Shame on Those Who Stay at Home on Sunday

On Sunday "all the people" ofBosnia and Herzegovina will decide who is to govern, "not just the powerful, not just the privileged few," the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, wrote in his weekly newspaper column.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative warned that in the last general election, more than a million citizens with the right to vote had failed to exercise that right. He argued that this may have been because of an outmoded perception that "history is the story of 'Great Men'" and that "important decisions are made by a privileged few".

This view of history and politics is not compatible with modern democracy, Mr Schwarz-Schilling wrote in his article that appeared in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*.

"The whole drama of our common past, the unfolding story of our civilizations is not to be found in the lives of a small number of powerful men. It resides in the lives of millions of men and women — our fathers and mothers and their fathers and mothers, The High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote.

"The achievements of peace are invariably the achievements of the people — industry, trade, prosperity, care for the infirm and the elderly, rising standards of education. These are the work of millions, not the work of a handful of decision-makers."

Another reason people do not vote is that they think "the parties are all the same," the High Representative/EU Special Representative wrote. "Yet they are only the same if the

people let them be the same. If the people vote, if the people express their sovereign will, then the parties and their representatives will be obliged to listen and to respond."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling urged all citizens to "reach out and take power" by voting and concluded with the words "Shame on those who stay at home on Sunday."

The full text of the High Representative/EU Special Representative's column can be found at www.ohr.int