

# HR in Vienna calls for stronger engagement by domestic actors and united international stance in BiH



High Representative Christian Schmidt undertook a working visit to Vienna, emphasizing the importance of international coordination and unified engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). On Thursday, he held key meetings with Alexander Schallenberg, the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs, and OSCE Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid. In discussions, the High Representative underscored the vital role the international community continues to play in supporting BiH's transition from post-conflict recovery to full integration into the European Union.

On Friday, the High Representative delivered a keynote speech at the 27th European Forum Vienna, hosted by the Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy (AIES). Reflecting on the European Commission's recommendation to initiate accession negotiations with BiH, he stressed that European integration is the only viable path for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider Western Balkans region.

Acknowledging some efforts made on the ground to sustain the momentum following the granting of EU candidate status, the High Representative urged political leaders to demonstrate greater dedication and responsibility. Immediate

implementation of necessary reforms is essential to enable the EU Council to officially commence negotiations in spring 2024.

“I encourage all levels of authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to seize this opportunity and reaffirm their commitment to EU integration and swiftly adopt the essential reforms,” concluded the High Representative.