

Press Statement by the High Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling on Srebrenica following Meeting with Three Prime Ministers



Good afternoon and thank you for coming here today.

I think I can speak for all of us when I say that we have just had a useful discussion about practical ways to improve conditions in and around Srebrenica.

We agree that there is a moral and political imperative to respond to the situation in Srebrenica.

We all need to work on this. We need to work on this because it is right in and of itself; because it is the just thing to do for the victims and survivors; and because future inter-ethnic relations and the reconciliation process in this country depend on it.

We have therefore agreed to set up a coordination arrangement involving both domestic institutions and the international community to focus efforts linked to Srebrenica.

Before I come to this arrangement, allow me to say a few words about the broader issue of support to Srebrenica.

During the past six weeks, the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken stock of the situation in Srebrenica to determine what support has been provided over the years and what the results of this support have been.

As different governments and institutions prioritise different projects, we have looked at different types of support, covering the areas of rule of law; humanitarian aid; sustainable return; and social and economic questions.

We found, for example, that the international community has provided at least 67 million KM of aid since 1996, and that 9 million KM of this is committed for this year.

In addition, local authorities – state-level, Federation and Republika Srpska – have committed some 31 million KM for 2007 alone, the greatest portion of which comes from the RS Government for infrastructure development.

These are significant sums of money.

With the exception of unilateral demands for a special constitutional status for Srebrenica, which cannot be accepted, we also looked at the various demands that came from local communities, and tried to match them with the proposals from each of the governments represented here today by their Prime Ministers.

In this way, the OHR put together a list of recommendations covering six fields – general; judicial; missing persons; the Foundation; economic development; and social rights, including pensions, healthcare and education – that we have just been discussing.

The Prime Ministers will come back to me with their comments on this document in the coming days, with, if possible, harmonised positions.

As I said earlier, we also agreed to set up a coordination arrangement involving both domestic institutions and the international community to oversee and focus efforts linked to Srebrenica.

This will include representatives from each of the levels of

government represented here today, as well as a Special Coordinator, whom I intend to appoint to coordinate efforts on our side.

We have agreed that I will meet next week with the designated points of contact of each Prime Minister to confirm our coordinated effort and to have a more operational meeting to take matters forward.

Thank you