



Security Council debate on BiH, 15 May 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms. Francesca Gatt

Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

Thank you, President,

I also thank High Representative Schmidt for his briefing and I welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Denis Becirovic and the representatives of Serbia, Croatia and the European Union to the meeting.

Malta welcomes and commends the good progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina which led to the opening of EU accession negotiations by the European Council on 22 March 2024. This is a historic step for the country and its people towards achieving the goal of EU membership. Malta will continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's European integration process.



In this context, we appreciate the positive reforms already undertaken. Furthermore, we maintain our encouragement for Bosnia and Herzegovina to persist in its efforts and uphold its commitment to further reforms aimed at strengthening the country's constitutional, electoral, and judicial frameworks.

Reforms that prioritise inclusivity and uphold the rule of law, including the representation of women in all government institutions are important. We urge authorities to implement credible and genuine measures to uphold human rights and freedom of expression in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is also essential to recognise the vital role played by free media and civil society.

President,

Malta reiterates its steadfast support for the Dayton Agreement and urges all parties within Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully adhere to its principles. Furthermore, we reaffirm our unwavering support for the mission and mandate of the High Representative.



EUFOR-Althea has an important role in maintaining security and stability and its presence is crucial for preserving the present stable situation.

The presence of inflammatory rhetoric and divisive actions that undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and the Dayton Peace Agreement is a matter of significant concern. Reconciliation stands as a cornerstone for achieving lasting peace. Denial of genocide not only disrespects the memory of victims but also impedes genuine healing. Malta underscores the importance of the country's leadership refraining from inflammatory rhetoric and divisive actions, which pose significant threats to peace and stability in the region.



We maintain our concerns regarding any legislative initiatives or actions by one of the parties that contradict the constitutional order of the country and that deviate from the path towards EU integration. Of particular concern is the draft law labelling societal groups as ‘foreign agents’. At this juncture, it is imperative to channel all effort towards reconciliation. Addressing differences constructively and positively is crucial to prevent them from derailing the progress towards shared objectives.

As OSCE Chair-in-Office for 2024, Malta also encourages all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to make full use of the OSCE presence on the ground and of its very relevant toolkit to defuse tensions and promote dialogue at all levels of society.

Dialogue remains key, as does a commitment to engage in good faith for the preservation of peace and stability for the benefit of all citizens in the country.

In conclusion, Malta reaffirms steadfast support for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We respectfully encourage responsible and prudent leadership in the



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country, dedicated to fostering cooperation, and respecting all segments of society with a clear commitment to EU accession. We are confident that through inclusive dialogue and strong political will from all stakeholders, Bosnia and Herzegovina will advance peaceful co-existence, enhance cohesion, and realise its full potential.

I thank you.