

Schwarz-Schilling in Rome: Bonn Powers and OHR Should Continue

In Rome today the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, told senior Italian Foreign Ministry officials that he is increasingly coming to the conclusion that the situation in the region and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, means that the Bonn Powers and OHR should continue in some form.

The HR-EUSR is visiting key capitals ahead of the next meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) scheduled for 26 and 27 February. The goal is to develop a consolidated position in advance of that meeting, at which a final decision will be taken on the future of the Office of the High Representative. The HR-EUSR said today that: "The PIC must make a thorough assessment of conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the wider region."

Discussions in Rome, like in other capitals, has focused on the current political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; impediments to the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union, that is police restructuring and PBS reform in particular; economic reforms and government formation.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative will be sending his assessment and a recommendation for the OHR's future to the PIC in mid-February based on these consultations.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative started his consultations with PIC members in advance of the February PIC in Berlin . He has since held meetings in Paris and Brussels and next week will visit Washington and London .

These meetings have shown that PIC capitals share Mr Schwarz-Schilling's concerns about the situation with the result that maintaining Bonn Powers beyond mid-2007 is now a serious option.