

Remarks by EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko At the opening of the 2nd Session of the 2011 Parliament for Europe On Public Administration Reform



Better Bureaucracy, Not More Bureaucracy

Ministers, Parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by welcoming Ms Semiha Borovac, who has taken over as the State Coordinator for Public Administration Reform since the Parliament for Europe last discussed this key component of the European integration agenda.

Ms Borovac has a record of service in the Federation Parliament and also at the municipal level, which I think is especially important when it comes to Public Administration reform. The municipality is, after all, the place where citizens most frequently come face to face with bureaucracy.

I am also particularly pleased to be able to welcome Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Žbogar and Bulgarian Foreign Minister Nickolay Mladenov. Your participation in

today's discussion is testimony in itself to the European Union's serious and sustained commitment to helping Bosnia and Herzegovina move along the path of integration.

And I would like to welcome Ambassador Tóth, representing the EU Presidency, and the various experts who have joined us today, some of whom have come a considerable distance.

* * *

No one would argue with the fact that BiH citizens are obliged to deal with *too much* red tape and that this excessive bureaucracy is often *excessively inefficient*.

The European Commission's 2010 Progress Report expressed concern about a broad range of issues in this field, including the failure to make key appointments to State-level bodies and the continuing high level of politicisation in the civil service.

Over all, the Progress Report concluded that progress has been disappointing.

I don't think we have to look very far to see why.

Instead of proactively supporting efforts to make the bureaucracy – at municipal, cantonal, entity and state level – more cost effective and more efficient, political parties have tried to re-politicise appointment procedures and establish party control over whole areas of the civil service.

I cannot overstate the role that parliamentarians can play in helping to resolve this. It is a political, not an administrative problem, and it needs a political solution.

The underlying argument for changing the status quo is clear – the role of civil servants is to serve the public, not to serve political masters.

Ensuring an efficient, honest and transparent civil service is

clearly not the same as making the bureaucracy compliant and politically responsive – and that is what some parties are trying to do.

Parliamentarians need to help ensure that BiH citizens get the benefit of an efficient civil service and stop having to carry the burden of a politically controlled bureaucracy.

For this to happen, as the Progress Report makes clear, we need transparent recruitment procedures based on merit, and we need modern career development for civil servants.

We need *better* bureaucracy, not *more* bureaucracy, and in this respect the Cantons' uncoordinated implementation of the Federation Constitutional Court's recent ruling and the unilateral establishment of Cantonal civil services – can only be viewed with profound concern.

* * *

We are meeting today in a period when political gridlock has brought progress in a variety of areas to a standstill. <>>Those who are being penalised by the failure to reach political consensus are the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I believe that many parliamentarians are impatient with this state of affairs and honestly want to get down to work.

I hope that through today's discussion we can help to restore momentum to the urgent task of reforming the bureaucracy, and I hope that parliamentarians will find a way of alleviating the problems currently being created in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the intransigence of party leaders.

Thank you