

Learning from Positive Experience

Defence and intelligence reform have led the broader reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Southeast Europe, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko told an international conference in Sarajevo today.

The result has been “a changed relationship between citizens and those whose job it is to protect them,” he said, noting that in BiH “Defence reform has been sensibly conceived and carried out with exceptional professionalism.”

As a result, “BiH now has armed forces that are operationally effective as well as cost effective, and which have made a positive and important contribution to international peacekeeping missions in Africa and the Middle East,” he said.

The HR/EUSR said the successful imposition of democratic oversight over the military shows that citizens can take power into their own hands. “The fact is that democracy doesn’t just magically appear. It has to be promoted and defended.”

He said the military and security agencies “are accountable to the citizens whom they protect; they are not at the disposal of a small group of powerful individuals and nor should they be. The same is true of every asset that belongs to citizens – including, for example, public companies and state property.”

The High Representative was delivering the keynote address at a conference on implementing the OSCE Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security, hosted by the BiH Government.