

Dialogue And Compromise Must Be The Guidelines for the Balkans

Political divisions in Southeast Europe “have to be managed so that they do not surface with negative consequences,” High Representative Valentin Inzko told participants at an international conference in Slovenia today.

He warned that some politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina “have shown in the last year a readiness to take unilateral action – even when they knew how damaging this could be.”

Speaking at the Bled Strategic Forum, which brings together senior figures from politics and the private sector to discuss key issues facing Europe in the 21st century, the High Representative said political dialogue and compromise must be the guidelines for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole Balkan region.

He said the International Community has a continuing “moral obligation to provide a civilian and military presence that provides guarantees of peace and stability while the region moves forward”. Long-term international engagement is “an investment in the future of Europe.”

While the International Community can maintain conditions in which progress can be made, he said, “the speed of progress will depend on the conduct of governments that are elected.”

The High Representative said Bosnia and Herzegovina has “enormous natural and economic resources,” but that the skills and talents of BiH citizens are being hindered by “politicians who have grown accustomed to stagnation”.

The High Representative concluded his remarks by calling for the “common vision” that has until now been “the missing ingredient”. He emphasised that in Bosnia and Herzegovina there is no shortage of citizens “who have a vision free of nationalism and firmly grounded in the best of Europe’s ideals.”