

Interview with High Representative Valentin Inzko

Dnevni avaz: What do you intend to do with regard to the local elections in Srebrenica and the danger of the unique candidate of the Serb parties winning the competition for the Mayor?

Valentin Inzko: When we speak about Srebrenica, there is one thing that must be mentioned first of all: all of us – the people in BiH and the international community – have a shared responsibility to make sure that the crimes committed there never happen again and that the victims of Srebrenica are not forgotten. Out of respect for them, all of us – Bosnians, Hercegovinians, and foreigners – must commit ourselves to this. To do otherwise would be to dishonour the victims and their families.

Of course, I understand the sensitivities about the elections issue. Given what happened in Srebrenica, it is right that this public debate is underway. The ideal outcome would be an agreement among Bosniaks and Serbs. If such a thing were to occur, it would be a tremendous success in terms of contributing to reconciliation in this country. And don't forget, in 2008 everyone agreed that that Srebrenica is a special place which deserves special attention. Srebrenica today continues to be a special place which deserves our attention – that has not changed.

Dnevni avaz: If agreement is not reached, will you undertake the initiative for amending the Election Law or request the agreement of the political parties about that as was the case in 2008?

Valentin Inzko: As I noted earlier, the international community expects Bosniaks and Serbs to sit down and discuss solutions which will be in the interest of the current and former residents of Srebrenica and which will ensure that the victims are appropriately honoured. Under no circumstances should the political parties be putting forward candidates who were in any way involved in the genocide or who have sought to deny the crimes committed in Srebrenica.

The challenge in Srebrenica goes far beyond the elections. There is much work to be done in Srebrenica on return and on economic development so that we have an environment where the people of Srebrenica both Bosniak and Serb can live together in dignity and prosperity. I expect all of the candidates in Srebrenica to be committed to this vision of working together.

Dnevni avaz: The issue of Mostar is still ongoing. Do the Bosniaks need a mechanism of protection through a special legal solution on the elections because of the Constitutional Court's decision?

Valentin Inzko: No, not at all – let me take this opportunity to reassure Mostarians – no one should be worried about the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court. I want to stress that the Constitutional Court decision has kept all of the many mechanisms for the protection of the rights of constituent peoples within the Statute. In addition, I want to emphasize that the international community will not condone the disintegration of the City.

Mostar citizens should know that such a thing will not happen. Mostar has come a long way. Both its citizens and the international community have invested so much effort and they will not allow it to be wasted. What we need to see now are improvements in services offered to the citizens by the city institutions. That would also improve the quality of life in the entire city. Mostar has a bright future ahead of it as a focal point of the wider Herzegovina region.

Dnevni avaz: Does the agreement of the Six open the door for the transition of the OHR?

Valentin Inzko: The OHR welcomes the agreement as a step in the right direction. Now we will look to the institutions to implement it. Implementation of this agreement, as well as progress on other elements of the 5+2 agenda, would help contribute to the country irreversibly being on a path toward NATO and the EU.

Such progress would create an environment in which the future of OHR could be discussed. However, this will be a discussion and a decision for the PIC Steering Board to take.