



## KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Speech by

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### Debate on Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Security Council

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Madam President,

[Belgium aligns itself with the statement which will be made on behalf of the European Union.]

I would like to thank the Permanent Representative, Mr Valentin Inzko for his presentation. We are particularly grateful for the work he carries out on the ground in a complex environment.

Madam President,

We welcome the unanimity within the Council, which led to the renewal of **Operation Althea (EUFOR)** for one year. This mission contributes to the viability of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single, unified, sovereign and multi-community country and to the stabilisation of the region. Belgium will continue to offer its full support as a member of the European Union.

Madam President,

Twenty-five years after the Dayton Agreements, Bosnia-Herzegovina has emerged as an independent State looking towards Euro-Atlantic integration. However, it will only be able to achieve its goal of one day becoming a member of the European Union if it carries out all the necessary reforms. The strengthening of the **rule of law and the fight against corruption** must be at the heart of these efforts. We call on Bosnia-Herzegovina to adopt

the necessary reforms to strengthen Justice and the independence of the judicial authorities, including within the *High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council* (HJPC).

Madam President,

In view of the municipal elections planned for 15 November 2020, we call on all political stakeholders to refrain from provocative rhetoric during the electoral period. We welcome the agreement on the holding of **municipal elections in Mostar** on 20 December 2020. This will finally allow the residents of Mostar to exercise their right to vote after 12 years.

We stress that any **electoral reform** must be inclusive and comply with European standards. In this respect, we also call for a guarantee on the equality and non-discrimination of citizens and the full implementation of the decrees of the European Court of Human Rights, including the Sejdić-Finci and related decrees. It is also essential to implement the recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

Madam President,

Twenty-five years after the **Srebrenica genocide**, the denial of genocide and war crimes, and the glorification of war criminals, continue. Let me be clear: there can be no place for the denial of genocide and war crimes. The International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia, the International Mechanism called on to carry out the residual functions of the Criminal Courts and the International Court of Justice ruled that the atrocities committed in Srebrenica 25 years ago constituted the crime of genocide. Continued denial merely undermines reconciliation efforts and needlessly adds to the pain of the survivors. This is unacceptable and must stop, in Bosnia-Herzegovina and elsewhere.

We welcome the adoption of the Revised Strategy on war crimes. It must be implemented fully and promptly. We also encourage the adoption of a law that punishes the denial of genocide and war crimes recognised as such by international justice.

True reconciliation is only possible if concrete actions are taken to combat impunity by guaranteeing the effective pursuit of war criminals and shedding light on the fate of the victims. Victims and survivors must be the focus of these efforts; their rights and meaningful participation in the reconciliation efforts must be guaranteed. The survivors

deserve truth, justice and reparations for the crimes committed against their family members.

The road to reconciliation is long, it is true, but it is the only way to achieve lasting peace.

Thank you.