

HR Schmidt at Bled Strategic Forum called for proactive engagement by politicians and civil society



High Representative Christian Schmidt held a series of high-level meetings on the sidelines of this year's Bled Strategic Forum, focusing on the progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans, as well as the region's integration and security prospects in the context of EU enlargement.

The High Representative thanked the Slovenian Foreign and European Minister Tanja Fajon for Slovenia's impressive and steadfast commitment to the integration of the Western Balkan countries into the EU. He further commended European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's announcement to entrust one commissioner to care for applicant states for the EU membership, explicitly naming Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In his meetings, the High Representative said that the EU and Dayton structures need to go parallel and work to ensure a sustainable future for the country. He repeatedly emphasized the importance of commencing Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession negotiations, highlighting the need for clear and proactive engagement from domestic politicians and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Such engagement is crucial to ensuring that the process moves in the right direction for the benefit of all BiH citizens. Bosnia and Herzegovina must

accelerate its efforts and address key challenges with shared priorities in mind. In doing so, political elites can demonstrate to their citizens and international partners their readiness for a decisive political breakthrough and their commitment to ongoing reforms and integration.

During the Bled Strategic Forum, the High Representative also attended a panel discussion titled “Europe Whole and Free: Enlargement as a Strategic Reconciliation Project,” which addressed the critical phase of the enlargement process that began in Thessaloniki more than 20 years ago and the need to adapt this process to meet today’s geopolitical challenges.