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**Schwarzkopf-Stiftung**  
**Festvortrag Prof. Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling**  
**Laudatio auf Nataša Kandić, Vesna Teršelić , Mirsad**  
**Tokača**

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Dienstag, den 02. Dezember 2009

18.00 Uhr

Berlin – Landesvertretung Hamburg

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## I. Welcome

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Mr. Klein (– Head of Representation of the Federal State of Hamburg) Host

Dear Mr. Scharff, (Executive Director of the Schwarzkopf Foundation)

Dear Board Members of the Schwarzkopf-Foundation,  
(*Herrn Dr. Schmitz-Schwarzkopf, Dieter Kosslick, Dr. Klaes, Dr. Nümann, Herr Koll, Herr Schwarzkopf, **Herr Bütow**, Herr Dr. Schweitzer, Herr Dreger*)

And last but not least: dear Prizewinners – Nataša Kandić, Vesna Teršelić and Mirsad Tokača.

For the 7<sup>th</sup> time, the Schwarzkopf-European-Prize will be awarded in remembrance of the great founder Pauline Schwarzkopf. She shaped the foundation and its work with her strong and emotional personality and her distinctive sense of social justice. Her heart was always with the people that were disadvantaged in life.

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you tonight to the Landesvertretung Hamburg in Berlin. I would like to thank the president **Dr. André Schmitz-Schwarzkopf** and his colleagues from the chair of the foundation, and particularly **Mr. Florian Bütow** for arranging this festive evening. I would also like to acknowledge the host of this evening **Mr. Franz Klein**. Please

allow me to say, thank you, for making this event possible. I welcome especially warmly the three recipients of this award, Nataša Kandić, Vesna Teršelić and Mirsad Tokača.

## **II. Heinz-Schwarzkopf-Stiftung took action: Schwarzkopf-Europe Award**

The Media's obsession with sensationalism is well known. Stories we read in the press or see on our television screen have short lives and disappear into oblivion very quickly. However, tonight we are honoring people whose work is set distinctively against such trends. We are celebrating the work of three people who excel in interfering, who do not look away, but take action

This year the Schwarzkopf Europe Award and the Young European of the Year Award will be received by outstanding citizens from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia who have dedicated their work and lives to fighting the manipulation of history and promoting understanding, thereby building an indispensable basis for peace, in and among the countries of the Western Balkans and their citizens.

Europe today is in a very critical position, perhaps on a historical junction: for some, integration has been too fast and for others too slow. Some think that too many decisions come out of an anonymous Brussels, others complain that the European harmonization has to become an end in itself. There

are voices that fear the enlargement of the European Union, because they have to share what they view as scarce resources. Others see the positive effect of combining our forces in order to improve the situation in Europe for a common good. Concerning the efforts to solve the problems in the Balkans it is now exactly the right time to remember the European leaders of the Thesaloniki agreement, whereby the European member states offered countries of the Western Balkans a European Union membership perspective. This constituted a historical opportunity and challenge for the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The transformative power of European integration, if allowed to unfold, will question many of the assumptions of the last two decades. Citizens and societies have to be ready to overcome the worst effects of the disintegration of the former common state, a process that was characterized by instability, violence and war, causing human losses, individual trauma and a lack of civic and democratic development.

Our laureates's work aims to transform the post-war situation into a process of establishing trust, cooperation and sustainable political and social dialogue, a prerequisite for successful European integration.

In the landscape of awards, the "Europe Prize" of the Schwarzkopf-Foundation is a special one. Its ethical dimension is strong while the idea of the award is very simple -Young

people honoring professional Europeans. The Award is conceptualized as a „thank you“ from the younger generation to admirable professional persons in public life who shape Europe as a place young people want to live in.

With the “Schwarzkopf Europe Prize” the foundation awards persons in public life who contribute in a special way to fostering European co-operation and integration and who shape Europe’s peaceful and responsible role in the world.

Schwarzkopf-Foundation asked 200.000 young people from all over Europe for nominations. A jury of ten young Europeans ultimately decided this year’s winner. The “decision-makers of tomorrow” have been given the opportunity to acknowledge the “decision-makers of today”, those who shape the future of Europe according to their values, their ideas and their wishes.

So far the following persons received the award: The former Chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Carla Del Ponte, the german-islamic writer and academic, Mr. Navid Kermani, the director of the BERLINALE Film Festival, Mr. Dieter Kosslick, the belorussian oppositionist Aleksandar Lahvinets and last year the Finish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexander Stubb.

### **III. Laudatio to the Laureates 2009: Nataša Kandić, Vesna Teršelić , Mirsad Tokača**

This year, for the first time in the young history of this award, it is given to three persons together. You may ask yourself why, but the answer is obvious: In the Western Balkans, in the countries that came into existence after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, dealing with the past is a regional challenge and a cross-border necessity. The work our laureates are doing for nearly two decades you may call „Aufklärung“ – a German word from the 17th and 18th century that entered other languages as well. „Aufklärung“, Enlightenment meant - and still means - to disburden thoughts, prejudices and ideologies of traditional, wrong and contra-factual imaginations and to spread acceptance for newly learned knowledge.

You might know that after the Second World War in a country once called Yugoslavia, publicly speaking about violence, victims, and perpetrators of World War 2 was taboo. But in private, people continued to remember their experiences especially during, but also at the end of World War 2, including the responsible perpetrators. For a sustainable peace in Southeastern Europe it is of crucial importance that collective memory is based on evidence, and not on manipulation and ideology.

The Jury explained and I would like to quote:

**„Nataša Kandić, Vesna Teršelić , and Mirsad Tokača**

receive the prize for their tireless efforts for peace and understanding in South-Eastern Europe. They contribute in an outstanding way to a stable future of the region. Their work raises our hope that the essential process of working-through the memories of the war on Balkans in the 1990s can be achieved. We honor three peoples who are committed to bravely tell the truth about tremendous sorrow and injustice.“

And now I would like to introduce:

**1. Nataša Kandić, Belgrade**

Nataša Kandić is the founder and the executive director of Belgrade's famous Humanitarian Law Center. She established this non-governmental organization in 1992 in the middle of war in order to document the grievous human rights violations that were then being perpetrated on a massive scale across the former Yugoslavia, its mission is to assist the post-conflict societies of former Yugoslavia to re-establish the rule of law and to come to terms with past human rights abuses in order to prevent their recurrence. When the persecutions in Kosovo escalated in 1999 Ms. Kandic travelled by taxi to Kosovo, talking to people, collecting information and giving interviews

to Radio Free Europe. Carla del Ponte has described her activities as 'invaluable'. Ms Kandic transferred the video-tape of the „Scorpions“ showing the murder of six men from Srebrenica to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. In March this year for example a criminal complaint against former members of a Special Police Unit of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia was lodged who allegedly participated in numerous massive war crimes in Kosovo. But what is probably most important for her, as for the two other laureates is to defend and to fight for the region-wide recognition of the people who suffered, who died or who survived and so „to return their human dignity“, as she said. Thank you Natasha Kandic.

Now I would like to introduce:

## **2. Vesna Teršelić , Zagreb**

Vesna Teršelić is a path breaking Zagreb based activist who had a leading role in founding the Croatian Anti-War Campaign (ARK) in 1991 at the beginning of the conflict. Today, Vesna Teršelić is the director of the “Documenta - Centre for Dealing with the Past”. The institution was founded by intellectuals and activist from Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia in order to initiate the process of dealing with the past, establish a factual truth about the war and contribute to shifting discussions from the level of

disputes over facts towards a dialogue on interpretations.

What is a very important and a very promising project for Ms Terselic, is the establishment of a Regional Commission on Truth-Seeking all over the Western Balkans. Together with the Humanitarian Law Center in Belgrade and with the Research and Documentation Center in Sarajevo a already very successfull civil-society initiative was launched in 2005. It is a very promising and important cross-boarder project bringing together organizations and individuals from different countries to enforce the pressure onto the political elites to deal with the past, to enhance debates about the continuity of elites, to enforce transitional justice on a regional level and to speak up together for the recognition of the victims.

Thank you Vesna Teršelić .

Now I would like to introduce:

### **3. Mirsad Tokača**

“We need to find out the truth – who, where, and how individuals were killed, to be able to talk of reconciliation“, says Mirsad Tokača. He has spent over 16 years researching and documenting the Bosnian war beginning during the siege of

Sarajevo during which he started gathering evidence on War Crimes for the Bosnian Government. In 2004, Mr. Tokača formed the Research and Documentation Center in. The RDC is an independent, non-governmental institution. Its most valuable sources is the evidence gathered in the field, often statements submitted directly by witnesses. This research institute has registered more than 350.000 war victims out of which nearly 100.000 have been killed “Human Losses in Bosnia-Herzegovina 92- 95” contains a meticulously researched database of the victims of the Bosnian war, sorted by name, place, and circumstances of death. The recently launched „Atlas of War Crimes“ uses the technology of Google-Maps and presents 50.000 geographic points where war activities took place, accompanied with photos and video-clips of the events. I would also like to commend Mr. Tokaca’s institute is searching for „positive stories.“ They present stories of the silent heroes – so to say -, of the rescuers, of the helpers, i.e. of the people who had civil courage and showed solidarity in the times of evil. Thank you Mirsad Tokača .

*All three laureates and their organizations work under complex and difficult conditions. Mostly their work is not supported by their governments, although they help to find sustainable regional peace. Everyone of them can tell stories about harsh resistance, accusations and threats. But through*

*their work and passion the „wall of denial“ that still exists in some milieus in South Eastern Europe is cracking and falling.*

*The story of their work continues further. The three laureates are demanding the formation of an official and independent cross border truth commission with a focus on the experience of victims. Next year, national parliaments will be petitioned and results are hoped for by spring 2011.*

We owe the prizewinners our deepest gratitude for their courage, persistence, and example in building a free, democratic Europe with its values of human rights, a constitutional state, and human dignity. Thank you!

## IV. Active Intervention 2009

### IV. Active Intervention 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On a final note, I would like to draw attention to **three** **problems** that urgently need to be resolved.

1. I believe that free travel within Europe for *all* citizens of the Western Balkans is very much in accordance with our Laureates' efforts and should be introduced without delay. The citizens of the West-Balkans should be able to travel freely across Europe. The remaining Schengen visa restrictions should be liberalised to allow free travel as soon as possible.

How can young people experience Europe, how can they find new prospects if they are not able to meet their peers, families or fellow students in an uncomplicated manner ?

In order to go further along the road towards sustainable integration, the freedom of movement *for all people* must be secured.

On Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> it was announced that the Schengen visa regime for Serbia, Macedonia, and Montenegro will officially end on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. The introduction of visa-free travel is a key step on the road to EU membership, - it implies EU approval of legal procedures in these countries.

To abolish Schengen visa requirements for Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia, is indeed progress for these countries.

However, one should keep in mind the danger that the new two tiered Schengen travel requirements pose for the region. Two classes of people are created – those with freedom to travel within Europe and those who are still restricted from doing so – namely citizens of Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia Hercegovina who are still constrained by harsh visa regulations.

The new visa regulations cause a new differentiation of ethnic groups in Bosnia Hercegovina. The Bosniak population, unlike many of their Croat and Serb compatriots, cannot obtain citizenship of neighbouring Serbia and Croatia in order to take advantage of visa free travel with these passports. It was Bosniak group that suffered the most human rights violations, massacres and genocide during the 1990s war. They are now feeling punished by Europe.

The decision to create two tiered access to European travel in the West Balkan region, adding the total absurd situation for different treatments of different ethnic groups in one state, this does not live up to the principles which Europe is supposed to stand for. It needs to be corrected immediately for it is a basic precondition for the meaningful integration of the Western Balkans in European institutions.

2. Germany has to stop the compulsive expulsion of people from the Balkans, who have been living with us as refugees, and due to our laws regarding aliens have only received short-term residency permits.

Everyone knows that the so-called “bilateral” treaties for the repatriation of these refugees take place under an enormous amount of psychological pressure for the South-East European countries, because they fear hindrance towards their own path to Europe.

That these people are being brought back to severe hardship, families are being ripped apart, and children who were born in Germany are being sent back to a country unknown to them, is known by every expert and is silently tolerated.

The spurious grounds are almost all causeless. Not long ago, the threat of overpopulation was being talked about. The boat, as we have heard, was full and would capsize, if these people were allowed to stay. Everyone today knows from, demographic developments that this is absurd.

We all lament more and more about a childless Germany, and yet we expel without mercy refugee children together with their parents out of our country.

Scenarios that are even more macabre have been taking place against Romany and Ashkali. After the extermination of about

500.000 Sinti and Romany during the Nazi era. It is more than unfair that the federal and state governments today refuse to give a new home to 10.000 Romany children from Kosovo, who were expelled. It is important to give these refugees a permanent home in Germany. Truly, that would only be a small way to compensate for what all these people had to suffer under the Nazi regime.

It is high time, those members of the parliament and the ministers of the interior come to their senses about their historical responsibility.

We cannot foster our memory of the terrible Holocaust and Nazi time, without drawing any consequence for current problems. Especially for those who already suffered in those times.

We have to give the brutally displaced persons of the 1990s a permanent home.

3. It is most welcome to support the German initiative to develop a documentation centre for expulsions and genocide, the “Centre Against Expulsions“, which documents the expulsions after the Second World War. Therefore, this could also be the occasion to consider the horrible expulsions of the 1990s in the Balkans adequately.

This centre should not only commemorate the past, but also contribute to the problem solving and the establishment of

peace and reconciliation in whole Europe. If the centre would be living up to its promises, personalities from South-East Europe should play a significant role. Furthermore, it would help to settle debates of the past.

Please excuse my personal contributions and I am certain that my remarks are in the spirit of tonight's gathering and tomorrow's conference proceedings. That is, I believe, in accordance with our laureates, who could make important contributions in the aforementioned project.

We have come here tonight not to an academic forum, but to a foundation that will make a difference in the present for a better future for whole Europe.

Thank you very much for your attention.