

High Representative Addresses Political and Security Committee of the European Council

The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, addressed the Political and Security Committee (PSC) of the European Council in Brussels today together with General Vincenzo Coppola, the head of the EU Police Mission.

On the second day of his two-day visit to Brussels, Mr Schwarz-Schilling provided the PSC with an update on the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and discussed the ramifications of last week's decision of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) to close the Office of the High Representative (OHR) on 30 June 2007.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative cited the precise wording of the PIC communique concerning the closure of the OHR, pointing out that the PIC Steering Board "agreed to review and confirm in early 2007 the OHR closure, taking into account the overall situation in BiH and the region."

He also made the case for reinforcing the EU presence in BiH and, in particular, for building up that of the EU Special Representative and ensuring that it is well resourced at the same time as the OHR is reduced.

"I consider that the build-up of the EUSR resources should take account of the OHR downsizing process," Mr Schwarz-Schilling told the PSC.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling also discussed police reform, stressing

that this was a prerequisite for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union. The three EC principles on police reform are the following: all legislative and budgetary competencies for all police matters must be vested at the State level; no political interference with operational policing; and functional local police areas must be determined by technical policing criteria, where operational command is exercised at the local level.