

# Opening of Ferhadija Mosque Vital for Reconciliation and Tolerance in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Beyond

High Representative Valentin Inzko will be in Banja Luka today and tomorrow, May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, to attend the ceremonial opening of the Ferhadija mosque.

“Tomorrow, the splendid Ferhadija mosque in Banja Luka, demolished in the war together with 15 other mosques in the city, will be reopened. This will be an event of wider significance for reconciliation and tolerance in the region and beyond, a very special moment not only for Banja Luka but for humankind as a whole,” The High Representative said.

During his visit, High Representative Inzko will also meet with Banja Luka Mufti Osman Kozlic and Bishop Franjo Komarica. During these meetings he will reinforce the importance of the reconciliation and return process. He will emphasize that refugees and displaced persons must be permitted to return in safety, without risk of harassment, intimidation, persecution, or discrimination.

Practically, this means providing jobs, education and healthcare in order to facilitate return. Equally important are dialogue and a better understanding among communities of promoting the concepts of tolerance and reconciliation. The religious communities should be at the forefront of this effort, the High Representative believes.

During his stay in Banja Luka the High Representative will also celebrate the Orthodox holiday St. George (Djurdjevdan) by joining a family in Banja Luka in their celebratory

activities.