

Nedeljnik: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

Nedeljnik: Out of all High Representatives you have been in BiH the longest; in our opinion, you have been the most successful High Representative too. What has BiH brought to you and what have you brought to BiH during this time? (Frankly, even without your use of the Bonn powers you have accomplished much more than you would have possibly accomplished with their use). How do you explain that, considering that you are not stepping outside your mandate?

Valentin Inzko: Firstly, let me thank you for the kind words. I am a sincere friend of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people. I have had a great fondness for this region, including BiH since the beginning of my diplomatic career in Belgrade in the early 80's.

I always say that BiH has its people as its greatest resource. The people of BiH are what gives me something valuable, a continuing belief in goodness of mankind. Its diversity is something precious in the modern world and it can serve as a role model of neighbourly coexistence, despite the specific horrific wartime events in the 90's.

When it comes to the political situation here, I think that politicians could learn a lot from everyday people. Instead of wasting time talking about division and the past, they should follow the people's lead and talk about how they can work together to build a more successful future for everyone in this country.

Nedeljnik: There are increasingly louder statements coming from Europe proclaiming the death of the multiethnic and multicultural societies. Do you still believe in multicultural and multiethnic community of the three peoples and two Entities in BiH, as you did upon your arrival to this high-ranking position in BiH?

Valentin Inzko: Absolutely yes. Diversity and multiculturalism in BiH had its pitfalls in 90's but it is by no means gone. Good neighbourhood and living together with those who are "different" from us is the essence of life in BiH. To je sudbina Evrope. Pogledajte Vojvodinu u Srbiji, Svajcarsku, Englesku ili modernu Svedsku koja ima ministricu obrazovanja porijeklom iz BiH.

Nedeljnik: Is there a room for this type of BiH in the EU, notwithstanding all the efforts to ensure the candidacy status for BiH, or are those who say that the EU will fall apart before BiH manages to transform itself, via successful integration-oriented policy, into a state that could be a full-fledged member of the Union, actually right in their claims?

Valentin Inzko: Yes, there is a room for BiH in the EU. BiH is personification of what is the essence of EU. The motto of the European Union "United in diversity" is something that fits as a glove to the description of BiH. Europeans, or in this case the people of BiH, have come together to work for peace and prosperity, while at the same time being enriched by the diversity of cultures and traditions.

Nedeljnik: In view of your mandate, which kind of impact have the recent Hague verdicts had on the stability and security in BiH? Has the *ad hoc* Court in the Hague created requirements for the reconciliation, in the opinion of the Peace Implementation Council, in BiH and the West Balkans region?

Valentin Inzko: Democratic and mature societies agree on the essential point of condemning war crimes. There are no "buts" nor "ifs", and no negotiation about this. One respects the rule of law, including international justice, or you do not. It is as simple as that. This was also the case with Nazi war criminals in Germany or my home country Austria.

All those who have consciously chosen to glorify those accused of or sentenced for war crimes, and to relativize war crimes and their victims, have excluded themselves from the civilised world.

Therefore, when it comes to the recent or any judgments passed by the ICTY I call on all authorities in BiH, in line with their responsibility, to refrain from resorting to political posturing and from distorting the importance of the justice served by ICTY. This appeal applies also for the work of any domestic court dealing with war crime cases here in BiH.

Nedeljnik: How do you assess the view of the Serbian Prime Minister concerning the respect of the integrity of BiH and a clear support to the policy personified in Milorad Dodik in the RS?

Valentin Inzko: I believe that PM Vucic and Serbian authorities, as pledged on numerous occasions, will continue to pursue their obligation to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of BiH. He repeatedly sends very clear messages in this regard and I welcome it. As for whom he personally politically supports or not, this is not for me to comment. +

What is important is the fact that the parties to the General Framework Agreement for Peace agreed to fully respect and promote fulfilment of the commitments made in Annex 4 to the GFAP, which includes respect to the final and binding decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH.

Nedeljnik: What do you think of the media initiative of Bakir Izetbegović, Chair of the BiH Presidency, for a review of the case against Serbia for genocide and aggression in the Hague, although this country, like Croatia, is a guarantor of the GFAP and is more and more sincere and effective in terms of implementation of the peace and peace process in BiH, according to the assessments of the PIC in BiH.

Valentin Inzko: I believe that it is important to find the truth as there cannot be no lasting reconciliation without the truth. How the politicians are going to do it is up to them. Twenty years after the war, politicians should be forward looking and focused on the Euro-Atlantic future of BiH.

Nedeljnik: Do you have any information about how far the investigation into the attack on Aleksandar Vučić in Srebrenica has gone and the same about the initiative for removal of the coordinator of security agencies in the Parliament of BiH as the lowest level of responsibility for what happened at Potočari.

Valentin Inzko: No I do not have that information. The right address for this is the judicial and security agencies of BiH.

Regarding the attack on Prime Minister Vucic, which I clearly condemned like the local Bosniac population, I expect the BiH institutions to be proactive in finding and prosecuting the perpetrators.

Nedeljnik: Do you have any information about the investigation of death threats to the High Representative by SNSD-manipulated youth, sent in the form of New Year's "greeting cards"

Valentin Inzko: The case is now with the relevant institutions. Whether it is against me or any other person, death threats are unacceptable and a very serious matter.

I do not mind being the target of criticism and yes everybody has a right to express their views. However, this SNSD-paid exercise went one step further as some of the postcards contained death threats against me and my family. That crosses a line as it would do for any person.

Nedeljnik: Where do you see yourself in five years and BiH in ten years. ?

Valentin Inzko: I hope to see BiH in future as a full member of the EU. As for me, I am already a retired Austrian diplomat hoping to spend more time with my family in my village which would include frequent visits to this wonderful country.