

Oslobodjenje: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko

By: Vildana Selimbegović

Their sacrifice reminds us of our responsibility, said High Representative Valentin Inzko said yesterday, at the ceremony held at Prokosko Lake to commemorate the twelve OHR and UN officials who lost their lives in a helicopter crash 20 years ago.

The commemoration at Prokosko Lake was also attended by family members of the killed officials, FBiH President Marinko Čavara, and numerous ambassadors, including Maureen Cormack, Ambassador of the United States in our country.

Speaking about those who lost their lives, Inzko also said: "From different countries and different backgrounds, they came to contribute to peace. Twenty years later, an entire generation has grown to maturity. The peace that seemed so tenuous in 1997 has held now for more than two decades."

"For those of us in the international community still working to support the country on its path to prosperity and security, their sacrifice reminds us of the responsibility to do everything we can to carry their contribution forward," he stressed.

It is more than clear that the international officials in Bosnia-Herzegovina are more and more concerned about the situation in the country: instead of a joint engagement on the Euro-Atlantic road of BiH, local political elites are joined in starting election campaign a whole year earlier. The situation in the judiciary – which the local and international public lays all hope in – flared up again with severe accusations, which is only one of the reasons for our talk with the High Representative.

The public disputes between state officials and judicial authorities are very loud: the Council of Ministers was forced to defend security agencies in BiH – OSA and SIPA – after inelegant statements and accusations of Acting Chief Prosecutor Gordana Tadić and HJPC Vice President Ružica Jukić. What is your comment?

The authorities and institutions in BiH dealing with justice and security should get back to work. They should be doing more to address crime and corruption, in the relevant institutions, and to uphold the rule of law. This is what people expect of them. The constant media attacks need to stop. Those who lower themselves to this level are only damaging their own reputations and further diminishing public trust in the justice system.

We have also seen numerous public statements challenging the Central Bank of BiH, also an important state institution.

This is rhetoric designed to provoke controversy. The legal basis of the BiH Central Bank is clear. The Dayton Peace Agreement provides explicitly for its establishment as the sole authority for issuing currency and for monetary policy throughout BiH. The *Law on the BiH Central Bank* additionally affirms that the BiH Central Bank “shall be entirely independent from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska, any public agency and any other authority, within the limits of its authority established by the law”.

The Law also regulates allocation of the BiH Central Bank net profits, including to the budget of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nevertheless, the OHR and the rest of the International Community will closely follow the situation and continue fully and strongly supporting the BIH Central Bank, as an independent and successful institution, including when the bank marks its 20 anniversary at the end of this month. I would like to stress that the BiH Central Bank is one of the biggest success stories in post-war BiH and the cornerstone of

monetary stability.

And have you been following the controversy surrounding the KCUS?

– The OHR supports the reform of public services, including the health care sector, to make them more effective and efficient, and above all more friendly to its customers, the patients. At the same time, reforms need to be addressed with care, sensitivity and sufficient communication between management and staff. A lot of things come down to the culture of dialogue – in this sector as well in others.

Although I am neither a medical professional nor a hospital manager, let me remind of the Hippocratic Oath *“I pledge that I will dedicate my life to the service of humanity. I will exercise my profession conscientiously and with dignity. I will maintain with all my might the honor and noble traditions of the medical profession. My colleagues will be my brothers. In my practice I will put the welfare of my patients before all other considerations, including religion, ethnicity, race, political or class affiliation”*. These are lessons for every human being and for every profession.

You put this nicely, although it seems to me that Milorad Dodik, SNSD leader and RS President, should be reminded of the culture of dialogue. How do you comment on the events in the National Assembly and the resignation of the RS Chief Auditor?

– In every system, the Institution of a Public Sector Auditor makes a crucial contribution to ensuring transparent public spending. It is therefore of vital importance that it is performed professionally and without political pressure.

The system in the RS is dictated by the ruling majority, the same majority which disputes the Bosnian language and has the support of the “Domovina”?! What is your opinion of the announced Declaration on preservation of the Serb language and culture, that is being prepared jointly by Serbia and RS?

– Of course I cannot comment on the declaration itself as this remains for the time being only an idea reported on in the media. The preservation of all languages – Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian – and both Cyrillic and Latin script on the entire territory of BiH should be a normal thing, which I wholeheartedly support. In reality it is not. Inside BiH there are still many problems with expression of identity of the constituent peoples and minorities, including systemic issues like the denial of the right of the Bosniak students to name their language Bosnian and the crossing out of Cyrillic scripts on road signs in some Cantons of the Federation. There are other unacceptable issues in this regard as well. Anyone who loves his/her own language will respect the language of others.