

High Representatives Meets Croatian PM Sanader and President Mesic

The High Representative and EU Special Representative (HR/EUSR), Christian Schwarz-Schilling met today in Zagreb with Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader and yesterday with Croatia 's President, Stjepan Mesic.

In the meetings the HR/EUSR outlined the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections, with a focus on the process of government formation and two areas where progress is possible right now: constitutional reform and police reform.

The High Representative and Prime Minister Sanader agreed that constitutional reform must be an inclusive process that meets the interests and needs of all BiH's constituent peoples. "This process must underscore the equality of all three constituent peoples. Constitutional reform is a priority for the long-term stability and functionality of BiH as a state and the stability of the region as a whole," said the HR/EUSR.

The HR/EUSR and Prime Minister Sanader agreed that Constitutional reform requires strong international support but the ultimate decisions will rest with BiH's citizens and BiH's institutions.

Yesterday the HR/EUSR welcomed recent statements by President Mesic on regional cooperation. "I agree with President Mesic's view that while Special Parallel Relationship Agreements are in line with the letter of the Dayton Peace Accords the region has moved forward and would do better to focus on new, inclusive methods of cooperation on the state level."

Meeting today with Croatia's Foreign Minister, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, the HR/EUSR discussed practical cooperation between Croatia and BiH on the economy, infrastructure and on return.

"Croatia has taken steps to encourage return, but refugees still face many obstacles," the HR/EUSR said. The HR/EUSR encouraged the Croatian authorities to find solutions to property return in order to be able to put this issue behind them.

Foreign Minister Grabar-Kitarovic was confident that BiH will be able to join CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) in December as planned, after which progress could be achieved in bilateral trade talks.