

Inzko: Fresh Political Thinking in BiH



Bosnia and Herzegovina needs fresh political thinking that will let it make the most of opportunities opening up throughout the region, the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, said today.

“It is clear that there is now a new political and economic reality in the Western Balkans,” he told Circle 99 in Sarajevo. “It is high time that Bosnia and Herzegovina arrives at a *modus vivendi* that will allow this country to take advantage of that.”

He cited the experience of Singapore and Ireland, noting that Singapore has no natural resources and Ireland is further removed from its export markets than Bosnia and Herzegovina yet. Both countries managed to accommodate competing aspirations of distinct communities and achieved prosperity at the same time.

“They understood that by increasing administrative efficiency, by attracting investment and creating jobs, they could create more promising circumstances for a political settlement. Bosnia and Herzegovina has the geographical position and the resources that could make it enormously competitive. What it doesn’t yet have is a political and administrative culture that is capable of exploiting that. It’s time to unleash the huge potential of this country!”

Inzko repeated his call for the European integration agenda to

be taken out of day-to-day political manoeuvring. "We must focus on getting agreements on key laws that deliver the benefits of closer EU integration," he said. "We must stop holding these laws hostage to larger political strategies."

He called again for the BiH Parliament to speed up the consideration of EU laws, and to improve coordination between the state and entity parliamentary EU integration committees.

"This is first and foremost a question of parliamentary management," he said, "of finding a more efficient way to ensure the thorough and constructive discussion of legislation and the swift passage of the laws this country needs."

"I call for consensus because consensus works," he said. "It has been achieved in societies that have faced challenges as big as those being faced by Bosnia and Herzegovina. I call for common sense because BiH citizens will benefit more from common sense than from divisive rhetoric. It's common sense to make the necessary arrangements for MPs to consider EU-integration laws thoroughly and swiftly."

The HR/EUSR concluded by noting that a majority of citizens believe in doing what is right. "That's the real majority in Bosnia and Herzegovina – not an ethnic majority but a majority of those who want to live in a free and prosperous country that's part of the European Union. I am on the side of the majority – and I believe the majority will prevail."