

Elections Can Invigorate Popular Demand for Reform

The October general elections offer the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina an opportunity to secure fundamental and positive change, High Representative Valentin Inzko said last night at an international conference in Maribor.

“The achievements of postwar recovery in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been substantial but they are far from complete,” the High Representative said, “and today they are being rolled back.”

He said citizens have responded to the country’s growing material and political crisis “with courage, dignity and a remarkable surge of energy,” and he noted that “through popular demonstrations, plenums and cases of forthright and independent journalism civil society has addressed the glaring deficit – in competence as well as in ethics – of political life.”

Noting that “Bosnia and Herzegovina does not comprise a handful of political leaders; it comprises four million well educated and currently very disappointed citizens,” the High Representative said that citizens must be consulted in a serious and substantial way.

“The election will be part of that consultation but there needs to be sustained dialogue with citizens after the election too,” High Representative Inzko concluded.

The High Representative was speaking at the annual conference of the Societas Ethica, a European society for research in ethics.

The full text of the High Representative’s speech can be accessed at www.ohr.int