

Schwarz-Schilling: It's the Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina that Matters



The future of the OHR is important – but the really important issue is the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column days before the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) meets in Brussels to chart international policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina.

“A great deal has been written and said about this meeting, and almost all of it has focused on the future of the Office of the High Representative (OHR),” the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote in an article that appeared in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list* today. “The proper focus of attention, however, ought to be on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The prospects for the four million citizens of this country are infinitely more important than the prospects for one international organisation.”

Almost everyone agrees that much of the progress that has been made in Bosnia and Herzegovina would not have been possible without the strong role played by the international community, the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote, pointing out that: “A great deal more progress could have been made, had this country’s leaders focused on implementing policies on the basis of pragmatic consensus instead of fighting among themselves.”

The participants at next week’s meeting must decide on the optimal way to get Bosnia and Herzegovina’s leaders to take full and effective responsibility for policies that actually

work and then implement them so that they bring benefits to citizens as quickly as possible, Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote.

“They may decide that this can best be achieved by recalibrating the international engagement. What is clear, however, is that this country’s authorities must adopt a better approach to democratic processes,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative continued. “The problem of successive administrations in Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been that they have lacked ideas, but that they have lacked the discipline and pragmatism to turn at least some of their ideas into effective policies.”

In addition to adopting a policy-driven approach to government, a priority for the first half of 2007 must be to set in train processes to streamline the parliamentary, government and administrative system, bring Bosnia and Herzegovina’s constitution into line with European democratic norms, and provide the executive with the tools it needs to do its job effectively, Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote.

“This must be done in conjunction with a concerted effort to complete the remaining requirements – police restructuring, PBS reform and cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) – that will clear the way for the signing of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union later this year,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative concluded.

The text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative’s [weekly column](#) can be accessed at www.ohr.int