

Klix: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

By Ervin Mušinović

Klix.ba: We have witnessed rising of tensions in recent days. The reason for that is the verdict to the war criminal Radovan Karadzic and Chetnik *Vojvoda* Vojislav Seselj. Seselj announced that he will come to BiH? What is your opinion on this and what does this say to the BiH citizens?

Valentin Inzko: Yes, there have been some tensions following the recent ICTY verdicts. Despite this, the process of ensuring justice for the crimes that were committed during the war is one which the country must go through.

One thing is certain: without truth and justice healing and reconciliation is impossible to achieve. To reach it should be our ultimate goal, so the families of the victims can find peace and future generations can know that peace has no alternative.

After some heated statements and reactions, we have seen encouraging messages coming from Mostar where regional leaders met this week. They have realized that the politics of confrontation brings no good to anyone and I applaud them for that. We need to see more of that: a strong commitment to peace, to good neighbourly relations and improved cooperation.

Provocateurs still exist, we know that, but with one important difference, today Bosnia and Herzegovina is strong enough to deal with this. Institutions have been put in place to uphold the law and I have full confidence in them.

Klix.ba: Recently, you had a meeting with the president of the entity of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik. What are your experiences, are there changes in Dodik's politics in sight?

Valentin Inzko: I cannot speculate whether Mr. Dodik or any other politician will decide to change their policies. The proof of positive change is that they actively contribute to achieving concrete progress and that they fully respect the Peace Agreement at all times. This is what I want to see more of from all politicians including Milorad Dodik. And I think this change has to come, because voters are also tired of hearing politicians misuse the divisions of the past to hide their failure to build a better life for people. People want leaders who will articulate a vision of society that is better than the one where they live now, where young people have any opportunity to achieve their goals and aspirations in life.

Klix.ba: You are aware of the fact that a student dormitory in RS was named after Radovan Karadzic. Are you planning to do something about this and what is your general comment when an institution is named after war criminals?

Valentin Inzko: I am very disappointed with the fact that there are still some people who choose to glorify war criminals and cover up the truth. That is not the way forward. This sends completely the wrong message to the public and is an act of anti-leadership. Can you imagine a situation where a student dormitory in Austria would be named after, let's say Heinrich Himmler? One's first reaction to such news would be that it is outrageous. And it would be. This is completely outrageous and unacceptable. To relativize evil is also an evil act. Instead of focusing on the future, some are trying to lock current and future generations into the darkest chapters of this country's history. In so doing they are putting themselves outside of the civilized world.

Klix.ba: Elections are coming and the issue of Mostar is not resolved yet. What can we expect?

Valentin Inzko: I know what Mostarians expect and they are right to do so: they expect to cast their ballots at the same time as other citizens of their country in this year's local

elections. It is up to the political leaders to ensure that an agreement is finally reached that implements the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling and enables voters to elect their local representatives in October.

Our message is clear: the international community will not support the division of Mostar .

As the PIC Steering Board has repeatedly made clear, Mostar must remain a single, coherent, multi-ethnic unit of local self-government, with some level of local authority/administration below that of the city.

SDA, HDZBiH and all other political parties involved in the effort to implement the Court's ruling must finally meet this obligation. They must now intensify their dialogue and adopt the necessary legislative changes.

The BiH Central Election Commission is to announce local elections soon and I want to believe that a solution will be found that will finally enable citizens of Mostar to elect their local representatives.

Klix.ba: You follow the work of BiH authorities? How would you assess it?

Valentin Inzko: There has been progress, but we need to see an acceleration in the delivery of reforms, as much remains to be done, at all levels. BiH needs changes that enable new investment and job creation. The European vision is a common one for the country and all its citizens, and an opportunity that the country must take.