

Police Reform Is About Making BiH a Safer Place to Live

The sooner police reform is agreed and implemented, the sooner the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to tackle crime effectively, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly column, which appeared in the BiH press today.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling noted that the controversy caused by the RS government's failure to cooperate in the Police Directorate has obscured the fact that the Directorate's work is aimed at liberating BiH citizens from the fear that they or their families will be attacked, that their homes will be burgled or that their cars will be stolen.

"The point of police restructuring is to give citizens better policing. It is as simple as that," the High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote in an article that was published simultaneously in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*. "The current process underway within the Directorate is about police professionals proposing the best technical solutions for police reform."

In October 2005, the State and Entity parliaments endorsed a Police Reform Agreement that provided for the setting up of a Police Directorate and the restructuring of the police in BiH in line with three principles laid down by the European Union. Mr Schwarz-Schilling reminded readers that the text of this Agreement was proposed by Milorad Dodik and Dragan Cavic.

The European Union agreed to launch talks on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) after it had been assured, through the Police Reform Agreement, that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina were serious about tackling crime.

“By putting this plan in doubt, the authorities of Republika Srpska are risking delaying finalisation of the SAA,” the High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote. They are also undermining efforts – including his own – to secure the liberalisation of visa requirements for BiH citizens.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling made it clear that police reform will re-enter the arena of political discussion only after the Directorate finishes its work.

[The full text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative's column.](#)