High Representative Valentin Inzko Visits Moscow

High Representative Valentin Inzko met today with high-level officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, including Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Meshkov, and took part in a conference marking the forthcoming 20th anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

At the conference, High Representative Inzko said that the significance of the Dayton Agreement was not only that it achieved a cessation of hostilities, but also that it provided the start pointing for Bosnia and Herzegovina to begin a long road of recovery.

He cited the introduction of common identity documents, a common currency and a uniform car license plate as key measures that stimulated trade and allowed citizens, regardless of their ethnic background, to travel freely across the whole country. "This freedom of movement is today taken for granted, but it was central to opening Bosnia and Herzegovina up to the slow and winding process of the country's re-integration".

Other important milestones of the last twenty years include the establishment of a framework to enable displaced persons and refugees to reclaim their pre-war homes and a profound reform of the security and defence sectors in the country.

The High Representative explained that centralisation was never the aim of the international community, but rather achieving "reconciliation, functionality and re-integration" and a country that is "pulling together and working as one for a better future for all".

As time passes, the role of the international community in the country is changing, with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina expected to take on the responsibility "for the future they want for themselves, their country and of course their children", the High Representative concluded.

Today's conference was organized by the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. Other participants included former Croatian President Stjepan Mesic and former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Prime Minister Milan Panic.