

# Schwarz-Schilling: BiH Politicians Must Focus on Making Poverty History

The overriding objective of every politician in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be to put an end to poverty, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column.

“To create jobs, to attract investment and to encourage new businesses to open their doors, and to start making poverty history the people voted into office on 1 October must focus on economic reform to a degree that has not been seen before,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote in the article which appeared today in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling also warned that since the elections politicians appear to have had ample time for “discussions about their own jobs – who will get to be a minister or a deputy minister; which associates they can appoint to this or that position; and how long they should continue to draw pay after leaving office – but they are apparently short of time to discuss jobs for the rest of the population.”

The High Representative and EU Special Representative added that: “Many politicians before and after the introduction of VAT had a great deal to say about whether there should be exemptions and zero rates. However, since the election, only the Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council have highlighted the urgency of establishing a National Fiscal Council to ensure greater fiscal responsibility.”

He emphasised that the small and medium-sized enterprises on which job creation in Bosnia and Herzegovina now depends

won't get off the ground unless the political establishment focuses on enacting legislation that improves the business environment.

"Every day's delay in getting back to the business of implementing economic reform is another day's delay in creating employment," the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote. "When party leaders announce that they will abandon key reforms if new conditions are not met, they are, in effect, announcing to prospective investors that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a country to put your money – because it is not a place where agreements are kept.

"Those who were elected on 1 October ought to have one objective – to make poverty in this country history. They can achieve this, but only if they start talking about – and doing – things that matter to the entire population, and not just things that matter to a small coterie of the powerful and well-connected," Mr Schwarz-Schilling concluded.

The full text of the HR/EUSR's weekly column can be accessed at [www.ohr.int](http://www.ohr.int)