

Voting for a European Future

The forthcoming election is about the pace at which Bosnia and Herzegovina moves towards Europe, High Representative and EU Special Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling wrote in his weekly column, which appeared in the BiH press today.

On the first day of the official election campaign, the High Representative/EU Special Representative urged the electorate, and in particular the young, to become engaged in politics and vote, warning that: "Anyone who chooses not to vote is effectively allowing others to decide about his or her future."

"Elections in general are important," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. "These are especially significant because of the changing nature of the international presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina," the High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote in an article that was published in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*.

"The leaders elected on 1 October this year will have to take responsibility for the future of their and your country and to lead it towards Europe after the closure of the Office of the High Representative next year."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling also compared the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina today to that prevailing in the Germany of his youth.

"When I was a young man, the future of my country was no clearer than that of Bosnia and Herzegovina today. Germany had been defeated in war. It was divided. And democracy was in its infancy.

"There was no European Union at that time," the High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote. "But through

NATO, the Marshall Plan and later the European Coal and Steel Community, there was a Euro-Atlantic perspective for Germany that the country's then Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, seized."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling pointed out that the path to Euro-Atlantic integration was much clearer today for Bosnia and Herzegovina than it had been for Germany and that he was currently building an Office, in his capacity as EU Special Representative, to help Bosnia and Herzegovina on this route.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina has a European future and that future will open up greater opportunities for this country's youth than many have even dreamed about. Nothing would please me more than to learn that a future European Commissioner or President of the European Parliament first became engaged in politics in this election," the High Representative/EU Special Representative concluded.

For the full text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative's column, see <https://www.ohr.int>