

# High Representative Lifts Bans on Holding Party Office Against All Removed

The High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, today lifted bans on holding party office against all individuals removed by earlier High Representatives.

The only exceptions are those individuals who were removed for reasons connected to non-cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

This Decision allows these individuals to hold positions within political parties. It does not, however, entitle them to return to the positions from which they were removed.

Today's Decision is part of a process of regularising the legal status of removed individuals announced by Mr Schwarz-Schilling on 21 March.

Since then, removed individuals have been free to apply to the High Representative to have their removals rescinded. In addition, the High Representative has systematically been lifting bans on holding public office in different employment sectors.

While removals have played an important role in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina emerge from the aftermath of war, the need for removals is diminishing as Bosnia and Herzegovina proceeds further down the path of Euro-Atlantic integration.

It is also important that the legal status of removed officials is resolved before the Office of the High Representative closes.

Whether these individuals return to a political party is now

up to the leaders of their parties. They are now responsible for determining whether these individuals, who have in the past obstructed peace implementation, can today contribute positively to a better future for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens.

The public and the media will be able to see which political parties allow these individuals to take up political party office again. They will hold these parties to account for their Decisions.

Last Friday, the High Representative lifted bans on holding public office against seven individuals who had been removed by earlier High Representatives for obstructing peace implementation.

The lifting of removal decisions in no way calls into question any ongoing judicial processes against the individuals concerned.