

Schwarz-Schilling: Effective Partnership Means Sticking to Agreements

The ability of Bosnia and Herzegovina 's new political leaders to carry out difficult reforms in coming weeks and months will be indicative of their willingness and capacity to assume ownership of the political process and govern in the absence of the OHR, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote today in his weekly newspaper column.

In his article, which appeared in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list* on the morning of a key meeting of the Peace Implementation Council in Sarajevo, the High Representative and EU Special Representative noted that: "The strategic steps which the domestic authorities are supposed to be taking are those which the main political parties have already committed themselves to: introducing European standards in policing, public broadcasting and education; reforming the constitution to make government more accountable and efficient; reforming the business environment to create jobs and reduce poverty."

In the late 1990s, the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote, "the international community held the purse strings. Bosnia and Herzegovina survived by international subsidy and the domestic authorities were financially and politically dependent on the international community."

Today, in contrast, the bulk of government revenue comes from conventional sources. " Bosnia and Herzegovina is no longer financially dependent on foreigners. Nor is it politically dependent," Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote. "The PIC, through my

office, makes fewer and fewer political interventions. More and more important decisions are taken exclusively by domestic leaders and institutions.”

Now that “the international community and local authorities are partners in a joint reform programme,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote, “the PIC will offer support and lobby for further EU integration, but the domestic authorities are expected to act in a way that is consistent with their counterparts elsewhere in Europe .”

He concluded that: “As the Office of the High Representative closes and the Office of the EU Special Representative becomes the lead international agency, international gatherings to discuss Bosnia and Herzegovina will increasingly reflect a genuine partnership. And the way that that partnership will bear most fruit is if the authorities stick to the long-term agenda that they and we have agreed to.”

The full text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative’s weekly column can be found at www.ohr.int