

HR Inzko: BiH continues to discriminate against its citizens



“For almost a decade, Bosnia and Herzegovina has failed to take an important step towards eliminating discrimination of its citizens and providing equal rights to all of them. On 22 December 2018, the country will enter the tenth year in which a significant number of citizens that do not declare as belonging to constituent peoples have not been able to exercise the fundamental right to stand for election to the BiH Presidency and the BiH House of Peoples.

Yet another general election has passed and these groups were once again discriminated against. Another year has passed in which the BiH authorities did not implement the European Court of Human Rights’ (ECtHR) rulings in the Sejci-Finci v. BiH and related cases,” the High Representative Valentin Inzko stated today.

He recalled that on 22 December 2009, the ECtHR ordered BiH to take all necessary steps for the full execution of that judgment by adopting necessary measures aimed at eliminating discrimination against those who are not affiliated with a constituent people in standing for election to the House of Peoples and the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to bring its constitution and electoral legislation in conformity with the ECHR without further delay. Since then the ECtHR adopted additional Judgements in the Zornic, Pilav and Slaku

cases where it ordered BiH to amend its constitution and electoral legislation to eliminate discrimination against its citizens based on ethnicity and residence-based restrictions. These rulings remind BiH of its obligation to make sure that every citizen enjoys the same rights when it comes to participation in public and political life, without any form of discrimination.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina aspires to become a member of the European Union. Its leaders claim to have a high regard for European standards and values. Yet, year after year, they treat some citizens as less equal than others. This discrimination must come to an end. I call upon the authorities of BiH to implement their obligation to bring the country’s Constitution and its electoral arrangements in line with the ECtHR ruling and the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols. These are your citizens that I am talking about – it is time to do the right thing, without any more excuses or delays,” the High Representative stated.