

Schwarz-Schilling: The Meaning of PfP Membership

NATO's decision to invite Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Alliance's Partnership-for-Peace programme should be seen as an important step towards Euro-Atlantic integration that brings with it additional responsibilities, including renewed cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column.

Allied leaders made clear at their Riga Summit that they will monitor Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to live up to the values and principles set out in the PfP basic document, the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote in the article which appeared today in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*.

"If, therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina fails to cooperate with the ICTY, it will be in breach of these commitments and cannot expect to take forward its relationship with NATO."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling explained that the Partnership for Peace was a flexible and innovative programme consisting of practical, bilateral activities between individual partner countries and NATO that allow partner countries to develop their own relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation.

"For some, it can be a first step towards NATO membership," the High Representative and EU Special Representative wrote. "For others, PfP membership has amounted to relatively little. Clearly, Bosnia and Herzegovina should seek to follow the path taken by countries that have now joined the Alliance or are currently working towards membership."

PfP membership was a golden opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to move ahead, to forge deep and enduring relations with NATO and to put its own conflict behind it that must not be wasted, Mr Schwarz-Schilling concluded.

The text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative's weekly column can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.org