

# A More Positive Direction



The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown resilience in the face of political leaders who have repeatedly failed them, and the international community must emulate that resilience and find a way of making the political system perform better, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, said in a speech to diplomats in Vienna today.

Addressing the Permanent Council of the OSCE, the HR/EUSR said that since taking office in March he has had to adopt a few “remedial measures”, but he stressed that “putting out bushfires is not enough” and that the task now is to “point Bosnia and Herzegovina and its leaders in a more positive direction.”

He said that “these leaders have the capacity to implement the kind of policies that will take Bosnia and Herzegovina much further along the path of Euro-Atlantic integration and at the same time deliver real benefits to citizens such as greater personal security, more access to properly paid jobs, better public services and a reduction in corruption, if the international community maintains the common goal of helping them to implement the legislative and institutional agenda that has been mapped out by the Peace Implementation Council and which is contained in the agreements reached by the BiH authorities with the European Union and NATO.”

He said the setback over visa liberalization could be corrected if key requirements are implemented in the coming months, and by doing so the visa liberalisation that citizens desperately want to see could be delivered. “Then it would have been demonstrated that progress is possible in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, and if it's possible in regard to visas it is possible in regard to everything else."

In this context, he said, "the real question is not when the OHR should be closed. The real question is when will the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina begin to reap the benefits of coherent policies. Closing the OHR won't make Bosnia and Herzegovina more stable. The OHR will be closed when Bosnia and Herzegovina is more stable."

The HR/EUSR said the "clear political agenda" must now be "to foster a consensus in the political establishment on how to make Dayton work in a sustainable way, which will allow BiH to meet the challenges of Euro-Atlantic integration.

He warned, however, that the world recession is eroding Bosnia and Herzegovina's economic stability. "As party leaders dither, citizens are suffering. This is also why it is of paramount importance that we continue to remind the political leaders of their responsibility to deliver improvements. "

Noting that this will require ad hoc decision-making and creative politics, the HR/EUSR expressed confidence that, working with a united international community, Bosnia and Herzegovina can secure improved living standards while it reaches a consensus on a long-term political settlement, "even though we will undoubtedly have to pass through some interesting times in order to get there."

**The full text of the HR/EUSR's speech can be accessed at [www.ohr.int](http://www.ohr.int) and [www.eusrbih.eu](http://www.eusrbih.eu)**