

## **Inzko Addresses the UN Security Council: A Better Neighbourhood in the Balkans**

A new and more cooperative atmosphere across the Western Balkans has created promising opportunities for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, told the United Nations Security Council today.

The HR/EUSR said the informal EU/Western Balkans summit scheduled to take place in Sarajevo on 2 June “can boost the trend towards regional reconciliation and forward-looking cooperation.”

He said recent visits by senior international officials “reflect concern over the country’s failure to take advantage of the possibilities that are now open to it, and the lack of a common vision for the future.”

The international community has unanimously and unconditionally reaffirmed the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the HR/EUSR said, but he warned that a confrontational election debate has simply moved the focus of attention away from issues that will actually help BiH citizens.

The HR/EUSR stressed that the progress that has been made, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina holding a seat in the United Nations Security Council, in BiH’s acceptance for NATO’s Membership Action Plan and in the successful implementation of reforms related to EU visa liberalisation, shows that that the country can function. But, this has however not extended to the economy, or to key EU related reforms, where citizens’ expectations are great, the HR/EUSR noted.

He also noted that the authorities have not made the required progress on the remaining objectives and conditions for the transition of OHR to a reinforced EU-led presence.

The HR/EUSR stressed “the causal links” between reforms and practical benefits for citizens, and he noted that this year’s election presents all voters with the opportunity to demand progress from their elected representatives.