

Diversity Is the Antidote to Division



Cultural diversity should not be equated with social and political division, High Representative Valentin Inzko told participants at a conference organised by the BiH European Movement at the Burch University in Sarajevo today.

“Diversity is the opposite of division,” the High Representative said. “Understanding this is key to getting Bosnia and Herzegovina back on the European path, because diversity – not division – is the European normal.”

The High Representative cited the European Court’s ruling in the Sejdic-Finci case as “a fundamental a fundamental ruling that will benefit all the people and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina when it is implemented..”

He said this was the “clear and firm basis on which it is possible to protect and celebrate the diversity that enriches and strengthens every successful society.”

“For too long, culture has been held up as an inevitable cause of division in BiH society,” the High Representative said. “Not nearly often enough do we look critically at the people who trot out this argument as though it were a self-evident truth. It is an argument that is lazy, dishonest and false – though it suits those who would do better out of a country that fails than a country that succeeds.”

The High Representative said “civic values that have been lost in other parts of Europe – hospitality, neighbourhood solidarity, merhametluk” have survived here. “They have survived despite the best efforts of bigots and chauvinists to snuff them out. They haven’t survived despite this country’s rich and distinctive cultural heritage – they have survived because of that heritage.”

“Cultural diversity is the antidote to social and political division,” he said. “It is a key element in this country’s long road to recovery.”

The full text of the High Representative’s remarks can be accessed [here](#).