

High Representative Pays His Respects at Srebrenica

Christian Schwarz-Schilling today made his first visit as High Representative and EU Special Representative to the Srebrenica Potocari Memorial, to pay his respects to the memory of the victims of the Srebrenica Massacre.

“This is an important visit for me personally,” the High Representative said. “Remembering what happened here is not simply a matter of visiting one day in the year.”

Noting that “the Srebrenica Memorial and Cemetery allows those who lost loved ones to bury their dead with dignity,” the High Representative also reiterated the fact that, “we must make sure that those responsible for these crimes are brought to justice.”

On 1 June this year the High Representative met representatives of the Srebrenica families’ associations’ in Sarajevo. At that meeting the High Representative promised to bring together all the relevant parties in Srebrenica.

In Srebrenica today the High Representative met with representatives of the victims’ families’ associations, representatives of the Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery Foundation, the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the RS Ministry for Displaced Persons, the Srebrenica Municipal authorities and the RS Ombudsman’s Office.

“My aim in coming here has been to understand the problems that ordinary people face and get the appropriate institutions to present their ideas on how to solve these issues,” the High Representative said.

Participants at today’s meeting agreed to draft a return

issues action plan for Srebrenica, to be coordinated by the Srebrenica municipal authorities and the appropriate RS and state level institutions. The action plan, to be presented by 1 August, will address priority issues for the Srebrenica region during the remainder of 2006 and in the period to 2010. "We must resolve problems, not just talk about them", says the High Representative.

"I look to the responsible individuals and institutions to respond to the issues that have been raised and propose solutions", the High Representative said. "Leading politicians would do well to visit special regions, like Srebrenica, to understand the real problems people face, rather than looking to score easy political points ahead of the elections."

Earlier in the day the High Representative met privately with returnees to the Srebrenica region.