

OHR Mourns Carlos Westendorp, One of the Key Architects of Postwar BiH



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A distinguished figure in Spanish and European diplomacy, Carlos Westendorp y Cabeza left his most enduring international legacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the delicate years following the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Westendorp was appointed High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina in June 1997 and served from 1997 to 1999, succeeding Carl Bildt and later handing over to Wolfgang Petritsch. His appointment came at a critical juncture, when Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions remained weak and deeply divided along ethnic lines.

During his mandate, Westendorp played a decisive role in advancing the peace implementation process and strengthening the functionality of the state. He issued a series of far-reaching decisions that helped shape Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutional landscape, including measures establishing state symbols such as the flag and anthem. He also introduced a unified system of license plates and contributed to the creation of a single currency.

He demonstrated readiness to act when political deadlock threatened progress, taking steps aimed at safeguarding the

implementation of the peace agreement and ensuring the continued functioning of key institutions.

By the time he left office in July 1999, Westendorp had enacted a broad set of measures, laying important foundations for Bosnia and Herzegovina's postwar democratic framework.

HR Christian Schmidt, on behalf of all staff of the Office of the High Representative, extends his heartfelt condolences to the family of Carlos Westendorp and to the Kingdom of Spain, paying tribute to his distinguished service and his lasting contributions to Bosnia and Herzegovina.