HR Christian Schwarz-Schilling: Mostar Matters

Mostar's politicians have had years to solve problems that are making life unbearable for the city's inhabitants and they have failed – obliging High Representative/EU Special Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling to intervene.

"These issues cannot be put off forever," the HR/EUSR wrote in an article that was published today in *Dnevni avaz*, *Nezavisne novine* and *Večernji list*. "Politicians must understand that they do not fail in a vacuum. Their failure hurts other people.

"In the case of Mostar, their failure is hurting tens of thousands of people. The city administration is dysfunctional because for more than a decade it has been overstaffed and poorly organised; public utilities are inadequate; and other institutions that should be providing services to citizens are unsatisfactory."

Mr Schwarz-Schilling said that despite receiving assurances during the summer from the city's leaders that "constructive and pragmatic action" would be taken, nothing had been done in regard to utilities and institutions that provide key services in the city, although he acknowledged that some progress has been made on downsizing surplus workers and filling civil-service positions.

The High Representative/EU Special Representative recognised that some Mostar politicians have tried to find solutions, but pointed out that: "The two parties that have shared power in Mostar for the past ten years, the SDA and the HDZ, have served their people poorly."

He added that for years the city has illustrated "the misery

that can be inflicted on citizens when their political representatives substitute bickering for constructive debate and opt for intransigence over getting things done.

“Mostar matters – it matters most to the people who live there, but it also matters to people in the rest ofBosnia and Herzegovina, and it matters beyond this country,” the High Representative/EU Special Representative concluded, adding that: “This is a city that *can* prosper; it *can* once again be home to a vibrant and inclusive urban community.”

Mr Schwarz-Schilling stressed that the steps he would announce in Mostar today are designed “to surmount obstacles in making that possibility a reality.”

The full text of Mr Schwarz-Schilling’s weekly column can be found at www.ohr.int