

## **Implementing EU Policies Can Bring Higher Employment**

“If Bosnia and Herzegovina wants to achieve EU membership and if the citizens of this country are to start enjoying EU standards of living – then, obviously, EU policies have to be implemented,” High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko told a conference in Sarajevo today.

The HR/EUSR was speaking at a session of Citizens for Europe, an initiative that brings together expert civil society organisations and authorities from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss legislative proposals and other key priorities that will speed up the EU integration process.

Emphasising that “poverty and unemployment are not the prerogative of one entity or one people” and that “citizens all across Bosnia and Herzegovina are struggling,” the HR/EUSR said that political leaders need to implement reforms they have promised to implement as part of the EU accession process.

These commitments include “making it easier for workers to find employment in any part of the country – and that means integrating a fractured labour market,” he said.

They also include establishing a BiH Social and Economic Council that will bring workers and employers fully into the process of economic policymaking, an initiative which, the HR/EUSR said “will help to turn the economy around.”

And political leaders have promised to resolve health-care and welfare issues that currently overburden the employment bureaus and make it hard for them to carry out their core task, which is to help unemployed citizens find work, he added.

“The Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the European Partnership cite these and other reforms because they have been successful in the EU and they can be successful in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” the HR/EUSR said.

“BiH citizens have a common aspiration to live in dignity,” he concluded. “Citizens want work; they want decent wages and decent working conditions. I urge the authorities to listen to citizens’ demands and understand their concerns, and to take these on board as a matter of urgency.”

*The full text of the HR/EUSR’s speech can be accessed at [www.ohr.int](http://www.ohr.int) and [www.eusrbih.eu](http://www.eusrbih.eu).*