

Klix.ba: Inzko – I retain the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP

It is mostly claimed that BiH cannot be a functional state because of its complicated constitutional order which has been developed by a ramified system of administration at all levels of government. What are the areas that need constitutional changes and to which extent would it be possible to implement them, considering the current political structure of the State and the Entities?

The immediate priority is not constitutional change. The immediate priority is to make progress on the reform agenda that has been adopted by the State and Entity authorities. The foreseen reforms at this point can be done without changing the Constitution. Let us start here, make some decent progress, which in turn could lead the country to send a credible membership application to the EU. A track record of reaching healthy compromises will do much to strengthen a sense of optimism and trust which is essential if this country is to really move forward on the Euro Atlantic path. To do this we will need politicians who have the strength to discuss and to reach solid compromises. This is the mark of a real statesman and a real political leader. Everything else is hot air and the continued departure of the brightest and the best in this country. Clearly the current approach to politics is not working as citizens are voting with their feet by leaving and this has to stop.

Future constitutional changes will be a result of a domestic dialogue and healthy compromise and will fully respect the established procedures as laid out in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This was the case for the only amendment adopted to the BiH Constitution so far, an amendment

concerning the Brcko District. For those of your readers who don't know this, the agreement on this constitutional amendment was facilitated by the OHR back in 2009.

Are the interests of some more important subjects within international relations, such as the interests of the world's great powers, colliding in BiH? Is BiH a vital national interest of the international community since it is a rare case where the international community has succeeded in securing lasting peace that has not escalated into new conflicts?

The international community in BiH has one common goal only: to ensure lasting stability in the country and to help its citizens live in dignity. Of course, sometimes different countries have different views on how to move forward, but we never lose sight of our common goal.

It is obvious that the international community is committed to this country and its progress. Since the adoption of the reform agenda by the State and Entity governments, international community wishes to see concrete results. The adoption of the FBiH Labor Law is a good example, but far from enough.

The International Community is ready to support the reform agenda but we cannot do the job of the politicians, elected by the citizens. Our common vision remains a re-integrated, functional and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina, a state which works in the interests of its citizens and is a fully integrated member of the European family.

President of the Republika Srpska Entity Milorad Dodik announced a referendum on the judiciary. He also pointed out that he thought that a referendum should also be called in Republika Srpska about the powers of the High Representative. What are the chances for these referenda to be called in the Republika Srpska Entity and are there any mechanisms on the

part of the International Community to prevent something like this? Is the International Community, in this case too, trying to avoid removals of BiH politicians?

The announced RS referendum is an extremely serious matter. If it goes ahead, this is an initiative which threatens to destabilizing the country to the detriment of all and at a time when all energy needs to be focused on the reform agenda. The Republika Srpska has a right to hold a referendum – but only about issues that are in its competencies. This is clearly not the case with the proposed referendum, which represents a clear violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement because it addresses issues that fall outside the competencies of the Republika Srpska.

There is absolutely no doubt that the RS National Assembly adopted a decision that goes beyond its competencies despite being clearly warned in advance by the International Community not to do so. Voting against essential parts of the General Framework Agreement for Peace is irresponsible to say the least and can cause serious consequences. I retain the necessary instruments to uphold the GFAP.

The referendum needs to be put aside and instead of wasting time and energy on an unconstitutional initiative that will lead to no changes, those politicians who initiated it should instead focus on the real needs of the BiH citizens whose views they claim to represent. The real needs are about improving the socio-economic situation, with a focus on creating job opportunities.

There are other avenues for those who are genuinely interested in improving the judiciary and there is space. Improvements to and strengthening of the judiciary at all levels is absolutely possible through competent institutions. What we cannot have is judicial institutions especially those that have a key role to play in the fight against corruption being weakened. This wouldn't be supported by either the International Community or

the public who want to see corrupt officials convicted.

How do you comment on the relations with BiH neighbours?

Over the years there has been a steady improvement in relations with all three of Bosnia and Herzegovina's neighbours, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro. This is exactly as it should be. Bosnia and Herzegovina must be respected like any other country. There will of course be ups and downs, but what is important is that the trend is positive and that the relations with all three countries become ever more concrete and practical. So far example, it would be welcome to see all three countries ratifying border treaties with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It appears that progress on this front could soon be made with Montenegro, which I very much welcome. I also hope that we will finally see the long announced joint government session of the executive authorities of Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Also, the Vienna conference next week is about this issue.

The bottom line is that regional cooperation is a win-win situation for all concerned. Eventually we will see all the countries of the region working and living as one within the framework of the European Union. This is what we need to accelerate and that requires the delivery of reforms.

Regions will pull together. To be a Serb in Bijeljina or Serbia, or a Croat in Herzegovina or in Dalmatia will be less important as these will be all regions under the European umbrella.

Strained political rhetoric, announcement of a referendum, attack on the Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić, attacks based on religious hatred, terrorist attacks... Should BiH citizens be afraid of new conflicts?

No, citizens should certainly not live in fear, but they should also not be passive and accept the negative atmosphere

that some seem intent on fueling. Now is the time for citizens to become active agents of positive change in their communities. Citizens must realize that democracy does not end at the closing of election polls on Election Day. They have to demand from the politicians to fulfill their promises. They also need to be far more vocal in saying no to the politics of conflict and division that have brought us to this point. Show you are a human being, stand up for the rights of your friends and neighbors if they are being harassed.

Everyone is entitled to live with dignity and without a sense of fear. So let me also take this opportunity to appeal directly to citizens to show solidarity with each other and to root out and hold to account the very few people in this country who perpetrate ethnically motivated attacks. Every local community, every law enforcement agency has a role to play here in stamping this out. My praise goes out to those public figures who have spoken out against the recent attacks.

Institutions at all levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina also have a direct responsibility to nurture a climate of tolerance that enables people to live freely and without fear in every corner of this country regardless of their name, religion or any other affiliation. Perpetrators need to be brought to justice.

Having said that, I am an optimist when it comes to the future of BiH. This country has so many resources, both human and natural and they offer the potential for real progress. Progress won't happen by itself, but it will if people get engaged in the way we have seen at the National Museum or the phenomenal youth basketball team. So let's not give up hope, let us instead pull together, roll up our sleeves and get this country moving forwards, to fully utilise its vast potential, both in natural resources, as well as its hardworking and resourceful people.