

Inzko: Elections Are an Opportunity for the EU Integration Process



The general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina this year must be seen as an opportunity and not a threat for the EU integration process, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko told a delegation of EU parliamentarians in Sarajevo today. "To achieve this, political parties need to focus their campaign on the EU agenda instead of re-engaging in the nationalist rhetoric of the past few years".

Meeting with five MEPs from the Alliance of Liberal Democrats (ALDE), Inzko said that the political atmosphere in BiH had been deteriorating steadily since 2006. In addition, the challenges to the Dayton Peace Accords have increased over the last six months.

The immediate priority is to move forward the visa liberalization agenda. "BiH will, of course, get the visa liberation when the criteria set by the EU will be entirely fulfilled. If the politicians in BiH would have done a good job so far, the people would have been able to freely by now".

Another important task is the need to act in line with the recent ruling by the European Court of Human Rights and remove a series of discriminatory provisions from the BiH Constitution.

Thanking the EU parliamentarians for their visit, the HR/EUSR stressed that an increased engagement of representatives of EU institutions with political parties and civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the coming months would be a welcome addition to the public debate on the European Union ahead of the general elections planned for October.

The ALDE delegation consisted of Sarah Ludford (United Kingdom), Jelko Kacin (Slovenia), Marietje Schaake (Netherlands), Ivo Vajgl (Slovenia) i Kristiina Ojuland (Estonia).