Arria-Formula Meeting in commemoration of the 25-year Anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

(24 November 2020, at 2.00 p.m.)

Concept Note

The Russian Federation invites to an Arria-Formula Meeting of the UN Security Council Members on 24 November 2020, to commemorate the 25-th anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Historic background

The General Framework Agreement was initialed on November 21, 1995, and then was formally signed in Paris on December 14, 1995, by the parties and witnessed by US President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The Dayton Peace Agreement with its 11 annexes represents a complex and unique architecture for maintenance of regional peace and security. It was hard-won, but it brought to an end four years of the most brutal conflict in Europe since the Second World War, conflict that claimed more than 100,000 lives and caused more than 2 million people to flee their homes.

Twenty-five years after the Agreement was reached, the Dayton Accords remain the most important documents for Bosnia and Herzegovina, by which all spheres of its political, economic and social life are regulated.

The Peace Implementation Council is an international body which supports the promotion of peace. The Steering Board of the Council meets twice a year.

The situation in BiH remains in the focus of the Security Council within the Council’s mandate based on the Article VII of the UN Charter.

Key challenges: the importance of full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, realities on the ground and interests of BiH peoples
It is hard to overestimate the importance of the 1995 Dayton comprehensive agreements. Their consistent implementation both put an end to the “hot” phase of the Bosnian conflict and made it possible to achieve impressive results in the post-crisis restoration and development of the decentralized BiH.

More than a million refugees and internally displaced persons have been able to return to their places of prewar residence; key transport and social infrastructure facilities have been modernized; economic reforms, as well as reforms in many other areas, have been implemented.

The Dayton Peace Agreement laid the basic principles of BiH functioning comprising respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, provision of wide authority of the two constituent entities - Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and equality of the three constituent peoples – namely the Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. The Dayton has defined the framework to find solutions related to interethnic conflict settlement through dialogue of the parties on the basis of equality and mutual respect, compromise and consensus.

The experience of political settlement in BiH unequivocally confirms the fact that the efficiency of stabilization processes can only be guaranteed if all parties involved seek to engage in constructive dialogue as well as to jointly identify and meet common interests. The Agreement for Peace in BiH is based on the philosophy of partnership as the only way to consolidate the society. This philosophy is central to strengthening mutual trust between the peoples living in BiH.

As one can see, the international community plays an important role in the efforts aimed at promotion of peace, stability, security and socio-economic development in the region. The Members of the UN Security Council have their own - sometimes rather diverging - views on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to understand the Dayton Agreement and the importance of its full implementation for the actual political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as to get a comprehensive picture of developments on the ground one needs to listen to the legitimate representatives of the three constituent peoples. That would help to assess the value and significant political and historic role that the Dayton Peace Agreement has for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkan region as a whole.
Questions for discussion:
- What factors affect normalization of relations between the three constituent peoples of BiH?
- What political and practical measures could be taken in order to help reduce mistrust among the constituent peoples and states in the region?
- What can the international community, including the UNSC, do to support the full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement?
- What can be done to facilitate transfer of responsibilities for the development of the country to the three constituent peoples of BiH?

Briefers:
Dragan Čović – Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chair (confirmed)
Milorad Dodik – Alliance for Independent Social Democrats, Chair (confirmed)
Bakir Izetbegović – Party of Democratic Action, Chair (to be confirmed)

The invited briefers all hold important positions in the BiH, but we really hope that we can hear their views not only as high-ranking politicians, but primarily as respective representatives of the three constituent peoples.

The Russian Federation looks forward to an open, frank and constructive exchange of views that would allow to confirm the indispensable role the Dayton Peace Agreement continues to play to maintain regional peace and stability.

The meeting will be held on 24 November 2020 at 2.00 p.m. via videoconference and will be broadcast through UN WebTV.