, through mutual understanding and compromise, to build bridges of reconciliation and promote solutions that lead to social cohesion and nation-building.

Kenya urges Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to make efforts towards the fulfilment of the five objectives and two conditions established by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board.

We encourage all parties to exercise restraint and refrain from provocative, divisive and nationalistic rhetoric, which could undermine the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State.

We call on all the parties to work together and recommit to effectively implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement. We encourage members of the Security Council to work together in a consensual manner with regard to the Office of the High Representative, whose role my delegation supports.

Mr. Kelly (Ireland): I would like to thank our briefer, Mr. Lecoq, from the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and welcome Minister for Foreign Affairs Turković to the Security Council.

Ireland supports the Office of the High Representative and believes that its role remains vital to the work of building a stable and prosperous future for Bosnia and Herzegovina. That stability is important in the reform process required for European Union accession.

We therefore welcome the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board decision on the appointment of Mr. Christian Schmidt as High Representative and look forward to working with him.

We note the past practice whereby the Security Council has marked the appointment of each new High Representative. We view that expression of political support as an important step but not legally necessary for the decision of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board to appoint a new High Representative to take effect.

We recall that the report transmitted by the Secretary-General's on 27 April (S/2021/409) noted that, aside from the encouraging trend in Brčko district, the authorities had made no progress in implementing the 5+2 agenda, the completion of which is a prerequisite for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. We note that, last November in resolution 2549 (2020), the Council reiterated its calls on the competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to take the necessary steps to complete the 5+2 agenda. The requirements that need to be met by the Bosnian authorities for the closure of the Office of the High Representative were agreed by the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board — the five objectives and two conditions.

Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Inzko for his many years of distinguished service as High Representative.

Ms. Farrey (United Kingdom): I thank Mr Lecoq for his briefing and welcome the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The role of the High Representative remains vital and has the United Kingdom's full support. The five objectives and two conditions for the close of the Office of the High Representative have not been met. Those objectives and conditions were agreed by all Peace Implementation Council Steering Board members, are recognized by the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and supported repeatedly by the Security Council, most recently in resolution 2549 (2020), adopted unanimously in November last year.

The absence of a High Representative at this stage would encourage further instability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thereby emboldening actors who wish to perpetuate divisions and slowing the implementation of much-needed reforms. It would have a negative impact on Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region and hinder the continued implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The Security Council should maintain its focus on achieving sustainable peace and security and supporting the Office of the High Representative until the conditions mentioned for closing the Office have been met.

As stated in Mr. Inzko's letter to the Security Council dated 3 June, subsequently circulated to Security Council members on 24 June, Mr. Christian Schmidt has already been appointed by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council as the new High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. He will take up his duties on 1 August.

As a member of the Steering Board, we attended the meeting on 27 May, where he was appointed. The appointment was supported by all members of the Steering Board, except for Russia. The decisions of the Steering Board do not require unanimity. On the basis that there was sufficient political support in the Steering Board for Mr. Schmidt, it was announced on 27 May that it had formally appointed him as the new High Representative. Legal advisers in the Office of the High Representative have confirmed that that is the correct procedure.

It is not the case that the endorsement of the Security Council is required in order to finalize the appointment of Mr. Schmidt. Pursuant to annex 10 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace and Peace Implementation Conference conclusions, specifically the 1996 conclusions, which state that, in the event of a vacancy, following consultations with members of the Peace Implementation Council, the Steering Board will designate a High Representative. The decision on the appointment of a new High Representative rests with the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board. There is no determinative role for the Secretary-General or the Security Council in the appointment process and no legal requirement that the Security Council take action to confirm Mr. Schmidt's designation. He will take up his duties as High Representative on 1 August, whether or not the Council welcomes the appointment, as it has done in the past, via resolution or an exchange of letters.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Estonia.

Before I do that, I would like to again make it clear that it was not a letter from Mr. Inzko addressed to the Security Council; it was a letter addressed to the Secretary-General. That is important given the issue of distribution being addressed here.

I thank the Officer-in-Charge of the Europe and Central Asia Division of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Mr. Hervé Lecoq, for the briefing. I welcome the participation of the Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina in today's meeting.

I would like to start by reiterating Estonia's full support for a robust and effective Office of the High Representative, as it is a strong contributor to the country's efforts in maintaining a safe and secure environment. Estonia strongly supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We are certain that its future is adjoined with the Euro-Atlantic path. Although the country has made progress in several areas over 25 years, it is unfortunately now divided by political tensions. Republika Srpska should stop advocating secession and refrain from any actions or policies that could destabilize the country. It is high time to put aside differences and focus on lowering political tensions and promoting reconciliation.

The Security Council has several times expressed its support for the 5+2 agenda in the debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Given that urgent reforms are needed and nationalistic and divisive rhetoric is on the rise in the country, it is clear that the conditions laid out in 2008 in the 5+2 agenda for closing the Office of the High Representative have not yet been achieved. That has also been confirmed by the regular reports to the Secretary-General by the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The ongoing position of the High Representative is therefore essential to the efforts for peace and stability in the country until the conditions of the 5+2 agenda are met.

We thank the current High Representative, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his commitment and efforts in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina for so many years. Mr. Christian Schmidt of Germany was appointed by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council on 27 May as the new High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was decided that he would take up office on 1 August. There is no requirement that the Security Council take action to confirm Mr. Schmidt's designation. The decision on the appointment of a new High Representative rests with the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. As my colleagues from France and the United States stressed before, those nomination rules must be respected, and there is no need for consensus in the Steering Board.

Lastly, we urge the parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage in dialogue and foster an environment conducive to unity, consensus and constructive engagement in the interest of citizens. We encourage the Presidency leaders to continue the country's path towards European integration.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Bisera Turković, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Ms. Turković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for so successfully presiding over the Security Council during the month of June.

I would like to assure all members here today that Bosnia and Herzegovina looks forward to the day when we can close the Office of the High Representative in our country. Unfortunately, that day has not yet arrived. As members know, and as a few members mentioned, the 5+2 agenda was agreed in 2008. It set out the requirements that need to be met by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to the closure of Office of the High Representative. While progress has been made in some areas, there is still much work to be done before we can consider the requirements fulfilled.

We simply cannot stress enough the importance of the role of the High Representative in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The process of transferring responsibility to Bosnia and Herzegovina's elected officials is an important one but it must be done at the right time, when all agreed preconditions have been met. The political situation in the country, in particular over the past six months, including deplorable actions and statements by certain political actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, illustrates the need for the Office of the High Representative to continue its important work.

Last year, we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the conclusion of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Dayton and its signing in Paris. While an immense amount of progress has been achieved, we need to continue strengthening State-level institutions and their competencies, in line with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Some politicians have found it quite beneficial to resist and oppose either the High Representative himself or the work of his Office, and that is unfortunate. Instead, our focus needs to be on continuing to create an Administration that can meet the needs of its citizens, as well as being able to face the challenges ahead.

As members will recall, on 27 May the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council formally

appointed the new High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, consistent with relevant Security Council resolutions. The newly appointed High Representative is to take up his duties on 1 August. I invite all members of the Peace Implementation Council to continue to provide support to the High Representative in his important work.

It is of the utmost importance that the Office of the High Representative and the High Representative himself continue their work with the people and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as with the international community, to ensure Bosnia and Herzegovina's continued progress towards becoming a prosperous and effective democracy set firmly on the path towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

Allow me to conclude my statement by using the medical terminology we have become accustomed to over the past 18 months. The collective immunization of the Bosnian political and legal system has not yet been completed. If the procedures we have diligently been following for the past 25 years were to be interrupted or suspended, we would expose ourselves to a high risk of reinfection and a potentially dangerous surge that we would not be able to contain alone, meaning that all our efforts to stop the spread of the virus would go to complete waste.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to put a question to Minister Turković. I hope she will not take the question personally, but it is a matter on which we require some clarification.

The question is as follows: Does the statement that she made today reflect the position of all of constituent entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina? Has her position been coordinated with the Presidency of the country, and if so how was that done? I ask because we received a letter from the Chair of the Presidency, Mr. Milorad Dodik, stating that she does not have the legal right to make a statement before the Security Council due to the fact that her statement was not agreed with all the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As we understand it, the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement assume that issues of foreign policy are the shared responsibility of all the entities of

Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why such programme statements must be coordinated with all the entities. If that is not the case, then it seems we must draw the conclusion that everything Minister Turković said today should be considered her own personal views. Obviously, she has every right to make her personal views known; however, it appears that they do not reflect the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are convinced that it is very important to adhere to the principle of respect for the interests of the two entities and three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to maintain a balanced stance. Otherwise, instead of resolving the situation, we can only provoke further antagonism between the parties.

We have heard in many statements today that all the legal requirements for the appointment of the High Representative were complied with and that the Security Council plays no role in the matter, which is now closed. That is quite surprising, as when we appointed High Representatives in the past, consensus was required in the Steering Board and no one cast any doubt on the role of the Security Council.

As we mentioned earlier, the same unacceptable games are still being played here. The views of the members of the Steering Board and the entities that make up the country are not being heeded, and decisions are being pushed through. I can say now that it does not add any authority to the allegedly appointed High Representative Schmidt.

The President: The Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Turković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to ask the representative of the Russian Federation whether he has been granted the authority by his own Foreign Minister, Mr. Sergey Lavrov, to ask the question he posed to me. Obviously, if he does not have the permission of Mr. Lavrov, his question constituted a personal expression, to which I am not willing to provide an answer. However, if he can prove that such a question comes with the authority of his Foreign Minister, then I would tell him that everything I have said is based on strategic foreign policy documents adopted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which serve as guiding documents for all that I have done, all that I am doing and all that I am going to do.

Despite the fact that those who dislike Bosnia and Herzegovina — and who are making concerted efforts to prevent it from being functional — would not agree with me, the majority certainly do. The strategic documents were created and adopted by all three constituent peoples and other citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who would certainly support my position and expect me to represent all views, as I am doing.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will gladly answer Minister Turković's question. I can assure her that I am fully authorized to speak on behalf of the Russian Government. I have been authorized by the President of the country, Mr. Vladimir Putin. I have submitted my credentials to the Secretary-General. She can be absolutely certain that everything I say in the Chamber is an official statement on behalf of the Russian Federation.

I do not know whether she wants written confirmation from Mr. Lavrov. I know she does not have such a letter, whereas we do — it is signed by the Chair of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That letter, which does exist, states that Minister Turković is not authorized to speak on behalf of the country on the present issue, or to express her position as representing the interests of all the constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is my answer to her question.

The President: The Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Turković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I do not want to enter into a debate, but I would just like to remind my esteemed colleague that there are three members of the Presidency and, in order to deliver such a statement, it is necessary to have confirmation from all three of them, or at least from the majority of the members of the Presidency.

The President: The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to ask how I am supposed to interpret what Minister Turković just said. Therefore, in order to speak on behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina,

just as within the Steering Board, consensus is not necessary and a majority is sufficient? Is my understanding correct?

The President: The Deputy Chairperson of the Council of Ministers and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina has asked for the floor to make a further statement. I now give her the floor.

Ms. Turković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): The Minister for Foreign Affairs of my country does not need the approval of any member of the Presidency to address this audience. However, if somebody wanted to set limitations, then they would have to be raised within the Presidency and agreed by all. I do not believe that this is a fruitful discussion, and I am truly not willing to continue to waste the time of the representative of Russia's colleagues.

The President: Actually, as President of the Council, I agree with that statement.

The representative of the Russian Federation has asked for the floor to make a further statement.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I agree with you, Mr. President. I also have no desire to continue this discussion. I just want to point out the fact that we are in an open meeting and that the parties concerned will be able to watch it. I therefore do not believe that it is up to me to determine the extent of the Minister's authority, the capacity in which she is supposed to represent Bosnia and Herzegovina at this meeting or the statements she is and is not authorized to make here. I believe that the matter is for Bosnia and Herzegovina to decide. I am sure that this meeting will be carefully watched there. Let them decide for themselves whether or not Ms. Turković was or was not authorized to make the statement she delivered.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.