 

*Att. to:*

*Mr Joe Biden, the President of the United States of America*

*Mr. Antonio Guterres, Secretary-general of UN*

*Ms Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission*

*Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council*

*Mr Josep Borrel, High Representative of Union Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*

*Mr Emmanuel Macron, President of France*

*Mr Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of United Kingdom*

*Mr Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of Germany*

*Mr Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada*

*Mr Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of the Netherlands*

*Ms Magdalena Andersson, Prime Minister of Sweden*

*Mr Mario Draghi, Prime Minister of Italy*

*Mr Jonas Gahr Store, Prime Minister of Norway*

*Ms Mette Fredriksen, Prime Minister of Denmark*

*Mr Scot Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia*

*Mr Karl Nehammer, Prime Minister of Austria*

*Mr Zeljko Komsic, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*Mr Jens Stoltenberg, Secretary General of NATO*

*Mr Christian Schmidt, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina*

*Mr Antonio Guterres, Scretary General of the UN and the Members of the United Nations Security Council*

We are writing to you on behalf of the concerned citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and others who will gather on 10 January 2022 in Brussels, London, Manchester, Ottawa, Toronto, Geneva, Oslo, Trondheim, Rome, Bologna, Munich, Stockholm, Gothenburg, Malmo, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Maglaj, St. Louis, New York, Boston, Utica, Portland, Copenhagen, Sidney and many other cities all around the world, expressing our utmost concern about the current political and security crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In October 2021, the ruling coalition in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian entity of Republika Srpska (RS) adopted a plan to create what it called "an independent RS within the Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina." A seven-page document laid out ***concrete steps for unilateral, illegal, and unconstitutional takeover of state-level competencies in fiscal, judicial, defense, security***, and many other areas. This plan is available in public and, among other points, foresees the use of force against any state-level institution trying to defend Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional order.

The plan's implementation will cause a collapse of the constitutional and institutional architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will result in terrible political, economic, and security consequences. With several concrete steps already taken, the ruling coalition in the RS has made it clear that it intends to implement its plan. On 10 December 2021, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted four conclusions on the so-called "transfer of authorities" and one so-called "declaration on constitutional principles" by which the RS legislative body has de facto and de jure ***decided to remove this entity from the state constitutional and legal system of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the sectors of the judiciary, defense, and security and indirect taxation.***  Moreover, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska has tasked and empowered the RS government to draft new entity laws on the RS army, RS intelligence service, RS indirect taxation system, and RS high judicial and prosecutor council. As well as more than 130 other laws and necessary regulations in various sectors, RS will abolish and replace the respected state laws and regulations with entity ones.

Neither the state nor RS entity constitution nor state or entity laws allows any possibility for the entity institutions to issue legally valid decisions or regulations on matters which are already imposed and regulated by state constitution or laws. The ***actions mentioned above and decisions of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska from 10 December 2021 are an illegal usurpation of state power and a criminal act against state constitutional and legal order.***By October 2021, the RS adopted and published in Official Gazette the unconstitutional entity law, which abolished the validation of the state-level Law prohibiting genocide denial in the scope of RS.  ***On 28 December 2021, another unconstitutional law was published in the Official Gazette. This Law on the RS Agency for medicinal products and devices could, as the European Commission noted in its recent letter to the RS authorities, lead to a collapse of the medicinal market and deprive citizens of primary medicine.***

This crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina has nothing to do with inter-ethnic relations; it is an artificial crisis provoked by corrupt nationalists and partners. They do not have the support of the opposition in the National Assembly of Republika Srpska nor of the majority of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those living in the RS. The country has now been drawn into a political crisis that threatens peace. A ***meaningful, robust, and coordinated response by the High Representative of the International Community, Christian Schmidt himself, United Nations, United States, Canada, the European Union, and its NATO allies is required.***

So far, a lack of such response has only served to embolden Mr. Dodik's and his ruling coalition's ambitions. Particularly worrying are statements by government officials in Serbia, who have expressed their support for the ruling coalition's plan in RS. Alongside this, the RS secessionists enjoy the bolstering backing of Russia, China, and even some EU member states such as Hungary, whose open nationalism, xenophobia, and anti-Muslim sentiment are rampant. Instead of pushing back, some in the international community only encourage Mr. Dodik's aspirations for secession and desire to undermine and eventually destroy Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign state. However, there are serious reasons why Bosnia and Herzegovina need to be preserved as a sovereign state and further strengthened.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a specific cultural entity that has existed for more than 1000 years, where citizens of different ethnic origins and religious traditions have lived together for centuries.

Despite the war in the 1990s, citizens today accept the existence and legitimacy of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.  ***The 2019 European Values Study showed that 74 percent of the population is proud of having Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizenship*.  *This sentiment is the strongest in the Brcko District (88 percent), while RS 66 percent share this view.*  *Neither the peace agreement nor the constitution provides for the right of secession. It would be a disastrous historic precedent if the 'entity' whose political and military leaders (as well as its army and police) have been convicted for severe war crimes and genocide, with over one million people expelled, were 'granted' independence.***

In the past 26 years, the EU and its Member States, the USA, Canada, and other countries, and many international organizations have invested a lot of political, diplomatic, human, and financial resources to maintain peace and rebuild the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens, Croats, Bosniaks, Serbs, Jews, Romas, and all Bosnians who do not identify with a specific ethnic group want to live in peace and harmony, nurtured by democracy.

On 10 January 2022, Bosnians and Herzegovinians of all ethnicities and religions, atheists and agnostics, alongside their friends, will gather in Brussels, Geneva, London, Vienna, Oslo, Ottawa, Toronto, Rome, Bologna, Stockholm, New York, St. Louis, Portland, Utica, Boston, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Maglaj and other cities across the world, to show their support for united Bosnia and Herzegovina. For its pluralism, coexistence, and preservation and to issue following demands to the High Representative of the International Community, Christian Schmidt, as well as to the European Commission and the governments of the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, European Union Member States, and NATO allies:

1. The plan adopted and currently implemented by the ruling coalition in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian entity of Republika Srpska should be recognized as an attack on the long-lasting peace, constitutional order, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and 30-year independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and as a threat to peace, stability, and security in the Western Balkans and Europe.
2. A meaningful, robust, and coordinated response should be developed and implemented as a matter of priority focusing on deterring the local forces of destabilization and foreign mentors while focusing on constructive and reformative approaches. This response should include a mix of interventions, starting with sanctions and strengthening the NATO/EUFOR military presence as a clear political signal.
3. Support domestic institutions in their response to the attack on the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Foremost, by providing full support to the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina to review the two passed laws and all others that the National Assembly of Republika Srpska might pass. Furthermore, by providing political and technical support for the state-level judiciary to investigate the attack on the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
4. Recent statements and activities by high-ranking officials of the government of the Republic of Serbia are violating the principle of good neighborly relations, which are at the heart of the EU accession talks and a violation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement between the EU and Serbia. The EU Member States should consider suspension of accession talks with Serbia unless its government changes its position towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, including that related to the 1990's war crimes and genocide.

Organization committee of the protests and Platform BiH - the Netherlands

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ANNEX:

[**COMPLETE LIST OF SIGNATORIES**](https://www.dropbox.com/s/a4gkg6id7cmqici/LIST%20OF%20CO-SIGNATORIES%20-%20ENGLISH.pdf?dl=0)

*(click on the link)*