

Schwarz-Schilling: Much Can Be Done Now To Change Srebrenica

The High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, will tomorrow meet with the leaders of the SBiH, the SDA and the SDP, Haris Silajdzic, Sulejman Tihic and Zlatko Lagumdzija. The HR-EUSR's aim is to focus efforts on achieving tangible results in improving the lives of all those who live in Srebrenica.

The International Court of Justice confirmed that genocide was committed in Srebrenica. In 2005 a RS Government Working Group produced names of members of all military, police and civil defence units present in the area in July 1995. However, the report did not determine individual criminal responsibility – this can only be done through this country's judicial institutions. The OHR is of the view that individuals working in State and RS institutions and named by the Working Group should be treated as a priority in determining individual responsibility.

Strengthening the judicial institutions responsible for these investigations and enhancing the work SIPA is doing on war crimes are achievable goals.

Projects specifically in the areas of education, memorials and reconciliation can and should be expanded. The status of the Srebrenica Foundation should be looked into urgently.

Much more effort needs to be invested into rehabilitating Srebrenica's economy. Agricultural projects and investments in light manufacturing have succeeded. BiH institutions should now carefully review existing economic and social incentives applied to areas heavily affected by the Balkans wars, such as

Vukovar, and assess their applicability to Srebrenica. Plans to strengthen investment, including plans to give Srebrenica special economic status – such as that passed by the RS Government today – should be exploited fully.

State and Entity level institutions can give Srebrenica special attention and financial support to aid development. In addition, both the FBiH and BiH institutions can take steps to ensure that pension payments, healthcare and other social benefits are accessible in a way that encourages returnees to actually register their residence in Srebrenica.

The High Representative has already discussed many of these measures with the Peace Implementation Council and other representative of the international Community in BiH. The HR-EUSR stands ready to ensure that BiH initiatives receive the best possible support.