

A Helping Hand Towards More Jobs and Higher Living Standards



The scale of job losses and the decline in living standards experienced in 2009 represent the most serious and pressing challenge facing Bosnia and Herzegovina, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko said today.

This crisis “must be faced with a bold heart,” the HR/EUSR said, “and until now, at least among the responsible leadership, that bold heart has been absent.”

The HR/EUSR was speaking at the launch of the annual “White Book” of proposals by the Foreign Investors’ Council designed to improve the BiH business environment.

“The White Book not only identifies the impediments that are making it impossible to end poverty and boost living standards,” the HR/EUSR said. “It recommends steps that can be taken to eliminate these impediments.”

He called on the BiH media to publicise the White Book’s recommendations “with the same detail and drama they bring to coverage of political and constitutional proposals.”

The HR/EUSR called on BiH political leaders and parliamentarians to implement the “detailed blueprint for prosperity” that has already been agreed. He said the European Partnership and the Stabilisation and Association Process “lay out – step by step – the path towards more jobs and higher living standards,” and that “the BiH political establishment

needs help to move along that path.”

“Key reforms have now been delayed – and delayed without any good reason – for years,” he said, again calling for the enactment of the Law on Obligations, the modernization of the banking supervision system and the establishment of a Social and Economic Council.

“These are among the key steps to consolidating the single market that is required by the BiH Constitution and by the European integration process,” he said. “The failure to take these steps in 2009 directly contributed to the hardship that now afflicts hundreds of thousands of BiH families.”

Noting that “those who have invested in Bosnia and Herzegovina are part of the broader community of people who wish this country well, people who believe in the future of this country, people who know that it can succeed, that it can develop – and develop quickly – into a prosperous democracy able to take its place in the European Union,” the HR/EUSR said that “many BiH political leaders have not been able to develop the same confidence in the country’s people and prospects.”

He said that “these politicians need a helping hand” and that the International Community is striving to lend that helping hand.

“Investors have a right to speak and a right to be heard. They have earned that right by demonstrating faith in Bosnia and Herzegovina, investing millions and creating jobs,” he said, adding that the White Book proposals represent a helping hand “that can help end the misery of unemployment and poverty in this country.”

The full text of the HR/EUSR’s speech can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.eu