

High Representative Replies to Potocari Battery Factory Occupants and Owners

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today sent a letter to Radomir Zekic, the director, and the shareholders and tenants of the Battery Factory "AS" in Potocari near Srebrenica. In his letter, the High Representative reminds Mr. Zekic that the Decision transferring ownership of the Battery Factory to the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery was issued following full consultation with the Republika Srpska (RS) authorities, who agreed with this course of action. The RS authorities appointed the Commission which is to determine the compensation to be paid by the RS to the current owners and users of the Battery Factory.

The failure of the Compensation Commission to reach a conclusion within the stipulated period would not affect the right of the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery to take possession of the site. The Compensation Commission has had six months to reach a conclusion but has yet to do so. The OHR has on several occasions reminded the RS authorities and the Compensation Commission, appointed by the RS Minister of Finance, of their obligation to ensure that the current users and owners of the "AS" are properly compensated.

Issuing the Decision transferring ownership in March the High Representative said "the Battery factory site has a special place in the memory of Srebrenica families as it was the last place many of them saw their beloved relatives alive". The High Representative's Decision has the full support of the Foundation of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery. The Foundation's Executive Board will determine the future use of the Battery factory site following consultations with

families of victims.