



## Security Council briefing on BiH, 1 November 2024

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt

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

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Thank you, President,

I welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the meeting and look forward to listening to his assessment.

At the outset, Malta welcomes the renewal of EUFOR Althea's mandate, and we thank France for their efforts as penholders in ensuring a smooth process. We recognise the importance of the operation and its role in maintaining a safe and secure environment in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We remain fully committed to the operation's presence in the country and support the work it carries out.



We also welcome the peaceful atmosphere in which the recent local elections were held and commend the efficient run-up to these elections, as well as the extensive participation from across the political spectrum. Unfortunately, women remain under-represented in public and political life.

Malta also positively notes the sustained overall stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina during recent months and the consistently calm security situation in the country. However, Malta remains concerned at the lack of progress in relation to the political situation. Secessionist rhetoric and actions are still rife and pose serious obstacles towards economic and social development, as well as putting the stable, but fragile, security situation at risk.



We are deeply concerned about any legislative initiatives that run counter to the constitutional order of the country and its EU path and call for restraint in adopting and implementing such measures. In this context, we reiterate your call on all members of the country's leadership to refrain from nationalistic and inflammatory rhetoric and divisive actions, as these would seriously threaten peace and stability in the country and, potentially, in the wider region. We reiterate our position on the importance of sustained stability in the Western Balkans which is interlinked with the overall prosperity of the region.

Malta strongly believes that Bosnia and Herzegovina's future lies within the EU and will continue to support its commitment towards achieving its goal of EU membership. This is a unifying factor among both the citizens and political class of the country and all efforts should be directed towards reaching this objective. We encourage the implementation of the necessary reforms and the strengthening of the country's constitutional, electoral, and judicial frameworks, that will ensure meaningful progress towards EU accession.



These reforms must adhere to the principles of inclusivity and the rule of law. Ensuring adequate representation of women in all government institutions and fostering an inclusive public administration is paramount. However, the absence of common ground at the political level is hampering the implementation of crucial reforms and risks culminating in a political crisis that could potentially de-stabilise the situation in the country and the region.

We strongly encourage all parties to work together to enact coherent legislation through coordinated institutions. This is the only way to achieve meaningful reforms and address future challenges. A genuine commitment from all parties to reconciliation and building stronger cohesion is urgently needed. All parties should strive for compromise solutions that are beneficial for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina regardless of ethnicity. This calls for a commitment towards trust building measures that are aimed at boosting mutual understanding and fostering increased cooperation.



Malta reaffirms its unwavering support for the Dayton Agreement. Next year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> year of its signing. We urge all parties within Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully and scrupulously respect and uphold the principles enshrined within it, including the power-sharing framework, and work in a constructive manner within agreed parameters. We also reiterate our support for the mission and mandate of the High Representative and his office, and its role in overseeing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

Finally, I would like to express Malta's continued strong support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's unity and territorial integrity and urges for political responsibility and sensible leadership in the country that strives towards cooperation based on the respect for all members of society with a clear view towards EU accession. Serious efforts are needed to engage in a constructive and inclusive dialogue that guarantees peaceful co-existence and a prosperous future for all citizens in the region.

I thank you.