



## **Inzko: State budget a priority for stopping COVID-19**

The High Representative fully supports coordinated measures taken by the authorities at different levels of government in BiH to fight the coronavirus pandemic. These challenging times have shown that political and institutional leaders are able to effectively work together for the same purpose.

Continued close cooperation and coordination and urgent focus on targeted measures can empower BiH authorities at all levels to adequately respond to the crisis and preserve the health of its citizens.

Those measures include, first and foremost, ensuring the uninterrupted, adequate financing and unimpeded functioning of the BiH institutions. To that end, it is the responsibility of the BiH Council of Ministers, the BiH Presidency and the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to promptly adopt a regular state-level budget for 2020.

This would remove the limitations arising from temporary financing that can seriously impact BiH's ability to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis or any other extraordinary situation that BiH may confront. The absence of a budget would also affect the ability of the BiH institutions to discharge their constitutional and legal obligations, including the organization of the October 2020 Municipal Elections, as well as numerous other important issues.

Politicians should under no circumstance use this crisis to push other agendas. In addition, unilateral and uncoordinated activities have limited value to fight the COVID-19 crisis. On the contrary, they drain attention and resources from areas where their presence and assistance could be of real use for the citizens. Instead, leaders need to ensure that any actions are swift — but also transparent, coordinated, and focused on helping the citizens of this country.

The High Representative also urges citizens to fully follow the instructions of the authorities. Without the full cooperation of every individual citizen, the virus cannot be put under control and will cause further unforeseeable damage. Instead, citizens should demonstrate that they are at their best when challenges are the biggest.