

# HR Schmidt congratulates citizens of BiH



High Representative Christian Schmidt congratulated the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina on today's decision of the EU Council to grant the status of European Union candidate country to BiH.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Candidacy Status is a crucial step in BiH's continued alignment with EU standards and regulations and further confirmation of the commitment on both sides for BiH's future as a member of the EU family. This is an opportunity for the political leaders of this country to serve the people in BiH and improve their lives. This will be a tough job and it will require persistence, hard work, and true commitment. But it is necessary.

Bosnia and Herzegovina must live up to its promise as a secure and prosperous multi-ethnic state, and prove that it can move beyond political and economic disfunction and implement a reform agenda. This requires determined politicians and functioning institutions willing to act in the interest of the country. Big challenges are ahead of you, but they are worth the effort", said the High Representative.

The High Representative will continue to work on ensuring full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The implementation of all aspects of Dayton, including, for example, non-discrimination and the right to return as

guaranteed under the Annex VII, along with the 5+2 Agenda, has to be finalized. For this we will need to see the full commitment of local politicians as well as the international community.

The High Representative will, in his capacity and in close cooperation with the EU, contribute to BiH's path towards the EU.