

High Representative expresses solidarity with citizens of BiH

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the fatal shooting during peace demonstrations on Sarajevo's Vrbanja Bridge, one of the tragic incidents that mark the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, wishes to express his solidarity with the citizens of BiH as they remember the difficulties of the last decade and look forward with hope to the future.

Ten years ago, two young women were shot dead on the Vrbanja Bridge in front of the building that today accommodates the Office of the High Representative. In the following three and a half years, countless citizens lost their lives and more than two million people were forced from their homes. This was a catastrophe whose legacy will remain for decades to come. There are few in this country who have not been touched by wartime loss.

Remembering is an indispensable part of recovery. Those who forget the past are destined to repeat it. The High Representative joins the citizens of Sarajevo and BiH as they remember the horrors of the war, public and private.

The High Representative also joins the people of BiH as they look to the future. Ten years on, BiH has come a long way from the nationalist intolerance that fueled the conflict and the intransigence that frustrated recovery in the years immediately after Dayton. The people of BiH have moved on from the bitterness of the war and its aftermath. They stand on the brink of European integration. BiH now has an opportunity to be a normal country where citizens can live and work in peace and security, where government, courts and police are becoming

efficient and impartial, where economic opportunities are growing and where no one feels threatened because of their ethnicity or religion.

Making BiH into this kind of country is surely the finest monument that can be built to honour those who were lost in the terrible events that began ten years ago.