Inzko: There must be respect for those who return

More than shelter is needed for re-integration. There must be respect and support for those who return; there must be sensitivity and understanding regarding what they have experienced, said the High Representative, Valentin Inzko, today at a Roundtable on sustainable return held in European Academy in Banja Luka. The High Representative underlined that "the extent to which citizens are able to honour loved ones who were killed during the war is a measure of how willing communities and individuals are to accept returnees and show understanding for their loss."

Srebrenica remains a special case because of the severity of the crimes committed there. In this regard, the High Representative condemns the latest denial by the President of the RS of the genocide in Srebrenica as unworthy of the citizens of the RS. In his address to the Roundtable, the High Representative cited the Kravica warehouse as a further example of where the right to honour the dead is not respected. He also questioned the rationale that prompted the building of the Budak church right next to the cemetery where the victims of the Srebrenica genocide are buried.

Finally, the High Representative called on the BiH authorities to redouble their efforts to ensure the full implemention of the revised Annex VII Strategy. The right to return is a legal right in Bosnia and Herzegovina, yet a hundred thousand citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are still displaced and thousands live in collective accommodation. "This is unacceptable and must be rectified over 17 years after the Peace Agreement was signed.," said Inzko.

Earlier in the day, the High Representative met with the Prime

Minister of the Republika Srpska Government, Aleksandar Dzombic, with whom he raised the issue of the Budak Church and discussed the current political situation in the country and the challenges facing the RS authorities in the coming months. Drawing attention to the last meeting of the Peace Implementation Council the High Representative said that much work remains to be done to enable the country to continue to make progress. “I am convinced that 2012 can be a breakthrough year for the whole country but domestic leaders must deliver.” – said the High Representative.

While in Banja Luka, the High Representative, Valentin Inzko also met with the Orthodox Bishop Jefrem and Mufti Edhem Camdzic and Bishop Franjo Komarica.