

Schmidt: Combating and sanctioning of war crimes denial and glorification of war criminals is important task for BiH society



High Representative Christian Schmidt visited Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial Center to meet with the management of the center and representatives of Movement “Mothers of Srebrenica and Žepa Enclaves” and associations that gather families of genocide victims. They discussed plans of the Memorial Center, activities of associations aimed at preserving the memory of the Srebrenica genocide, and about what can be done to help competent state institutions in combating denial of Srebrenica genocide and war crimes, including glorification of war criminals. The High Representative also reflected on ways of avoiding misunderstandings and strengthening efforts to avoid abuse of the Srebrenica genocide for political purposes and added that “it is also absolutely necessary to be sensitive and precise when talking about the genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.”

Swift legal processing of all those who either deny war crimes or who glorify perpetrators of these crimes is an issue that is important for advancing reconciliation processes in society. “Denial of war crimes and glorification of convicted war criminals have a negative effect on reconciliation efforts

and must be tackled by competent institutions with the full force of the law,” said High Representative.

In this light, the High Representative informed his interlocutors about a meeting he had with the BiH State Prosecutor to learn what more could be done so that denial of war crimes could be tackled more effectively. In this regard, the High Representative committed to helping find international partners with expertise in this field to help BiH judicial institutions to prosecute cases of denial of war crimes or glorification of war criminal with more vigor.

Following his decision to amend the Law on the Center for the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial and Cemetery for the Victims of the 1995 Genocide, the High Representative wanted to hear about concrete effects of that decision in terms of facilitating the work of the Memorial Center. High Representative Schmidt notes that “the work and the legacy of the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center is important for reconciliation efforts in BiH society. To perform this important role Memorial Center needs to develop, free of financial burdens.”