

No Political Stability Without Sensible Economic Steps



In the midst of “an intense and crucial exercise to recalibrate Bosnia and Herzegovina’s relationship with the international community”, it is imperative that “the economy is not simply put on the back burner,” the High Representative and EU Special Representative, Valentin Inzko, told a conference of BiH and Slovenian employers today.

“Our aim is to normalize this country’s status so that it can proceed on its way towards full Euro-Atlantic integration as a sovereign and stable democracy,” the HR/EUSR said, but he stressed that “these discussions do not take place in a vacuum.”

“As we search for a settlement that will protect the interests and satisfy the aspirations of all citizens, these same citizens are going about their lives. They are working – or in tens of thousands of cases – they are looking for work; they are studying and running businesses and homes. They are trying to get by,” the HR/EUSR said.

He stressed that efforts to improve the BiH business environment, to attract investment, to create jobs and to raise living standards cannot simply be put on hold until a political settlement is reached. “You cannot build democracy on an empty stomach: economic development and political

development have to go hand in hand.”

The HR/EUSR repeated his call for the ruling parties to “fulfill commitments they have made through the European integration process and radically improve the business environment by enacting a state Law on Obligations and modernizing the banking supervision system.”

He also called on the relevant ministries and agencies to improve the service that BiH embassies are able to offer prospective investors in this country.

“The reason I am calling for these things to be done is straightforward – they will help channel more money into job creation,” he said.

The HR/EUSR called on the members of the BiH Employers’ Association, co-organiser of the conference being held today and tomorrow in Sarajevo, “to exert pressure on the authorities to take these sensible steps, because if you don’t they won’t.”

He concluded by saying that “if the politicians fulfill their basic commitments, they can help employers to bring the people of this country the prosperity that has been denied them for much too long.”

The full text of the HE/EUSR’s speech can be accessed at www.ohr.int and www.eusrbih.eu