Report by the Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina: UK statement, March 2026

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UK Chargé d'Affaires, Deputy Ambassador James Ford, welcomes the OSCE Mission's continued public advocacy and work on election integrity, reconciliation and dialogue between communities.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

And welcome Ambassador Holtzapple to the Permanent Council. As you know, the United Kingdom is a strong supporter of your Mission's work.

Mr Chair, the United Kingdom remains committed to supporting a more inclusive, stable and transparent Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We are working with our international partners to support domestic institutions to respond to threats to Dayton, and to encourage constructive engagement from leaders in the wider region.

We believe that following the recent presidential elections in Republika Srpska there is an opportunity for the new RS President to draw a line under the past and move towards a functional, stable Republika Srpska entity respectful of the BiH constitution. We encourage all politicians – including the current leadership of Republika Srpska – to work for the benefit of all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The United Kingdom strongly values the OSCE Mission's strong public advocacy and continuing work on reconciliation and facilitating dialogue between communities. A more inclusive and cohesive society is essential to achieving a positive future for the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We particularly value the insight and proactive engagement by the nine OSCE Field Offices across the country and their role towards strengthening inter-ethnic relations. This has remained especially important amid recent divisive and inflammatory rhetoric.

We welcome ongoing efforts to draft reforms to BiH's Constitution and Election Law, to address electoral discrimination and bring BiH in line with European Court of Human Rights requirements. It is positive news that the Working Group, established to advance this process, has committed to meeting again this month to discuss reform proposals. We urge continued and sustained efforts to implement these reforms ahead of October's general elections.

The UK is pleased to have contributed to the Mission's programme of support for improving the integrity of electoral processes in BiH. The successful rollout of election technology is a key part of strengthening political plurality and bolstering trust in democratic processes.

Lastly, I wanted to recognise the role played by OSCE field missions in delivering cost savings which allowed the adoption of the 2026 OSCE budget, for the first time in five years. Decisions around staffing cuts have been difficult, and we thank you for engaging so constructively with the process.

Thank you again, Ambassador Holtzapple, for your leadership of the Mission at this important time. We highly appreciate the hard work and expertise of your team, and wish you continued success.

Thank you, Mr Chair.

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/report-by-the-head-of-osce-mission-to-bosnia-and-herzegovina-uk-statement-march-2026