

Dishonest Promises

Days ahead of the 1 October election, a large number of BiH politicians “are behaving as though they inhabit a fantasy world,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column, published today in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*. “Politics for these people seems to have nothing to do with what is possible and everything to do with what sounds good, irrespective of the consequences.”

The High Representative/EU Special Representative cited two recent cases, involving the Federation Law on Rights of Demobilized Defenders And Member of Their Families, and amendments to the Foreign Currency Savings Law. He said that in both cases, steps being proposed by parliamentarians “would hurt the very people they were allegedly designed to help”.

Noting that the Veterans’ Law had been adopted by the Federation Government on Monday, and by the House of Representatives on Tuesday and had been placed on the House of People’s agenda for Wednesday, he pointed out that the law had “got through three key phases of political scrutiny in three days – something most laws fail to do in as many months”, adding that “when parliamentarians in this country want to get things done, they really can move fast.”

“Yet any *bona fide* champion of veterans’ interests cannot possibly vote for this law,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling stressed, “because, if it is enacted, its net result will be to jeopardise pension payments to veterans – because it will make these payments fiscally unsustainable.”

Likewise, he wrote, the amendments to the Foreign Currency Savings Law, if put into practice, “would overwhelm the State and Entity budgets, burden Bosnia and Herzegovina with new debt, and undermine investment, job creation and fiscal

sustainability.” Full and timely payment to foreign currency deposit-holders “would be made more difficult because the amendments themselves would compromise the authorities’ capacity to raise the necessary funds.”

“This election campaign has been characterised by politics of unreality, whether in regard to referendums that cannot take place or to payments that cannot be made,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling concluded. “The pity is that a prosperous and secure future for Bosnia and Herzegovina *is* possible – for veterans, for foreign currency deposit-holders and for everyone else – but this possibility is not brought an inch closer to reality by dishonest promises.”

The full text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative weekly column can be found at www.ohr.int