



Attacks on Media Cannot be a Part of a Democratic Election Campaign

"We are seeing a concerted campaign from some politicians to increase inflammatory and nationalistic rhetoric at the expense of much needed reform in this election year, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, said today. "The OSCE will continue to have an important role not just in monitoring the election process but adherence to democratic norms in the pre-election period," he said.

The HR/EUSR was speaking during a meeting in Sarajevo with a delegation of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, led by OSCE Assembly President Joao Soares.

The HR/EUSR underlined that media freedom in Bosnia and Herzegovina had once again come under attack, a development that is particularly pernicious as this is an election year, when media access and media impartiality are both at a premium. The HR/EUSR called on the OSCE to maintain its active monitoring of the media situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and he pledged the full support of the OHR and the EUSR in this respect.

Responding to questions on how Bosnians and Herzegovinians can tackle the obvious disregard the political leadership has for the citizens' interests the High Representative and EU Special Representative said that appealing to voters to turn out at the polls this Autumn would send a clear message that public opinion may not be ignored. The HR/EUSR said that the international community would be campaigning this summer to get voters to the polling stations in October.

Noting the OSCE role in supporting human and minority rights the High Representative and EU Special Representative underlined that the European Court for Human Rights ruling in the Finzi and Sejdic case represents a challenge the BiH authorities will need to address. "It is unacceptable that there are second class citizens in 21st

century Bosnia and Herzegovina,” the HR/EUSR said.