

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 265

Supporting a democratic, pluralistic, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina
and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 22, 2023

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. RICKETTS) submitted the following
resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

RESOLUTION

Supporting a democratic, pluralistic, and prosperous Bosnia
and Herzegovina and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina has historically been a plu-
ralistic society influenced by and composed of a diverse
set of religions, cultures, and ethnicities;

Whereas, on March 3, 1992, Bosnia and Herzegovina de-
clared independence, and on April 7, 1992, the United
States recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as an inde-
pendent state;

Whereas more than 100,000 people died and 2,000,000 more
were displaced in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992
and 1995;

Whereas the United States, alongside the North Atlantic
Treaty Organization (NATO), played a crucial role in

ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and brokering the General Framework Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the “Dayton Agreement” and the “Dayton Accords”) in November 1995;

Whereas the Dayton Accords ended the war, affirmed the territorial integrity and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, as subordinate units of government below the state, installed the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) as an international interim peacekeeping force, and created the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) to oversee civilian implementation of the accords;

Whereas, since the Dayton Accords were signed, the Government and people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made important strides toward re-building a peaceful society based on democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and a free-market economy;

Whereas, in 2004, the United Nations Security Council adopted United Nations Security Council Resolution 1575 authorizing a multinational stabilization force led by the European Union (EUFOR) as the legal successor to SFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, in 2008, the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board set out the requirements that need to be met prior to the closure of the OHR in the 5+2 Agenda;

Whereas, since 2009 and the case of Sejdić-Finci, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has issued judgments concerning ethnic- and territory-based discrimination in the elections of Bosnia and Herzegovina and re-

quiring reforms amendments to the Dayton Agreement, which have yet to be implemented;

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to join a NATO Membership Action Plan in 2010, and Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its first Reform Program to NATO in 2019;

Whereas the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2658 on November 2, 2022, formally reauthorizing the multinational stabilization force known as EUFOR-Althea for a period of 1 year to help implement defense and military aspects of the Dayton Agreement;

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina formally applied for European Union membership on February 15, 2016;

Whereas, on May 29, 2019, the European Union adopted a roadmap to membership for Bosnia and Herzegovina, outlining needed reforms in the areas of democracy, the rule of law, fundamental rights, and public administration;

Whereas the European Union unanimously granted candidacy status to Bosnia and Herzegovina on December 15, 2022, calling upon Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue its efforts to implement democratic reforms and confirming that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies with the European Union;

Whereas some politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries in the region continue to make statements downplaying or denying the 1995 Srebrenica genocide;

Whereas Milorad Dodik, President of Republika Srpska, has hampered reconciliation efforts through genocide denial,

engaged in destabilizing security maneuvers and threatened to withdraw Republika Srpska from state-level institutions, including the judiciary, the security services, the Indirect Tax Authority, and the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas, on December 10, 2021, the parliament of Republika Srpska—

(1) voted in favor of denying the constitutional and legitimate authority of Bosnia and Herzegovina in numerous areas, including indirect taxation, justice, and security and defense; and

(2) falsely claimed entity-level competencies were illegally transferred to Bosnia and Herzegovina;

Whereas the United States has imposed sanctions on Milorad Dodik pursuant to Executive Order 13304 (68 Fed. Reg. 32313; relating to the Termination of Emergencies With Respect to Yugoslavia and Modification of Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001) and Executive Order 14033 (86 Fed. Reg. 31079; relating to Blocking Property and Suspending Entry Into the United States of Certain Persons Contributing to the Destabilizing Situation in the Western Balkans) for obstructing the Dayton Accords and corruption;

Whereas, on January 9, 2022, Milorad Dodik presided over commemorations of an unconstitutional holiday, Republika Srpska Day, which coincided with the day Bosnian Serbs declared their own state and ignited four years of war and bloodshed;

Whereas Milorad Dodik has threatened the secession of Republika Srpska from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which contravenes the Dayton Accords and jeopardizes the peace and security of the entire Western Balkans region;

Whereas, on January 8, 2023, Milorad Dodik awarded a medal to Russian President Vladimir Putin, amid the unprovoked war on Ukraine by the Russian Federation, for strengthening relations between Republika Srpska and the Russian Federation;

Whereas Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted a general election on October 2, 2022, which resulted in the election of Željko Komšić, Denis Bećirović, and Željka Cvijanović to the tripartite presidency;

Whereas, on January 31, 2023, all members of the tripartite presidency visited Washington, DC, for the first time in 18 years and participated in meetings with officials of the Department of State and a bipartisan meeting with Senators;

Whereas, in 2020, the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina contracted by an estimated 4.3 percent, and the youth unemployment rate rose to 33.6 percent, disrupting a five-year trend of decline in part due to the rampant corruption that remains unaddressed; and

Whereas at least 400,000 citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have emigrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina over the past 8 years: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) congratulates Bosnia and Herzegovina on
3 the 31st anniversary of its declaration of independ-
4 ence;

5 (2) reaffirms strong and longstanding bipar-
6 tisan support for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the
7 territorial integrity, sovereignty, and multiethnic

1 character of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and continues
2 to believe that peace and stability in Bosnia and
3 Herzegovina is integral to the peace and stability of
4 Europe as a whole;

5 (3) calls on all parties to uphold the spirit of
6 unity enshrined in the General Framework Agree-
7 ment for Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as
8 the “Dayton Agreement” and the “Dayton Ac-
9 cords”) and to enact electoral and targeted state-
10 level constitutional reforms prior to the 2024 general
11 election in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and calls for the
12 urgent adoption of a package of election integrity
13 measures to address widespread concern among vot-
14 ers about the sanctity of elections in Bosnia and
15 Herzegovina and to address the fraud and abuse
16 that characterized the 2022 elections;

17 (4) calls on the members of the Presidency of
18 Bosnia and Herzegovina to recognize their critical
19 role in preserving stability, to embrace compromise
20 and consensus building within the decision-making
21 process of their institutions, and to work together in
22 the best interests of their constituents as part of a
23 sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina
24 within its internationally recognized borders;

1 (5) encourages the Government of Bosnia and
2 Herzegovina to continue pursuing membership in the
3 North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Euro-
4 pean Union and urges the European Union to in-
5 crease its efforts, cooperation, and assistance to
6 swiftly advance the accession process;

7 (6) calls on the members of the Presidency of
8 Bosnia and Herzegovina to prioritize efforts to com-
9 bat political corruption, democratic backsliding, un-
10 employment, and brain drain in Bosnia and
11 Herzegovina, in particular, by focusing on youth en-
12 gagement;

13 (7) commends the continued efforts of the Of-
14 fice of the High Representative (OHR) to advance
15 reforms, reaffirms the authority of the OHR as ar-
16 ticulated in the Dayton Accords, and calls on mem-
17 bers of the Peace and Implementation Council to
18 provide their full support to the OHR and advance-
19 ment of the 5+2 Agenda;

20 (8) calls on the members of the Presidency of
21 Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop an inclusive and
22 comprehensive strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina,
23 in coordination with Bosnian and Herzegovinian civil
24 society and the European Union, and to increase en-
25 gagement with minority groups in an effort to hear

1 from a diverse cross-section of citizens in Bosnia
2 and Herzegovina, inclusive of all ethnic, political, or
3 religious affiliations;

4 (9) encourages the United Nations and its
5 member states to continue the annual reauthoriza-
6 tion of the EUFOR-Althea stabilization force and to
7 review the current levels of the force in the face of
8 challenges to the integrity of Bosnia and
9 Herzegovina;

10 (10) encourages the United States to consider
11 additional steps to support security and stabilization
12 in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to support EUFOR;

13 (11) calls on the United States—

14 (A) to work in close cooperation with rel-
15 evant institutions to discuss contingency plans
16 if the annual reauthorization of the EUFOR-Al-
17 thea stabilization force is put in jeopardy; and

18 (B) to take steps to deter malign actors,
19 both inside and outside of Bosnia and
20 Herzegovina, from threatening the territorial
21 integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

22 (12) condemns individuals who are actively
23 seeking to undermine the security, stability, and ter-
24 ritorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and
25 urges the President and European allies of the

1 United States to hold such individuals accountable
2 for their actions, including through the use of sanc-
3 tions where appropriate;

4 (13) condemns the inflammatory rhetoric of
5 politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and others in
6 the region who deny the severity or perpetration of
7 war crimes and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina;

8 (14) condemns politicians in Bosnian and
9 Herzegovina and the region who—

10 (A) persist in rampant corruption for per-
11 sonal enrichment at the cost of the prosperity
12 of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina;

13 (B) prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina from
14 adopting the reforms necessary to secure mem-
15 bership in the European Union and the North
16 Atlantic Treaty Organization; and

17 (C) threaten the territorial integrity of
18 Bosnia and Herzegovina, undermine the state
19 and institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
20 and block functional, efficient, and accountable
21 government at all levels;

22 (15) acknowledges the decision of the European
23 Union to grant candidacy status to Bosnia and
24 Herzegovina, and encourages the Government of
25 Bosnia and Herzegovina to take advantage of such

1 candidacy status to accelerate the reforms required
 2 to meet its goals for membership in the European
 3 Union;

4 (16) supports the use of Executive Order 13304
 5 (68 Fed. Reg. 32313; relating to the Termination of
 6 Emergencies With Respect to Yugoslavia and Modi-
 7 fication of Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001)
 8 and Executive Order 14033 (86 Fed. Reg. 31079;
 9 relating to Blocking Property and Suspending Entry
 10 Into the United States of Certain Persons Contrib-
 11 uting to the Destabilizing Situation in the Western
 12 Balkans) to hold individuals accountable for high-
 13 level corruption and actions that obstruct the Day-
 14 ton Accords; and

15 (17) emphasizes that the United States Govern-
 16 ment will continue to support—

17 (A) the territorial integrity, sovereignty,
 18 and multiethnic character of Bosnia and
 19 Herzegovina; and

20 (B) the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 21 in their goal to build a democratic, pluralistic,
 22 prosperous, and peaceful State.

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