

Inzko: Time to reconsider our approach in BiH



Bosnia and Herzegovina needs a “tailored and targeted strategy” of the international community to address the unique challenges of the country’s recent history and ensure that it becomes a successful candidate for EU membership, High Representative Valentin Inzko told a meeting of parliamentarians from EU member states in Dublin today.

“BiH is a country whose people want to join the European Union but whose leaders are much more ambivalent. The views of the people and the views of the leadership have diverged. And that’s what makes it a special case. A successful enlargement policy has to take this divergence into account”, Inzko said.

Welcoming the frank assessment of the situation in BiH by EU Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fuele and Irish Minister of State for European Affairs Lucinda Creighton at the European Parliament debate on BiH on 22 May, the High Representative argued that a “recalibration” of the approach of the international community was necessary to achieve progress.

“The EU’s breakthrough in the Serbia-Kosovo dispute has rightly been attributed to the decisive political engagement of High Representative Catherine Ashton. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, success can be achieved only through a creative and stronger political engagement, with clear conditions and benefits based on European values – the values that are fully understood by the people of BiH if not yet fully understood by

their leaders”, Inzko said, recalling that thousands of citizens had come out onto the streets of Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent weeks to express their frustration at the absence of competent, honest and effective government.

“What is abundantly clear to me, after four years in the job, is that Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot integrate into the EU if mainstream politicians inside the country are seeking to drive it toward disintegration”, The High Representative said. “When rethinking our strategy, we should consider pushing change more forcefully, while still maintaining the central role of the institutions of the European Union in the country.”

“The region is moving and we have the best regional situation in the last 20 years – a unique chance for regional cooperation but also for regional reconciliation”, Inzko concluded.

The High Representative was speaking at a Conference of Parliamentary Committees for European Union Affairs, which brought together MPs from all 27 EU member states on 23-25 June 2013 in Dublin.

The full text of the High Representative’s speech can be accessed [here](#).