

Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress since 1995, but its hard won peace remains fragile and under pressure

Thank you President, and first may I join others in welcoming the unanimous adoption of the resolution renewing the mandate of EUFOR Operation Althea. And I want to pay particular tribute and appreciation to Ireland's role as penholder on the text. Bosnia and Herzegovina has made progress since 1995, but its hard won peace remains fragile and under pressure. EUFOR's presence continues to play an indispensable role in ensuring a safe and secure environment.

Second, we would like to thank High Representative Schmidt for his latest report, and we look forward to welcoming him in future meetings. He and his office continue to play a crucial role, and have the UK's support, including for the use of his executive powers should the situation require it.

We would like to congratulate all the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the 2 October elections. These were, overall, peaceful and democratic. But instances of fraud must be investigated and prosecuted. And we also regret further instances of dangerous, divisive and secessionist rhetoric. These must stop.

But only half the work is done. We urge the relevant actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to prioritise collaboration and cooperation over political obstructionism to ensure the election results are implemented swiftly and effectively.

In this regard, we note the executive actions taken by the High Representative in the run up to and following the elections. It is clear from the report that these were tough decisions and that the High Representative did not take them lightly. We understand that in some quarters, these decisions were considered controversial. But it is clear that they were made to amend a dysfunctional status quo that benefitted few. His actions were designed to improve governance to benefit all in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the UK's commitment to the Dayton Peace Agreement and its structures. We welcome all work towards meeting the conditions set out for their closure, including the 5+2 Criteria. We remain an active member of the Peace Implementation Council in support of the territorial integrity and fundamental structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, sovereign state, comprising two entities.

We urge all actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina to set aside narrow interests, and focus instead on improving the quality of life for all citizens, and making progress on the agreed aim of Euro-Atlantic integration. Thank you Mr

President.