

Remarks by the High Representative, Christian Schwarz-Schilling at the Award Presentations Following Igman International Ski Championship: “Tourism and Forestry Can Create More Jobs”

– Check against delivery –

Sponsored by the German State of Hesse

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I’m particularly pleased to participate in this event because it brings together my home state in Germany, Hesse, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Nordic skiing tournament that has just finished is also a marvelous advertisement for Alpine tourism, one of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s most promising – but as yet underdeveloped – economic sectors.

The state of Hesse is working with partners in BiH on forest management projects – and the forestry sector, as all of you know, is another potentially major contributor to BiH’s postwar economic and social recovery. It could have huge economic potential, but is not properly managed – I understand

that these problems are now being aggressively addressed, through the follow-ups to audit reports among other things.

So this primarily *sporting* event is one that nonetheless touches on two of Bosnia and Herzegovina's core economic strengths – tourism and forestry.

Those of you who have participated in this week's tournament or who have traveled here as spectators do not need to be persuaded, I think, of the very *distinctive* experience that awaits international tourists in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This is a country where hospitality is still a way of life and hasn't yet been turned into an industry. We *want* to turn it into a major industry, of course, because we believe that tourism can develop as a strategic pillar of economic growth, as it has done in other countries such as Spain, Greece and Turkey – but we also want to make absolutely certain that the particular characteristics of BiH, the unique topographical, cultural and culinary traditions, are not lost in the development of mass tourism.

We are already engaged with the BiH authorities in streamlining the coordination of tourism management and improving the marketing of BiH as an international tourism destination.

The Bjelasnica-Igman Resort is a good example of what can be achieved through the sensible management and development of existing resources. We estimate that this resort alone could generate as many as 5,000 new jobs – once it is fully developed – in the Sarajevo region. If this can be done on Bjelasnica, it can be done throughout BiH.

Let me once again express our thanks to the State of Hesse – and our warm welcome to the visitors from Hesse – for their cooperation in developing two of BiH's key economic sectors. This cooperation is based on sound commercial principals, and at the same time it reflects the natural friendship that

exists among citizens of BiH and citizens of Germany.

So now it gives me very great pleasure to select the winners who will receive tickets to this year's Football World Cup Finals in Germany donated by the State of Hesse!

Thank you