

High Representative Participates in Business Round Table in Tuzla

The High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, participated in a round table on export-related economic issues organised by the Northeast Regional Development Agency today in Tuzla together with representatives of five export-orientated businesses from the Tuzla region: TMD AI (Gradacac), Herceg d.o.o. (Srebrenik), Alpamm d.o.o. (Tuzla), Smrcak (Zvornik) & FEN BH (Lukavac).

The BiH businesses represented reported that exports make up a significant part – and for two companies, all – of their production and that developing this dimension would help their companies grow.

“BiH businesses have shown themselves to be both capable and innovative,” said the High Representative at the round table today. “Their products can stand up against foreign competitors, showing that BiH does have real economic potential.

“BiH’s politicians must now take steps to develop this potential further, by helping business they can help this region and BiH as a whole”, said Mr Schwarz-Schilling.

Business representatives also highlighted that the easing of visa regimes for BiH business people, support for exporting companies and the creation of a level playing field – putting BiH business on a level footing with foreign businesses – would help their business grow.

“There needs to be a policy to improve access to foreign markets,” said the High Representative today. “This is absolutely in BiH’s interest,” he added.

The High Representative encouraged the round table's participants to take the lead in promoting a level playing field for export so that BiH politicians would see the better business environment that would result.

"You represent exporting companies. You have to compete in foreign markets with companies from other countries, which in most cases have more favourable export conditions" the High Representative said. "This export imbalance must change because by making BiH business more competitive you build new jobs and a stronger economy.

From the start of his mandate the High Representative has placed a high priority on economic development and stressed the essential role of small and medium-sized enterprises in revitalising the BiH economy. The experiences of the Tuzla region's business community can be applied to many other areas of BiH and should be drawn on to help face the challenges faced by business in the future.