

Xinhua: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko



by Han Jianjun

SARAJEVO, April 14 (Xinhua) – Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) parties needed to show political will to develop the country, said Valentin Inzko, the High Representative for BiH, here on Thursday.

During an interview with Xinhua, Inzko noted local politicians needed to show “political will” for all levels of governments to function well in the Balkan state with a complex political structure.

Under the Dayton Agreement in 1995, BiH is made up of two autonomous entities, the Republika Srpska, with a predominately Serbian population, and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with mostly Bosniaks and Croats.

“The issue is that if you have a lot of political will, you can manage everything well even with 14 different levels of governments in BiH,” said Inzko.

Those blockage mechanisms based on the Dayton Agreement were introduced to protect different nationality groups and vital national interests, he explained, adding those mechanisms sometimes were unfortunately abused to “block” normal functions in BiH.

Huge progress was made in BiH after the 1990s war, he said.

BiH now has an efficient border police force, a unified taxation authority, and a common electricity transportation network, he added.

Inzko, however, said the Office of the High Representative (OHR) role was partly changed in the last 10 years and has reduced interventions in BiH politics.

"We now prefer local solutions. The new approach is local responsibility, local accountability. Of course, OHR is still around," he said.

He admitted things "move slowly" in BiH, including reforms and economic development.

Inzko said one emphasis in his report in May to the UN Security Council will be sovereignty and integrity of BiH. The OHR is obligated to report to the Security Council every six months.

He said it was a good move for BiH to submit an application to join the European Union (EU).

"The OHR fully supports BiH to join the EU," said Inzko, adding candidate status of EU membership "is good for transition and changes in BiH" although a full EU membership will need years of hard work.

The BiH economy showed some signs of stability last year, such as an increase of trade and industry production, but there were still serious problems such as high unemployment, especially among young people.

Foreign investments are welcome, he said, citing a new power plant in Stanari as a good example.

The 300-megawatt power plant in northern BiH, which was constructed by China's Dongfang Electric Corporation, is expected to operate commercially from mid 2016.