

# Schwarz-Schilling urges a resolution of the status of BiH citizens holding dual citizenship



The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, on Tuesday urged the BiH authorities to remove obstacles preventing the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from holding dual citizenship.

The OHR has followed citizenship legislation reform closely since 1997. Current BiH legislation requires citizens holding dual citizenship to choose one citizenship and renounce the other if no bilateral agreement between BiH and the concerned state is concluded by 1 January 2013. However, it has become clear over the last years that many countries where a significant number of BiH citizens reside do not sign such bilateral agreements.

“A more liberal and unrestricted approach to citizenship is appropriate to Bosnia and Herzegovina , where war has led to a widespread diaspora. I therefore call on the authorities of BiH to bring the country’s dual-citizenship provisions into line with increasingly common international practice and enable the widest possible international travel for the citizens of this country”, Schwarz-Schilling said.

The more usual practice is to allow every citizen to enjoy

dual citizenship where they qualify, without restricting this right to those cases where a bilateral agreement has been concluded with another country.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative also pointed out that such an “unrestricted” access to dual citizenship has been adopted by many countries – most notably Italy, the US and Canada – as a means of maintaining close and useful contact with internationally mobile populations.