



Op-ed by Valentin Inzko, EU Special Representative and High Representative in BiH: “Referendum a dangerous political adventure”

Two years ago I began my work as High Representative and EU Special Representative with an absolute commitment to help the four million people of this country break with the past and start enjoying the same kind of prosperity and security as their counterparts in the rest of Europe.

Today that commitment has not changed one iota. Unfortunately, a corresponding commitment has not been evident among some local politicians.

The results of this are plain for all to see.

Living standards throughout the country haven't risen. They have fallen.

Unemployment hasn't gone down. It has gone up.

Progress towards the European Union has been stopped in its tracks.

Against this backdrop of failure politicians in the RS are organising a referendum. It's not the referendum that is the issue – but that the entity referendum is on a State level competency.

Neither entity has the constitutional mandate to deal with a State institution, including the State Court. It has never been an entity issue. It has always been a state issue. In an institutionally complex country like BiH each level of authority must respect its competencies and not undermine others.

RS politicians know this, and they should know that undermining the peace agreement is a dangerous political adventure – one which can have unforeseen consequences.

People in every part of this country suffered under the brutality of war criminals. People in every part of this country continue to suffer under organised crime and corruption.

I am certain that BiH citizens want stronger courts not weaker ones. They want anyone who took part in war crimes, anyone who has taken part in organised crime, anyone who has accepted bribes or used political office to amass a personal fortune to be tried and punished.

If there are questions about the State level judiciary then they should be debated in the State level parliament. These institutions are there to be used. Serbs have voted for the law at State level, they can initiate improvements, again at State level. This could be welcome.

As High Representative I am responsible for upholding the Dayton Peace Agreement so that the people of this country never again have to suffer because of the short-sightedness, or power games of a small group of politicians. I and International Community will fulfil that responsibility.