Making Your Voice Heard Is a Right Not a Privilege

Citizens have ultimate power in Bosnia and Herzegovina. When citizens lobby, campaign, complain, argue, and shine a spotlight on their representatives they can create change, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko told a conference in Sarajevo today.

Speaking at a session of Generation BiH for Europe, an initiative that brings young professionals together to lobby for practical steps that will accelerate Bosnia and Herzegovina's European Union integration, the HR/EUSR said young BiH citizens must understand that "making your voice heard is a right not a privilege." And he called on citizens to "claim that right and exercise it."

At today's session of Generation BiH for Europe, participants presented senior political figures with proposals for priority action in the fields of education, employment, anti-crime and anti-corruption, and streamlining the bureaucracy. The proposals were drafted and agreed over a period beginning in June.

The HR/EUSR said this speedy and successful drafting process has shown that "in Bosnia and Herzegovina it does not have to take an eternity to build consensus. Differences of opinion and other practical obstacles can be managed and overcome, and politics can deliver positive results."

He also pointed out that much of the discussion had been conducted electronically, which, he said, shows that the

“smoke-filled rooms” in which political deals have traditionally been made are “increasingly out of date.”

“Generation BiH has shown that it is entirely possible in this country to act quickly and achieve agreement and results,” the HR/EUSR said. “This is clearly something that the political establishment must learn from young citizens.”

He said the proposals “to provide young citizens with a decent education, to roll back the tide of crime and corruption, to create jobs and deliver decent living standards and to turn the bureaucracy from a public burden into a public service,” reflect reforms laid out in the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the European Partnership.

“The vision being presented today is the vision of young BiH citizens – a vision that has been produced through creative dialogue and compromise,” the HR/EUSR said. “The European Union wholeheartedly supports this dialogue and urges the BiH authorities to support it too.”

The full text of the HR/EUSR’s speech can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.eu