

Improving election integrity immediate priority for BiH authorities



High Representative Christian Schmidt met today with Kyriakos Hadjiyianni, Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Special Representative on Southeast Europe, and Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH Brian Aggeler. The primary focus of the meeting was on election integrity reforms and the priorities necessary for BiH to initiate EU membership negotiations.

The High Representative reiterated that restoring the public's trust in the electoral system remains the immediate priority for BiH authorities, given that the necessary election integrity improvements must be in place in time for the local elections in October. Aside from the time considerations, authorities also must ensure that any solution adheres to international standards and recommendations, which are well-known to all stakeholders, and that the focus is on empowering voters rather than expanding the influence of political parties.

In order to expedite progress, election integrity should be decoupled from contentious political issues that have been pending for years, though this by no means implies that these longstanding obligations are off the table.

Expressing satisfaction with the close cooperation between the

OHR and the OSCE, the High Representative concluded by emphasizing the importance of a united and decisive international stance to assist BiH in achieving this crucial milestone. The international community remains committed to supporting BiH on its path to a more transparent and democratic electoral process.