

Politika: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko



By Dimitrije Bukvić

Valentin Inzko: Nobody is objecting to the RS right to have an official “Day of the RS” that is in line with the BiH Constitution. Absolutely not. The issue we are talking about is not about the holiday itself but about respecting the constitutional order of BiH.

I have made my views on the RS referendum clear: it is a rejection of the authority of the BiH Constitutional Court and a challenge to the fundamentals of the Peace Agreement, in particular to the authority of the State-level institutions.

I think that it would be wise for the authorities in the RS, following the session of PIC SBA and after their meeting in Belgrade with the Serbian President and Prime Minister, to act accordingly and not hold the referendum.

Politika: Why would the holding of a referendum in the RS be problematic?

Valentin Inzko: All the events surrounding the announced referendum brought the country into another unnecessary standstill – everything is on hold, including so many needed reforms.

Just a few months ago, the country made an historic move – submitted its application for membership in the EU and began

the reforms necessary move the country in that direction.

Now we need to shake off this referendum frenzy, focus on what is really important and get the country back on the track it chose a few months ago.

The Dayton Peace Agreement and the BiH Constitution are not an *a la carte* menu from which one can pick the parts they like and ignore the parts they don't in order to suit their current political agenda. Decisions of the Constitutional Court are final and binding.

As in any democratic country governed by the rule of law, the authorities are obliged to implement the court's decisions. One may like them or not, but they must be implemented. I called upon the RS authorities to respect the Peace Agreement and seek a resolution to this issue in accordance with the law, and I would like to use this opportunity to do that again.

Politika: Did you ask Belgrade authorities, as the guarantors of the DPA, to point this out to Banja Luka?

Valentin Inzko: When it comes to Belgrade, naturally, I have discreetly used the channels available to me.

Politika: Your views on the PIC's recommendations regarding the referendum?

Valentin Inzko: I welcome the fact that the PIC SB Ambassadors urged the RS authorities not to hold the referendum and encouraged the institutions of BiH to resolve the issue through the established legal processes, existing constitutional framework and dialogue.

They have also unanimously concluded that the referendum would be a violation of the Dayton Agreement. The only diverging view was expressed by Russia.

Politika: To what extent is Russia's representative's

dissenting view affecting the present situation?

Valentin Inzko: There is no value in speculating on which country would or would not support the use of the Bonn Powers, which are still available. The Russian Federation appears to have made its stance clear, however, through public statements by the Russian Ambassador.

Others have made no statements on this matter. Of course, I would have preferred that the Russian Federation support the statement of the PIC Steering Board, but sometimes it not possible to reach consensus on all issues. No family is always united.

What is important is that the international community, including Russia, shares the same goal when it comes to BiH: to see this country become stable and prosperous and able to function on its own.

Politika: If the RS and Milorad Dodik continue insisting on holding the referendum, how could this affect BiH and the region?

Valentin Inzko: Dodik is playing with fire. This would be very serious, and could help destabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BiH's regional neighbours are aware of this, as well as the wider International Community. It is time to de-escalate the situation and return to the legal processes and an atmosphere of constructive dialogue.

The way forward is quite simple: respect the constitutional framework of the country and its institutions.

I hope that countries with common or similar languages will one day use this remarkable advantage and pick up their pace towards the future.

Otherwise the citizens will be the ones to pick up the pace, and many of them are already leaving. Who would like to live

in a country with conflicts and slow progress, while possessing the same amount of potential as a diamond mine? Let us use these diamonds, those great talents of our beautiful and rich European southeast.