

Responsibility and Long-Term Solutions



The only viable future for Mostar is as a unified city with a modern and efficient administration, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column, adding that this vision cannot be realised as long as the citizens of Mostar fail to take responsibility for their own future.

“Much progress has been achieved in Mostar since the immediate post-war period, but practically everything that has been done to alleviate that misery has been done by the international community on its own or by local actors operating with the indispensable support of the international community,” he wrote in an article that appeared in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list* today.

The main political parties in the city have made themselves conspicuous by their refusal to pursue constructive or effective policies and are unlikely to change their approach unless citizens make them.

“Popular pressure is all the more urgent and necessary as the international community scales back its direct engagement,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote, adding that holding up the work of the Professional Assessments Commission, for example, would only serve to prevent the city administration from addressing the unregulated building that has blighted the city’s landscape.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative rejected suggestions that the urban-planning process could be considered a matter of “national interest”. Likewise, “national interest” could not justify the mismanagement of HRT, which has been brought to a position of technical, administrative and financial collapse.

The recent initiative to increase the number of ministries in the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal government would make it easier to allocate positions along party and national lines, but to suggest that this initiative is inspired by a desire to increase efficiency is both “ridiculous and impertinent”, Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote.

“In the face of this, citizens ask why the international community is not stepping in and when the High Representative will intervene? In response, I have a question of my own. Why don’t the citizens of Mostar and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton intervene?” the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote.

“If the citizens of Mostar act, they can achieve long-term progress,” he concluded. “That is the lesson of Mostar during the past 13 years and it’s one the entire country needs to learn.”

The text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative’s weekly column can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.org.