

# BiH citizens the real casualties of political deadlock



BiH citizens are the real casualties of political deadlock, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko told a meeting of the European Union's Political and Security Committee in Brussels today.

Six months after the election there is still no prospect of a state government being formed and many state institutions, particularly those dealing with the rule of law, are coming under political pressure. "BiH needs functioning authorities at all levels," the HR/EUSR said. "The European integration process has come to a complete halt and the economy has continued to suffer."

The HR/EUSR said the International Community and the European Union must ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not slide into deeper crisis.

"It would be a mistake to view the latest developments in the Federation and in the Republika Srpska as a short-term problem," he said. "We have been on a downward trend for five years. We must focus on immediate difficulties, but we must also take a critical look at what we need to do in order to consolidate a functional and viable democracy over the long term."

He stressed that progress is possible, and welcomed the fact that the European Union has developed customised tools so

that the new reinforced EU presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina can act effectively to help BiH stakeholders to get out of the present impasse and make real progress in the near and medium term.

“I warmly welcome the preparations that are currently being made for the reinforcement of the EU’s presence and policies,” the HR/EUSR said. “I will give my full support to the future new EU Head of Delegation. It is clear that Bosnia and Herzegovina simply cannot afford four more years of stagnation and internal disagreement. We have to find a way forward.”

The HR/EUSR said that, “for clear historical and geopolitical reasons Bosnia and Herzegovina presents very specific challenges; it has been and continues to be faced with serious, though not intractable, problems. I am confident that the plans that have been agreed by the EU member states are taking us in the right direction.”

Among other things, the HR/EUSR emphasised that maintaining EUFOR’s presence with an executive mandate remains an essential element in peace implementation.