



**PERMANENT MISSION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

STATEMENT

by

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Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UN

at

UN Security Council, Meeting on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May, and to wish you and your delegation every success. We also welcome Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and have taken note of his report on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering the period from 16th October 2019 through 15th April 2020.

Mr. President,

Firstly, let me address the most urgent issue. The first cases of COVID 19 in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been confirmed in the beginning of March. Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities have responded very swiftly. Various urgent and necessary measures have been put in place to contain spread of virus, including declaring a state of emergency and setting mandatory quarantines. All resources at our disposal have been mobilized. Our hospitals, medical and other relevant institutions had to adapt overnight to the new and unforeseen circumstances. Doctors, nurses, first responders and many others rise to the challenge risking their lives in fighting this ferocious and highly contagious disease. We use this opportunity to thank all of them for their indispensable efforts and dedication. We would also like to thank our international partners for their valuable assistance and support that has been rendered in these difficult times for all humankind.

In addition to its impact on our health system, this pandemic hits our vulnerable economy very hard. Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities have introduced some necessary measures to mitigate those negative effects. Some urgent financial packages have been created in order to help those suffering the most. These efforts will take time and significant resources to recover from the unpredicted situation caused by the virus which has claimed so many human lives worldwide.

Lastly, we would need the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and other international financial institutions to overcome the negative economic and social effects of COVID-19 pandemic. The role of the UN will be indispensable through the UN Country team, i.e., UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, etc.

Mr. President.

Let me now turn to some points relating to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina prior to COVID 19 outbreak. The new Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been confirmed by the Parliamentary Assembly in December last year. The Council of Ministers has continued the cooperation with the Entity governments on the issues concerning the European integration and reform processes targeting the stabilization of economy, increased effectiveness of public administration, and attraction of domestic and foreign investments enabling job creation. In addition to that, it is important to mention that the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has adopted 'Bosnia and Herzegovina Reform Programme' in November 2019, which defines the county's future relations with the Atlantic alliance. Consequently, this document was submitted to NATO in order to implement the Defence review from 2016.

Authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are fully committed to overcome challenges and implement reforms required for full-fledged integration into the European Union (EU). In that regard, we are grateful to the EU for its active support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's European path and would like to urge both the EU and its member States to continue to intensify that support. For our part, we have increased efforts in a number of areas relevant to achieving that goal including the implementation of the reform agenda and socioeconomic reforms as a matter of priority, as well as our continuing determination to strengthen the rule of law and good governance in order to fulfill the requirements of the European Union to obtain candidacy status.

Most importantly, on 28 April the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina made a resolute step towards the candidacy status and prospective negotiations with the European Union on membership by adopting a Plan for implementation of the Recommendations from the Opinion of the European Commission from 2019.

The fostering of friendly and constructive cooperation among the countries of the region on issues of mutual interest remains a top priority of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy. The cooperation of Western Balkan States within the framework of the Berlin process remains a key driver of their integration into the European Union and of stability in the region.

Bosnia and Herzegovina plays an active role in the regional initiatives through the South East Europe Cooperation Process, the Western Balkan Fund, Central

European Initiative, etc. Let me mention as a good example of regional cooperation the project of construction of Sarajevo-Belgrade highway in cooperation among three partner countries, namely: Serbia, Turkey and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. President,

During the reporting period, Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to fulfil its international obligations with regard to countering terrorism and violent extremism. Bosnia and Herzegovina with an extensive support by EU has undertaken significant steps forward in strengthening the rule of law and the fight against organized crime. The EU experts have been working together with Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities on the implementation of the 2018-2022 Action Plan for the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorist Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The judicial institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to process individuals involved in fighting on behalf of terrorist organizations, as well as those who facilitate the recruitment of terrorist fighters. With regard to processing war crimes in domestic courts, we would like to reiterate that fighting impunity is vital for Bosnia and Herzegovina as a complex and multinational State.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues a very important planning, monitoring and evaluation process in the field of social and economic development that is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that regard, let me express our gratitude to the UN country team in Bosnia and Herzegovina for its outstanding contribution and tireless efforts in assisting our institutions on development agenda.

Mr. President,

I would like to draw your attention to one of the main concerns of Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities, namely to the issue of illegal migrants. The international migrant crisis continues to pose a substantial challenge to the States of the region and their economies. During last year Bosnia and Herzegovina have experienced a significant increase in refugees and migrants on its territory, most of whom crossed the border illegally.

Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not have enough capacities to implement all necessary measures and to curb the migrant crisis, in accordance with the highest European and international standards.

Bearing in mind that lack of capacities, and also the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a final destination for migrants, our government is in need of stronger international support, especially from the European Union as the final destination of migrants.

We are grateful to the European Commission's financial support to Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities in handling migration and strengthening its capacity for border management, but for comprehensive reaction, Bosnia and Herzegovina institutions need much more support from European Union, as well as from United Nations agencies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues in these trying times to contribute actively to international peace and security by deploying its military and police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping missions. Currently, we have approximately forty-five personnel serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina has endorsed the call of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres, for an immediate global ceasefire of all conflicts in the world in order to silence the guns, stop violence, and raise the voices for peace. In this very challenging time, there is nothing more important than an immediate ceasefire in all corners of the globe to reinforce diplomatic action, help create conditions for the delivery of life-saving aid, and bring hope to places that are among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. Bosnia and Herzegovina stands ready to cooperate with UN member states and the UN broader family on this critical and the most pressing issue the world is facing today.

Finally, we would like to express the readiness of Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to continue their work in securing a better and prosperous future for its citizens, as well as our gratitude to our international partners for supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina on that path.

Thank you for your attention.