

Take the EU Agenda Out of Day-to-Day Politics



Bosnia and Herzegovina can do more than simply survive and subsist: it can succeed and prosper, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, told a joint session of the BiH Parliament today.

He said the successful enactment of the Brcko amendment to the BiH Constitution, in March, showed “the capacity of this Parliament to deliver real and positive change” and he said this achievement “has to be repeated again and again.”

“We must take the EU agenda out of day-to-day politics,” he said, and he suggested changing rules of procedure to expedite consideration of EU laws and formalizing coordination between state and entity parliamentary EU integration committees.

Ambassador Inzko pointed out that the BiH Parliament enacted barely 16 new laws last year, and only seven of these were European Partnership laws.

“I will work with you to advance the Euro-Atlantic integration agenda that already enjoys a massive political and popular consensus,” the HR/EUSR added. “This means that we must put aside the distractions that have brought progress to a standstill in the recent past. As elected representatives you have a duty to build a consensus that will take this country where its people want to go – into Europe.”

Ambassador Inzko stressed that BiH citizens still have to apply for visas when they want to travel to Europe not least because four of the six laws required by the EU as part of the

visa-relaxation process have been rejected by Parliament.

Stressing that “nobody is above the law, nobody is an exception,” Ambassador Inzko said “in this climate, the international presence in the BiH judiciary needs to be maintained during the coming period.”

He called on Parliament to adopt the draft Annex Seven strategy, which, he said, addresses the needs of more than 100,000 citizens who are still displaced. He said he would resist any attempt to re-politicise the civil service and he urged parliament to implement its own law on the electricity sector in order to ensure that the country receives the resulting economic benefits.

Ambassador Inzko said that “deep and widespread poverty” demands a coordinated response, which should include “budgets that no longer favour a privileged minority at the expense of everyone else,” and he warned against the temptation of protectionism, which, he said, “leads in the long run to fewer goods, less choice, and higher prices.”

The primary objective must be more efficient and representative government that can start helping to raise living standards.

Ambassador Inzko said the entire International Community is of one view: that “there is only one ship that will take the citizens and constituent peoples of this country into the EU and NATO – that is a sovereign and united Bosnia and Herzegovina.”