

Schwarz-Schilling Urges United Nations to Establish UN Day of Srebrenica to Pay Respect to Genocide Victims and Families

The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, urged the United Nations today to establish a UN Day of Srebrenica to mark the tragic events that occurred there in 1995 and to pay respect to the victims of genocide and their families in an address to the UN Security Council.

In a wide-ranging speech, analysing the many difficulties experienced in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the course of his mandate and in particular since the International Court of Justice's verdict in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina versus Serbia and Montenegro, Mr Schwarz-Schilling informed the UN Security Council that: "Radical rhetoric had poisoned the political environment and the issue of Srebrenica is back in the headlines."

The High Representative and EU Special Representative also discussed the prospects for transition and ownership, the leitmotifs of his mandate, highlighting areas in which reforms necessary for Bosnia and Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic integration had stalled, areas where the country had, nevertheless, made progress and areas in which it would need to make progress to evolve into a functioning state capable of full Euro-Atlantic integration. And he paid tribute to the UN Security Council for the role it had played in helping achieve a positive outcome regarding police officers denied certification by the United Nations International Police Task Force.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling drew special attention to the "ruthless political manipulation of [Srebrenica] by irresponsible politicians," in the wake of the ICJ verdict, which, he said, "distracts from the real issues that require concrete action". And he highlighted both his own efforts to improve conditions in and around Srebrenica and areas in which the United Nations should consider further action, in particular in relation to Serbia's lack of cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague.

"I have appointed an envoy... to play a coordinating role," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said, drawing special attention to the work of Bosnia and Herzegovina's justice and law-enforcement institutions, but stressing that the constitutional and territorial order of the country was not about to be overturned.

"A unilateral change of the Dayton Peace Agreement would pose grave risks to peace and stability. The Security Council should consider making this point very clear," he said.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative explained that he had written to President Boris Tadic of Serbia in the wake of the ICJ verdict asking him to inform him of measures taken to cooperate with the ICTY, but that President Tadic had failed to respond.

"I believe that the Security Council needs to consider seriously how Serbia can be brought to implement the ICJ judgment," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. "This is a matter of stability in the region and the Security Council must live up to its responsibilities in this regard."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling also asked the UN Security Council to remind all parties to the Dayton Peace Accords of their obligations to comply with their international obligations and in particular their obligation to cooperate fully with the ICTY.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative informed the UN Security Council that political reforms, in particular police restructuring, have now been blocked in Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than a year and that increased effort must be made to overcome the lack of political will, skepticism and fear that has dominated political discourse for Bosnia and Herzegovina to progress towards Europe.

"The European Union has approved technical negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina for a Stabilisation and Associations Agreement," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. "The document is ready to be initialed - but political conditions must be met first."

The High Representative and EU Special Representative described "ownership" as a "difficult learning process," but made clear that it represented the way forward in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"The difficult learning process does not mean that the ownership path is wrong – but it is a warning we should not ignore," Mr Schwarz-Schilling said. " A warning that transition cannot be taken for granted, that Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities must increase efforts to live up to their responsibilities; and that serious international engagement must continue."

The High Representative and EU Special Representative explained that he recommended extending the Office of the High Representative (OHR) beyond the end of June this year because he had growing concerns for Bosnia and Herzegovina's political stability.

Despite many setbacks, progress had also been made in Bosnia and Herzegovina during Mr Schwarz-Schilling's mandate.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative drew the UN Security Council's attention to the facts that elections had taken place in line with international democratic standards; that governments had been formed by Bosnia and Herzegovina's politicians themselves, albeit slowly; that Bosnia and Herzegovina had joined NATO's Partnership-for-Peace programme; that Bosnia and Herzegovina joined a free trade area in Southeastern Europe; and that the Regional Cooperation Council decided to locate its seat in Sarajevo.

Mr Schwarz-Schilling thanked the UN Security Council for the constructive role it had played in issuing a presidential letter on the issue of police officers denied certification by the UN International Police Task Force. And he paid tribute to Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions, the Council of Europe, the EU Police Mission, the UN Department of Peacekeeping and the UK Presidency of the UN Security Council for working with his Office in finding a solution to this matter.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative urged Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to return to discussing concrete action in the interest of all citizens, specifying the need for reforms in the fields of education, the economy, foreign investment, public administration and broadcasting. And he highlighted the longer-term importance of constitutional reform to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina serves its citizens better and becomes an effective, functioning state capable of full membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

"I believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to establish a constitutional reform process within its own institutions that would provide the political parties, parliament and wider civil society with the forum for both substantive debate and technical preparations of the complex issues involved," he said, pointing out that both the European Union and the United States were ready to advise on standards and share experience and expertise.

"The international community must not waver from its commitment to assist," Mr Schwarz-Schilling continued. "It must continue actively its policy of advising and guiding Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities to the point where the OHR and the Bonn Powers are no longer needed."

The High Representative and EU Special Representative warned of further challenges that the new government and his successor, Ambassador Miroslav Lajčák, would face in the coming period. He thanked the UN Security Council for the support he had received during his mandate and announced that he intended to remain close to Bosnia and Herzegovina, "a country I have come to know and love," as it travels to a brighter future in Euro-Atlantic institutions.

The full text of the High Representative and EU Special Representative's [speech](#) is available at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.org.