

# Speech by the High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, to the BiH Parliament

## 100 DAYS TO MAKE HISTORY

Mr Speaker, fellow Parliamentarians,

I stand here 100 days after I took office as High Representative and EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina .

And I stand before you – the highest democratic body in Bosnia and Herzegovina – 100 days before you will be held to account by the citizens of this country in the October elections.

Dame i gospodo: Pred vama je sto dana da stvorite bolju buducnost za ljude u Bosni i Hercegovini.

We all share a serious burden of responsibility towards the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina . A solemn duty to do everything that we can to assist this country's progress towards full integration in the European Union and NATO structures.

For me, that responsibility has meant stepping back – handing over responsibility to the authorities of this country. That is what I have done and that is what I will continue to do.

For you, that responsibility means stepping forward – taking on the tasks that progress requires, and carrying out the reforms to bring this country and its citizens forward.

Firstly, I would like to tell you about what I have seen and

heard during my first 100 days here.

Secondly, I would like to talk to you about your responsibilities to the citizens of this country; about the expectations of the International Community to see reforms move forward; and about the opportunities that lie ahead of you in the next 100 days until the October elections.

### **[My First 100 Days]**

It is an honour to be here to build on the work of my distinguished predecessors. But they were working in different times, with different circumstances and different challenges. Now we have reached a new phase of transition and ownership. And so my job today, as High Representative and EU Special Representative, must reflect that.

I made it clear on day one when I addressed the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina that I have come to assist, advise and advocate. I have kept that promise.

- I will not take decisions for those who do not have the courage to take them – this is a democracy, and Parliament must make up its own mind;
- I will not intervene every time the authorities fail to take up their responsibilities;

In short, I will not do the jobs that the institutions and elected leaders of this country must do.

Transition and ownership means the transfer of full responsibilities to the institutions of this country. This will enable Bosnia and Herzegovina to become a 'normal' European country. What does that mean in practice? It means that we, in the International Community, will engage actively and assist constructively. But we will not intervene when there are mistakes, and we will not run this country for you. And it means that you, the people and politicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina, must decide on the path you want to take to

a better future.

To do this, I will make full use of my experience over 25 years as a Member of Parliament and over 10 years as a Minister of the German Government to assist and advise you to the best of my ability. I will also draw on my experience since 1995 as international mediator in Bosnia and Herzegovina to support the people and politicians of this country.

Over the last four months, I have watched closely and listened carefully: to politicians; to businesspeople; to young and old; to religious leaders; to intellectuals; to citizens. *And even on occasion to my advisors!*

Nothing I have seen or heard will deter me from maintaining a hands-off approach. It is clear that this country has made huge progress – and you should take credit for that. It is also clear that this country has all the resources it needs within it – and you should develop these as much as you can:

I know that this country has strong democratic institutions in place to take on the demands of Euro-Atlantic integration;

I have been impressed by the highly professional and competent negotiating team who are leading talks with the EU;

I have met people in business and politics with great potential and capability to move the economy and society forward;

All around I see countless young people with energy and enthusiasm, looking for opportunities to play their part in building a strong and stable Bosnia and Herzegovina .

There are many examples I have found inspiring and of which this country should be proud:

- in March I had the privilege of accompanying a team of I.T. entrepreneurs from Bosnia and Herzegovina to the

CEBIT technology fair in Hannover. I have been a businessman for over 25 years, and this is the most competitive market forum for one of the world's most competitive industries – but believe me, all I had to do was make introductions – your entrepreneurs knew exactly what to do after that.

- The international success of the film “Grbavica” showed that this country's artistic talent is on a par with the very best in the world.
- And I think we can say that this was confirmed further at the weekend when Bosnia and Herzegovina achieved a historic 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Eurovision Song Contest. **Čestitam!** I speak without bias when I say that Bosnia and Herzegovina should have won. *Please don't remind me about where Germany finished in the competition!*

There is every reason why this country should have the confidence and capability to direct its own destiny. And – if I keep to my responsibility to hand over authority to local institutions – and you keep yours to take that on in a mature, responsible manner – then this country has a bright and promising future ahead of it.

However- let me be clear that I have also witnessed a darker side of political life here – a lack of responsibility and a lack of political courage by some in positions of influence:

There is corruption, there is bad faith and there are some who refuse to put the country's best interests before their own.

This is not acceptable. I will not stand quietly and watch the darker side overshadow what is good and positive in this country:

- I will tell you where important obligations are not being fulfilled;
- I will point out where there are higher standards to be met;

- and I will expose those who have failed to take on their responsibilities or acted without integrity.

Let me also be clear that if there is any serious threat to peace and stability, or any evidence of non-cooperation with the ICTY, I will act using my full powers. I will not allow progress achieved so far to be undermined.

In short, I will do everything I can for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – but this will only make a real difference if you do everything within your power too.

Let me give you two recent examples of where more could and should be done by the politicians and leaders of this country to improve citizens' lives.

Firstly my recent visit to Vienna : two weeks ago I went to lobby the EU to ease visa requirements for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – with some success.

– But what was happening here whilst I was in Vienna ? The politicians here were arguing over reforms. The newspapers were full of stories about disagreements over the future of your police.

– Yet police reform is a key EU requirement and one that is directly relevant to EU Ministers considering visa policy.

This did not look good to EU Ministers in Vienna . This did not help Bosnia and Herzegovina 's image abroad. And I do not for a minute believe that this looked good to the citizens of this country either.

The second situation I would like to mention that urgently requires local authorities to be active and constructive is Mostar: it is the only major municipality in the country that has not adopted its budget for 2006; unification of the city administration is far from completed; and it is the citizens who have to pay for these unnecessary costs. Many other issues

are unresolved, and garbage piled up in the streets for weeks – this in itself symbolizes all that is rotten in the politics of Mostar.

What else have I learned during the last 100 days? I have seen that many citizens, and in particular the younger generation, are frustrated. Too many people suffer every day because of a dysfunctional education system, limited job prospects, and a society rife with corruption. They are right to be frustrated.

And let me be completely honest with you: too many people are poor and hungry and without hope. Too many families live in poverty. Pensioners must live on 200KM a month – do you know what it means to live on 200KM a month? Yet you can help these people. You can get this country on the right track through the economic and social reforms that are desperately needed.

It is you who have the privilege of office in this Parliament that allows you to act to improve the country's legal and constitutional framework. Do not treat this privilege lightly.

You should waste no time in taking decisive steps to improve the situation. And the next 100 days – the last of this particular parliament – will offer you many opportunities to do so. These are opportunities you must seize with both hands – with courage, and with a clear vision of a brighter future – not looking back over your shoulder, fearful of the past. This must not be an 'inat kuca', a house of spite, but a place of constructive work and positive results.

I will return to what you can do over the next 100 days for the citizens of this country in a moment. First, there is one important issue to complete my story of what I have seen since I took office.

### **CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM**

A month ago I myself sat in this very chamber. I came to witness the delegates of the House struggle with a historic

challenge: a package of measures to amend the constitution.

The spotlight focused intensely on the work of this Parliament during those tense evenings at the end of April. The role and responsibility of this Parliament was absolutely critical to the direction this country takes.

- I saw a historic opportunity before you.
- I realise that you had a difficult decision to make.
- I know that there were demanding time constraints within which you had to carry out your important role of democratic debate and scrutiny.
- And I understand how difficult it is when faced with a tough decision where emotions and reason are so deeply interlinked in an issue that goes to the very heart of this country's identity.

But these are moments that Parliamentarians should be prepared for. Bismarck once said that statesmen have to recognise key moments, leap forward and grab the 'coat-tails of history' – 'den Mantel der Geschichte' or 'skute istorije'. This was one of those occasions to leap forward – a brief opportunity, a window of history – but you have to be strong and decisive to grasp such moments and take that leap. I know it is not easy.

There are important lessons to learn from this experience. I pay tribute to the majority of delegates in the House of Representatives who supported the measures. I applaud the hard work of six parties who came together over many difficult months to reach a comprehensive agreement on a package of reforms. That is what I am looking for – as I and the International Community step back, those with character and strength in this country must step forward. The voters of Bosnia and Herzegovina need politicians who have the confidence to seek constructive compromise and positive outcomes for the good of all.

Politics, like life, is a journey – but planning that journey

and choosing the right path is never easy. On that night at the end of April, it seemed like an express train had arrived in the station for Bosnia and Herzegovina – most of the people on the platform wanted to get on, wanted to move ahead, wanted to travel quickly to the next destination.

But the train has departed. And thanks to a small number of passengers, everyone was stranded.

Whatever the limitations of the package of constitutional reforms, it would have helped this country to move forward on the important journey towards Europe . This journey now requires careful planning. Your responsibility does not end with the 'No' vote – that is just the beginning. Democracy does not stop when something is rejected. Mature, responsible politics is about taking small steps when you can, and always finding new ways to move forward when things don't work first time.

I think that all of us in this room agree that the constitution must be reformed. Indeed a majority has already proven that. We will have to return to this question and we will.

But as Konrad Adenauer famously said: "Die Situation ist da" – 'situacija je ovdje' – history is where we are now, and that is what you must work with. I have said that I am willing to play an active role to help you in this reform. And I now stand ready to do this.

But before we do, there are other ways that you can and should move this country forward. There are many areas that require you to deliver more than has been delivered so far. Across the institutional and political landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina , there are key reforms – in education and the economy, in police restructuring and broadcasting – which are being held back by the politicians and leaders of this country.

I want to focus now on how you can take this country forward in the next 100 days.

### **[PARLIAMENT'S LAST 100 DAYS]**

There are many things you can put right before the elections. Many ways to get the trains of progress moving again in Bosnia and Herzegovina , and to get the people of this country on board.

You can also send an important signal in the next 100 days: Show the citizens of this country that you are capable of passing laws that will make a positive impact on their lives. They will judge you on this when they go to the polls in October.

Show to Europe, the US and the wider world that you have the capacity to change your country in a positive way. That you understand not just the European legal and technical requirements – but that you also understand what European values mean:

- promoting economic growth for the benefit of the daily lives of your citizens;
- upholding and defending the principles of an independent judiciary and police to make this society a place where citizens feel safe;
- respecting international obligations, for example to the ICTY and the Council of Europe, and preparing to be a future valued member of NATO and the EU;
- developing a citizens' society with full human rights protections – human rights are the foundation of every modern democratic and European state; human rights go to the heart of this country's need to come to terms with the past;
- I know from my own country's experiences after the Second World War that reconciliation is a vital part of moving forward and creating a better future, and

learning to live and cooperate with neighbours who were previous enemies;

- and investing in the future of this country, one right in particular must be nurtured and valued in your society: providing a quality education for all children and young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina whatever their ethnic background. What hope is there for a prosperous, stable future if children do not learn together, do not play together?

Of course, this will not be easy. There are challenging legislative requirements ahead of you.

### **[THE AGENDA FOR THE NEXT 100 DAYS]**

I would like to highlight some of the laws which will be in your hands – either to take forward or to delay further over the next four months. Laws which enjoy broad political consensus and popular support. Laws which will ease the path to European integration. But which you have to agree on first. This is not my agenda, it is an agenda for you, your citizens and your country.

First, let's look at education: There have been no laws passed for three years. Every year without education reform is a lost year for a generation of pupils. Progress is urgently needed at all levels of education. The European Partnership requires laws to be adopted by this Parliament on pre-school education, vocational training and an agency for primary and secondary schools.

In particular I would like to mention the need for a Higher Education Law – to give all young people a level playing field in which to study; harmonised standards for courses and exams across all the universities; and real possibilities of studying in Europe – none of this exists at present.

Who could stand in the way of that, citizens might ask? Yet this law has been argued over for months, even years, now – I

urge you not to hold the youth of this country back any more. The future of this country depends on them. They are watching what you do – do not let them down.

That leads me on to my second point: the economy: just three issues can bring significant economic progress, building on the welcome news that Bosnia and Herzegovina's international credit rating has dramatically improved – the Law on Obligations, the Salary Law and the creation of a Central Banking Supervision system. It is within your power to solve all three problems within the next 100 days. I urge you to stand up and be counted, and to pass these laws.

Two more laws are long overdue and should not be held back any longer – a Law on National Fiscal Council which will help to improve further this country's credibility in the international financial markets. This would help the country to borrow money for necessary investments on an even lower credit basis.

– Then there is the Pharmaceuticals Law: this would allow companies to sell medicines at competitive prices and ensure the quality of those medicines – you can assist both the health of the economy and the health of the population at the same time.

Third, let's consider the justice sector – pioneering work is being done: Indictments and cases transferred from The Hague have already begun to be tried in the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is proof of the high international standards established at the Court.

But there are important changes to the Criminal Procedure Code that need to be passed in order to strengthen the judiciary and ensure that the successful transfer of cases from ICTY continues. It is vital to show to the citizens of this country and to the world that no one can act with impunity on the territory of BiH . This country's judiciary has a unique

chance to serve as a global model of justice if these reforms are carried out.

Finally the major reforms of this country's police structures and broadcasting system are essential to the very fabric of this society. Moreover, the European Union is watching very closely how you deal with these two reforms – the success of the SAA depends on this.

And as we have seen recently in Serbia – and in the example of Bulgaria and Romania – the EU is in no mood to accept anything less than it has clearly set out as key conditions. Be under no illusions – rejecting broadcasting reform or police reform will stop progress towards Europe. Elections or no elections, this is not a good time to go slowly on reforms or to test the EU's patience.

## **OCTOBER ELECTIONS**

Make no mistake, there is pressure on you today and during the next 100 days – but look on that pressure as an opportunity, a positive challenge.

If you step up to the task over the next 100 days, major reform progress will be rewarded by the voters and by the completion of SAA negotiations by the end of the year. This will pave the way for a better standard of living for the people of BiH, and ease the path towards European integration and a smooth transition from OHR to EUSR during 2007.

Another train is coming into the station, and you can get Bosnia and Herzegovina and its citizens on board this time and on their way – which of you is going to block this time and find reasons for delaying or missing the train again?

Voters will want to know in October. If you fail to seize these opportunities to make their lives better, they will want to know why. Do not imagine they will forgive you easily if you decide not to act.

Voters are concerned about poverty, about unemployment, and inadequate social services. They are concerned about a general lack of will to move this country forward. Show them that you can address these issues. That you have learnt lessons from your experiences of delayed reforms and that you are ready to take things forward.

I have confidence in you and your ability – I encourage you to prove to your voters that they can and should have confidence in you too. *Believe me, after 26 years in Parliament, I have learnt what that means!*

And the voters should also be clear when they go to the polls in October, that this time there will be no International Community safety net for the next government. OHR plans to close by the middle of next year. The elected representatives of this country will be in charge; the voters will have to live with any mistakes made thereafter; only those elected will be able to take the hard decisions to carry out tough but necessary reforms for the good of this country.

## **[CONCLUSION]**

These are historic times. Just as the countries in Western Europe took a brave and bold decision in 1955 to establish what has become the EU as we know it today, and to banish war from Western Europe forever – so you have the chance to be brave and bold, to establish closer relations in this region and become a valued member of the EU and NATO, and to banish war forever from the Western Balkans.

From the moment I took office, I saw that this country has a unique chance to establish sustainable peace and prosperity. I am 100 per cent committed to playing my part in that – I hope that you will stand alongside me with equal commitment to play your part in writing a positive chapter in this country's history.

Believe in your ability to create a stable and prosperous

democracy.

Recognise the role you can play in building sustainable peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina .

Seize the coat-tails of history with both hands.

I hope you are ready for the curtain to go up on a new phase in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina . The next 100 days will tell. The stage is set: but now it's over to you: it's your play and your performance; you are the directors and the actors from this point on. If you take your roles seriously and act responsibly, it will be a great and rewarding performance.

If you meet the challenges in a constructive way, you can be sure that I will be right beside you at every step. I wish you courage and strength in your work over the next 100 days to build a better life for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bilo mi je zadovoljstvo.Hvala Vam lijepo.