

Schwarz-Schilling: Republika Srpska's Failure to Cooperate with The Hague Tribunal Undermines Bosnia and Herzegovina's PfP Chances

Bosnia and Herzegovina may miss out on an invitation to join the Partnership-for-Peace programme at NATO's forthcoming Summit because of Republika Srpska's failure to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column.

NATO leaders are meeting on 28 and 29 November in Riga, Latvia , to set the Alliance 's agenda for the next couple of years and there is a possibility that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be invited to join NATO's Partnership-for-Peace programme on that occasion.

"I very much hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will receive such an invitation. It would be well deserved," the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote in the article which appeared today in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*.

"A huge amount has been achieved in the field of defence reform in recent years, with the net result that the country now has a defence system that it can afford and that meets its needs. PfP membership is the next logical step," he wrote.

"Participation in the Partnership for Peace is in many ways the Euro-Atlantic equivalent of signing a Stabilisation and

Association Agreement with the European Union,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling explained. “It is in effect the first step on the road to NATO membership. And the prospect of eventual membership of the European Union and NATO is the key to a safe and secure future for Bosnia and Herzegovina and all its citizens.”

However, the High Representative and EU Special Representative also pointed out that Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be invited to join unless the authorities of Republika Srpska were seen to be cooperating in a satisfactory way.

“The authorities of Republika Srpska must do what they are morally and legally obliged to do,” Mr Schwarz-Schilling concluded. “They must demonstrate that they are doing everything possible to assist in the arrest of war-crimes suspects who are still at liberty. When they do that, Bosnia and Herzegovina will be invited to join the Partnership for Peace. If they don’t, it won’t.”

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