

Schwarz-Schilling: Dodik Undermining Republika Srpska's Crime-Fighting Capacity if Cutting Judicial Salaries

Prime Minister Milorad Dodik will be undermining Republika Srpska's capacity to combat crime, if he sees through his threat to cut judicial salaries in Republika Srpska, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling said today.

"If Prime Minister Dodik is serious about combating crime, as he promised during the election campaign, he would not be threatening the judiciary with salary cuts," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said.

Prime Minister Dodik has announced that he would reduce the salaries of the judiciary in Republika Srpska by 30 per cent. That reduction would not, however, affect the Office of the Special Prosecutor – a project that PM Dodik is personally associated with – whose staff members would enjoy salaries that are up to 30 per cent greater than those of regular judicial staff.

Prime Minister Dodik argues that the cut is punishment for poor results, yet it is unclear how this policy would improve the functioning of the judiciary and the effective delivery of justice for the majority of people in Republika Srpska.

Judicial salaries were balanced throughout the country in December 2005. Prime Minister Dodik would be placing judges

and prosecutors in Republika Srpska in an inferior position to their colleagues in the rest of the country, were he to reduce their remuneration.

If there is dissatisfaction with the work of a judge or prosecutor then the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council has the mechanisms and the powers to put in place the appropriate sanction.

“Taken together with the announcement that Prime Minister Dodik would seek to withdraw Republika Srpska from the Higher Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina – another key rule of law reform – it appears that Prime Minister Dodik is seeking to undermine the rule of law by interfering in the work of the judiciary,” said the High Representative today.

Democracy is based on a division of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. The fundamental principle is that these branches respect that division.

“Prime Minister Dodik is opening himself up to criticism that he is ready to use the methods of control that were common in Eastern Europe two decades ago,” said the High Representative.