

Oslobodenje: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

Oslobodenje: Mr. Inzko, how do you view the events related to Naser Oric's detention in Switzerland?

Valentin Inzko: I cannot tell you in which direction the issue is going to develop after the extradition decision. It is not up to me or anyone else to comment on decisions of the Swiss judiciary on which there shall be no doubt that they are addressing the legal proceedings in an impartial, fair and independent manner.

Oslobodenje: RS President Milorad Dodik has once more announced the possibility of holding a referendum related to state-level judiciary.

Valentin Inzko: The judiciary must be allowed to act independently. An independent judiciary is the cornerstone of any democracy, and should be respected by all. The OHR fully supports the institutions that were established to exercise state constitutional responsibilities in the field of judiciary. It is also important that those institutions meet these responsibilities in a timely and professional manner.

These institutions were established in accordance with the constitution to exercise constitutional responsibilities of the State in the field of judiciary. This was confirmed by the Constitutional Court in a number of final and binding decisions. Entities are obliged under the constitution to respect State constitutional responsibilities and implement decisions of the BiH institutions.

Oslobodenje: After the decision of Swiss authorities to extradite Orić to BiH, the Organisational Board has no further objections to going ahead with the burial and commemoration in Potočari.

Valentin Inzko: Regardless to Swiss decision on Oric's extradition I have always expected it to go ahead. I believe this is the right thing to do, especially on the 20th anniversary of the genocide committed in Srebrenica. I have little doubt that the priority of the families is that the burials take place on 11th of July. The respect for the dead and their dignified burial must be the priority and should not be called into question.

Oslobođenje: Therefore, you expect no further problems to holding the commemoration on July 11?

Valentin Inzko: Yes, absolutely! For the world, 11 July must be a date of planetary importance, a day the significance of which nobody can deny. Just like the day of the liberation of Auschwitz, 27 January, cannot be denied or postponed, or 9 May, the end of the Second World War. 11th July in Srebrenica should be above politics, a day when we are all obliged to bow heads and to remember the innocent victims in Srebrenica and in the country as a whole. 11 July is a day when we must always commit to never allow such crimes to be repeated in the future..

Oslobođenje: Do you expect Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić to attend?

Valentin Inzko: I believe he should. He is a man who has made it explicitly clear that we must turn over a new leaf to build a better future for the region and its citizens. This requires actions as well as words.

Certainly, if nothing else then because of the Serb people to use Srebrenica for healing their souls, like we do in Austria with the Mauthausen concentration camp, or Germans, who have gone through a catharsis, and are now one of the strongest societies in Europe. In Srebrenica we can heal the wounds in our souls together, Serbs, Bosniaks but also Europeans, who in

this case carry the blame of co-guilt, the guilt of having allowed it.

Oslobođenje: Lately some officials from Banja Luka, namely the Minister of Education and RS President Dodik, have said that “there is no such thing as Bosnian language”. What do you say?

Valentin Inzko: This is incorrect. The Peace Agreement recognizes Bosnian as a language and the jurisprudence of the constitutional court is also clear regarding the issue. These statements and actions are futile and damaging. Politicians would be better advised to focus their actions on delivering rights rather than undermining them..

Why this exclusivist attitude? Why is the name of a language an issue at all? Putting aside the clear legal situation, why would you be against the name of a language? For example, my wife is Argentinian, but the language of the Argentinian people is called Spanish. The language of the Brazilian people is called Portuguese, in America it's English, the language of the Austrian people is German and the language of the Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina is called Bosnian. That's so very simple. Why are problems being needlessly created when we have more than enough other problems to deal with, not least creating new jobs for the unemployed?

Oslobođenje: European Union Agenda, when will it be signed?

Valentin Inzko: This is a question you should ask the authorities in this country. I certainly hope it will be signed without further delay. We cannot afford to waste any more time. Every day more and more young people are leaving. Every day we delay is a day we lose the brightest and the best in this country. We need politicians to show a sense of urgency and we need them to show it now!

There is no alternative kick-starting the reform agenda that has to all intents and purposes been stalled for the last ten years. Quite frankly, I don't think there is an alternative.

Yes there are tough reforms ahead, but there is also a readiness of the International Community to provide support to the country to get through the reforms and to emerge in a better place where there is more prosperity, stability and Rule of Law.

The Council of Ministers and the Federation Government have signed up. I hope the RS will come aboard as well. We have seen written commitments. Now we need to start seeing results. It really is as simple as that.