

Dnevni avaz: Interview with High Representative Christian Schmidt



Interviewer: Danijal Hadžović

Dnevni avaz: You have recently stated that those who attempt to commit election fraud can expect severe sanctions. Can you be more specific?

Christian Schmidt: It is necessary to emphasize that the elections are the right of citizens, and not the right of the political parties. Political parties have the right to humbly accept the election results. I wanted to send a signal that those who attempt to manipulate the election results can face consequences in terms of criminal law, and I will check if their activities are also anti-Dayton. I take action on the basis of that.

Dnevni avaz: Which type of action?

Christian Schmidt: It will depend on my assessment. Those who think that they can tamper with the voting process and manipulate election results, will have to deal with state prosecutors and myself.

Dnevni avaz: You also said that post-election blockades will not be allowed to happen. We do not have to fear a scenario of having a government operating in a care-taker mandate for another four years?

Christian Schmidt: I am not ready to accept something like that anymore, and I will act to the benefit of citizens. Rest assured that I will not stand aside and passively watch if somebody tries to prevent the implementation of the voters' choice.

Dnevni avaz: You gave politicians a 12-week deadline to agree on key changes to the Election Law. This deadline has expired and nothing happened. Why?

Christian Schmidt: I talked with all parties. Some brought very concrete proposals, but, unfortunately, there was no agreement. What was the point? Why did I do it? I would say I acted on the DIY principle. On this issue, I returned the ball to the locally elected representatives, but I won't stay as just an observer of the game. We have been too generous to BiH politicians for years.

Dnevni avaz: What are you prepared to do?

Christian Schmidt: If some things can be done at the Federation level, I think we should do it together, but, as I was saying, after the elections, those who are elected should say they want to do it and they should take matters into their hands. I am generally a patient person, but my patience has its limits.

Dnevni avaz: As we are talking, Dodik is in Moscow to meet with Putin. He supported the Russian aggression, he doesn't recognize you as the High Representative, he says he's listening in on the American ambassador. How long are you going to tolerate him?

Christian Schmidt: I have a feeling he's making this all an instrument for his campaign. Only, he's making alliances with wrong people. Mr Putin, if he meets him at all in Moscow, will not promise any more money because he doesn't have the money himself. Dodik must be aware that Putin might only be using him as a puppet. If someone wants to be destructive, then the

decision about that will not be made in Banja Luka but by his collocutor and I would recommend he thinks carefully about every move he intends to make.

Dnevni avaz: Many attack you from the Bosniak side. Komsic and DF accuse you concretely that you are at the service of the HDZ BiH...

Christian Schmidt: I have had too many election campaigns in my own country not to know that one should not pay attention to their words aimed at winning the votes. I can only say to someone accusing me that I want to cement ethnic division that they do not know me. The situation is completely different. But those who say "we will start a revolution and cancel all identities" also do not contribute to the improvement of the situation.

Cancers are Corruption and Nepotism

Christian Schmidt: If we manage to be successful with three things; first, for people to agree regarding that "never again". Secondly, things that separate should not be emphasized; the emphasis should be on those things that are uniting. Thirdly, corruption and nepotism are the cancers of this society. This will be the most difficult thing to eradicate, but for that people need to give up their old habits. If we manage to resolve these three things, I am an optimist that this can be a successful country.