



## **Practical Solutions to Pressing Problems**

Obstructing urgent reforms that would help alleviate living conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is absolutely unjustified – on moral as well as political grounds, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, told the UN Security Council today.

“I will seek to keep this plain fact at the centre of public debate,” said Inzko. “At the same time, I will seek a change in the political paradigm that downgrades practical and pressing economic issues and stresses instead a strident and unhelpful kind of posturing.”

Delivering the High Representative’s report to the Security Council, Valentin Inzko noted that since the end of last year “some progress has been made toward our objective of making Bosnia and Herzegovina a ‘peaceful, viable state, irreversibly on course for European integration’.”

He cited the Prud Process, which has facilitated

- agreement on the state budget for 2009,
- the promise to initiate talks on constitutional reform,
- the early fulfilment of remaining objectives and conditions set by the Peace Implementation Council for a transition from OHR to an EU-led presence, including the adoption of a National War-Crimes strategy and limited progress on resolving the issues of state property and defence property, and
- the passage on 26 March of the Brcko constitutional amendment, the first ever amendment to the Dayton Constitution, reached by consensus and constructive debate.

However, set against this, the HR/EUSR said that, “divisive rhetoric and official resolutions challenging the sovereignty, constitutional order and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina all continued.” He said

Republika Srpska leaders “have been in the forefront of attacks on the legitimacy of state institutions – judicial, prosecutorial, policing, economic, intelligence and defence – and in the forefront of efforts to reverse previous state-building and EU-mandated reforms.”

Inzko stressed that his “basic role” as High Representative is “to uphold the Peace Agreement, at the centre of which is the sovereignty of the State and competencies of its institutions.” He said he would “not let these be challenged.”

The HR/EUSR warned that, “this campaign has blocked the passage of state legislation required to complete the EU’s ‘road map’ for the elimination of visas for BiH citizens travelling to EU states, and it has blocked other state legislation that will fulfil Bosnia and Herzegovina’s obligations under the Stabilisation and Association process.”

“Present domestic circumstances make enhanced involvement by the EU and the wider international community essential,” Ambassador Inzko concluded. “The vast majority of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to support Euro-Atlantic integration and the prosperity, security and self-respect it would bring. There *is* progress, though it is slow, and we have reason to believe that the positive *will* win out over the negative. That’s what the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina want, and that is what we must continue to help them to achieve.”

Yesterday, HR/EUSR Inzko met in Washington with senior State Department officials to discuss necessary steps following the joint visit of US Vice-President Joseph Biden and EU High Representative Javier Solana.