

Statement by the High Representative and EU Special Representative for BiH, Christian Schwarz-Schilling at the Press Conference in Mostar



Good afternoon and thank you for coming here today.

I have just held a series of meetings with Norbert Winterstein, my Special Envoy to Mostar, with Mayor Ljubo Beslic, with City Council President Murat Coric, as well as with the City Council caucus presidents.

I came here today because, as you are aware, Mr Winterstein is nearing the end of his mission and I wished to offer my support in person for his efforts.

Mr Winterstein has spent a lot of time meeting, talking, and working with the officials and political parties in Mostar to try to find solutions to the most pressing problems faced by the City, in order to move the unification process forward.

The process of filling of vacancies in the City Administration and the issue of surplus workers are being handled by the City Administration with the assistance of the Civil Service Agency. This is on track and should be brought to a speedy conclusion.

In the case of HRT, he was invited by the City Council to arbitrate between the parties. Since no agreement was found, it was necessary to issue an arbitration decision.

I am aware that not everyone is satisfied with the outcome. However, when the City Council accepted arbitration, it also accepted the possibility of a decision from the arbitrator in case no agreement was found. I, therefore, expect the decision on HRT to be implemented.

If no new holder or owner is found for HRT by 31 March, it must be liquidated. I do not expect to have to come here to discuss HRT after that date.

There are two further pending issues, namely the formation of the single public utility company, and the competences of the urban planning institute.

Mr Winterstein has also submitted his proposals for the future of these enterprises to the City Council.

These proposals have been formulated with the best interests of the City as the top consideration.

I expect that the City Council will convene on Wednesday, put aside its differences, and adopt the proposals. The Chairman of the City Council Mr Coric confirmed to me that he will send out the invitations for the Wednesday's session today. This was also consented by the heads of caucuses who were also present on the meeting.

If the proposals are adopted I will consider whether to send Mr Winterstein again for a follow-up mission regarding implementation.

If these proposals are not adopted, I will take immediate action on the basis of the Mr Winterstein's proposals.

Implementation of the decisions shall be the responsibility of the City Administration, led by the Mayor, and supported by the City Council.

OHR South, headed by Anatoly Viktorov, will monitor implementation, and provide assistance as necessary. I will be

in constant contact with Mr Viktorov, and will not hesitate to take further action if the situation requires it.

I will be following events here very closely and have the backing of the PIC to act wherever necessary to ensure the completion of the unification of Mostar.

This is a prerequisite for the functionality and stability of both the Federation and the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thank you.