

# Leader Must Tackle Crisis Before October: Inzko



The political forces that are pulling in different directions in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not, for the most part, apply principles that are the foundation of the European Union and that they claim to share, the EU Special Representative and High Representative, Valentin Inzko, told a meeting of the European Union's Political and Security Committee in Brussels today.

We will only get the country out of its present political and economic crisis and back onto the road to Europe if we stand by our own principles and offer policies based on these principles as an alternative to the present political deadlock, the HR/EUSR said.

Noting that EU High Representative Catherine Ashton's visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina two weeks ago had "energised the forces that are working actively for the country's Euro-Atlantic integration," the HR/EUSR stressed that Baroness Ashton had reiterated that Bosnia and Herzegovina's future is inside the European Union, that it will achieve this objective as one country, and that the European Union will help, practically and politically, every step of the way.

He said the political situation remains difficult, but "with judicious and energetic engagement I believe it will be possible to moderate the ill effects of negative election rhetoric."

He said the country "cannot afford to lose another year, and

we in the International Community must do everything possible to prevent the election campaign being used as an excuse to delay key reforms.”

The HR/EUSR welcomed the decision by the European Union’s Foreign Affairs’ Council on 25 January to continue the executive European military presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which he said fulfilled a practical need and sent a message of positive reassurance to citizens.

The Political and Security Committee is a permanent body of the European Union, composed of representatives of all 27 EU member states. It plays a central part in defining the European Union’s foreign and security policy.