

International Community Ready to Support Reforms Proactively



Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken some positive steps towards Euro-Atlantic integration, but “the pace of real reform remains somewhat slow,” High Representative Valentin Inzko told the Security Council in New York today after presenting his biannual report on the implementation of the peace agreement.

The High Representative noted positively that the BiH authorities have completed their initial 20.000 pages responses to the European Commission’s Questionnaire, part of the EU accession process, and that the Parliamentary Assembly has adopted fiscal legislation that unlocked funding from the International Monetary Fund. However, he also briefed on the overall negative political climate, in which “many of the most prominent elected officials remain disproportionately focused on divisive issues.”

The High Representative warned that irresponsible and inflammatory rhetoric challenging the fundamentals of the Dayton Peace Agreement has increased in the last six months, as some officials in Republika Srpska have continued to deny the statehood of Bosnia and Herzegovina, some Croat officials have mused about the dissolution of the state, and some Bosniak politicians have shown a readiness to refer to the possibility of a renewed conflict.

The High Representative reiterated the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina “is a single multiethnic sovereign state consisting of two Entities, in which all citizens – the three constituent peoples and Others – live and work together, and elected officials above all have a responsibility to contribute to peace and reconciliation.”

He also stressed the urgent need for parties in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to agree on and adopt rules for indirect elections to the Federation House of Peoples. Otherwise the formation of authorities throughout the country after the elections could prove difficult. Reminding the Security Council that the citizens of Mostar continue to be deprived of their basic democratic right to elect local representatives, the High Representative encouraged the parties in Mostar to build on a recent domestic initiative and reach a solution.

Speaking about the rule of law and the fight against corruption, High Representative Inzko talked about a trend of some prominent elected officials ignoring or rejecting final and binding decisions of courts.

He emphasized in particular the current risks to the fight against corruption if the BiH Parliamentary Assembly does not adopt amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code in line with international standards as soon as possible. On this issue, it is telling that some politicians seem focused on taking away the state judiciary’s capacity to investigate, indict and convict corrupt politicians.

The High Representative said a change in the way politics is conducted in Bosnia and Herzegovina “must come from the politicians themselves, but we as an international community have an interest in encouraging this change. We need to maintain all the tools at our disposal to prevent any further deterioration of the situation and we should be ready to be more prescriptive about the reforms that are needed.”

[Click here for the full text of the High Representative's remarks at the UN Security Council.](#)