



Schwarz-Schilling: Understanding What Others Want Key to Prosperity and Security in Western Balkans

The capacity to understand what others want and to find creative ways to reconcile different aspirations is the key to prosperity and security in the Western Balkans and to full membership of the European Union and NATO, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in an article that appeared in *Euroblic* today.

"You don't have to be bright to know what you want – a child knows what it wants," Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote. "But it takes imagination to understand what other people want. The history of former Yugoslavia is littered with failed politicians who only knew what it was they wanted."

The High Representative and EU Special Representative pointed out that when politicians reiterate impossible demands, he hears the sound of failure. "If the failure were their own it wouldn't matter," he continued. "However, they do not have the right – after so much pain, and after so much has been achieved to recover from that pain – to fail their citizens again."

"Focusing exclusively on your own aspirations is a sign of weakness. It absolves you from having to reconcile your interests with the interests of others; it removes the obligation to seek outcomes in which both sides win," the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote. "But in a functional democracy that is the only way to get what you want – by ensuring that the others get what they want too."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling highlighted the level of political grandstanding in recent weeks and concluded by saying: "I hope in the coming weeks to see more strength and more imagination. I believe a majority of citizens share that hope."

The text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative's [article](#) can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.org.