Statement by Christian Schwarz-Schilling, the High Representative for BiH at the Press Conference in Mostar

It’s remarkable how much time has been spent in meetings over the years in Mostar to so little effect, how many promises have been made and how few have been kept, and how many deadlines have been set and how few have been met.

This ridiculous state of affairs cannot continue. I am therefore on the point of taking measures to bring it to an end.

The latest in the list of meetings that failed to deliver was that which I called with Mostar officials in Sarajevo on 4 July. On that occasion, I received a number of promises, almost all of which have been honoured in the breach.

I was promised that civil-service vacancies would be advertised and filled before October. It is now late August and the necessary paperwork has still not been forwarded to the Civil Service Agency.

I was promised a plan for the establishment of a single public utility company. Instead, I was informed that an “expert team” had been formed to make recommendations to the City Council on 20 September, although the first date was August 1.

I was promised a progress report on the harmonisation of the statutes of those institutions whose statutes are not yet harmonised and specifically HRT. I’m still waiting.

I appreciate the efforts of Mayor Beslic, and President of the City Council Coric, to move things in a positive direction.

Clearly, the SDA and HDZ majority are blocking these issues.

I, nevertheless, agreed in my meeting with Mr Beslic and Mr Coric to accept a new, final deadline for achieving substantial progress on the outstanding issues.

The deadline for reporting is now 8 September, while 15 September is the deadline for a decision.

By 15 September, I expect to receive a plan for establishment of the single public utility company.

By 15 September, I expect the civil-service vacancies to be advertised.

The issue of vacancies is the responsibility of the Mayor and the Civil Servants Agency. After the appeal time on this procedure is finished, the process should start in October.

And by 15 September, I expect to receive a progress report for the establishment of the public utility company. The public utility companies are now either bankrupt or facing bankruptcy. Day and night work is needed to solve this issue, not long vacations.

The 15 September is not a deadline for recommendations of the expert group working on this issue. It is a deadline for City Council decisions.

On the two last points; utility companies and HRT there are two alternatives. Either the City Council discusses and agrees the needed course of action for each one or there will be an official request from the City Council to the OHR for arbitration.

The arbitration decision as normal will be final and binding. Isolated mediation by OHR will not take place. There has been enough time for this in the past two to three years. Mediation is possible as part of arbitration, without arbitration there is no mediation.

These are the choices for the City Council. If they do not manage to make this decision, on 15 September I will take other measures, which would end ownership in Mostar.

This is the last chance for this town. The image of this city has an impact on the whole country. I hope this last chance will be used.

Thank you.