

Schwarz-Schilling, Admiral Witthauer Discuss Security in BiH



The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, and EUFOR Commander Rear Admiral Hans-Jochen Witthauer discussed security matters in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Office of the High Representative on the day that Bosnia and Herzegovina joined NATO's Partnership-for-Peace programme.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling and Admiral Witthauer agreed that PfP membership was a reward for successful defence reform and a milestone on Bosnia and Herzegovina's road to Euro-Atlantic integration. Moreover, since PfP membership was the first step towards NATO membership, it would also contribute to a secure and stable environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The two men stressed, however, that PfP membership should not be viewed as the end of a process but as the beginning and that it brought with it additional responsibilities and obligations.

They also pointed to the conclusions of last week's meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board in Brussels in which Political Directors made clear the critical importance of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague and further defence reform.

Political Directors pointed out that it is now even more important that the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Republika Srpska, meet their international and Dayton obligations to cooperate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

They also noted that the hiring of personnel, the full implementation of the defence and armed forces structure and the transfer from the Entities to the State of all property needed for defence purposes, as required by the Defence Law, are essential for the success of defence reform and must be achieved as soon as possible.