

Continued and even stronger international community engagement needed in BiH



Peace is more than just an absence of war, the High Representative Valentin Inzko told participants at a conference on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina held yesterday at the Oxford University. He said the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina want more from their country and their politicians and will no longer accept a government “on autopilot.”

The High Representative stated that “securing lasting peace, stability and a level of prosperity that will enable citizens to live with dignity” requires a fundamental political change, adding that leaders need to stop living in the past and instead start “looking decisively towards the future.”

Noting that “proactive engagement by the international community, working closely with elected politicians, led to remarkable progress in the first ten years after Dayton,” the High Representative said there was an opportunity to return to this proactive approach. He said that positive change can be delivered if leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina are obliged to fulfil the commitments they have made. He further added that the international community “should be ready to be more prescriptive about the reforms that are needed to take the country forward.”

Progress is urgently required, he said, to support the judicial system in order to revive the fight against corruption and to eliminate the constitutional anomalies in the electoral system. “We as the international community should not have a double standard: we need to insist more forcefully that the European values we consider vital to our own democracies are maintained in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

The High Representative suggested that harmonizing the municipal and general election cycles might raise voter turnout and increase stability. He also suggested that a more progressive approach in education policies could reduce communal divisions in future generations, and proposed the introduction of an Erasmus program within Bosnia and Herzegovina and between the countries of the Western Balkans.

Finally, the High Representative paid tribute to “the unwavering commitment and impressive contribution that the United Kingdom has made and continues to make to peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.”

[Click here for the full text of the High Representative's speech.](#)