

Investment, Jobs and Higher Living Standards Depend on Return to Normal Politics



Boosting investment, creating more jobs and raising living standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina all depend on persuading the country's leaders to step back from the poisonous rhetoric of the recent past and return to normal politics, the Principal Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian, told a meeting of businesspeople in Sarajevo today.

"As long as the parliaments are unable to enact and implement the reform programme that has already been prepared, Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be able to attract and retain the investment needed to create jobs and lift the country out of poverty," Dr Gregorian told a meeting of the BiH Foreign Trade Chamber. "The bottom line is that deadlock over police reform and two or three other key reforms is keeping the people of this country poor. The absence of normal politics is driving away investment, destroying jobs, hindering trade, and keeping living standards low."

The Principal Deputy High Representative said there was "a misplaced belief among many politicians that economic reforms can be put on hold until other issues have been resolved," and he cautioned that "the present crisis of poverty and unemployment cannot be allowed to continue indefinitely. It must be tackled and tackled now." He called on the BiH business community to lobby the country's leaders to focus on urgent economic issues.

Among economic priorities he cited consolidation of the Single Economic Space, improvement of fiscal coordination by establishing a National Fiscal Council; the setting up of a

BiH Economic and Social Council; modernisation of banking supervision and the commercial code; and the rationalisation of public sector wages.

“All of the preparatory work has already been done on these issues, but everything has been held up because the politicians want to maintain the status quo as long as possible.” he said.

Dr Gregorian concluded his remarks by pointing out that “We have to make progress on police reform and constitutional reform and other essentially political issues – but we cannot simply let the people stay poor while we do that.”

The [full, text](#) of the Principal Deputy High Representative’s speech can be found at www.ohr.int.