

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

**as delivered by Ambassador Michael R. Carpenter,
Permanente Representative of the United States of America to the OSCE,
to the Permanent Council**

Vienna, 21 September 2023

I am making this statement on behalf of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and my own country, the United States of America.

Our five countries greatly value our longstanding friendship and partnership with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are fully committed to our shared goal of a democratic, inclusive, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina on its European path.

We feel compelled, therefore, to express our concern over the escalating separatist and destabilizing rhetoric and actions of the president of the Republika Srpska entity within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr. Milorad Dodik's attacks on the legitimacy of Bosnia and Herzegovina's state institutions, especially the Constitutional Court, are deeply irresponsible and undermine the constitutional order. Mr. Dodik's support for draft legislation contrary to democratic norms, such as the so-called "foreign agents law" introduced in the Republika Srpska Assembly – in defiance of the opinions of the Venice Commission, Council of Europe's constitutional law experts, and the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights — is also unacceptable. Finally, Mr. Dodik's threats to prevent High Representative Christian Schmidt from entering the Republika Srpska entity and to limit his freedom of movement is contrary to the Dayton Peace Agreement, in which the position and authority of the High Representative are enshrined.

We nevertheless remain committed to standing with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina as they build a future together in the Euro-Atlantic community of nations and strengthen their democratic institutions. We pledge to continue to uphold Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and multiethnic character, which is so essential to peace and stability in Southeastern Europe.