

Real Grounds for Optimism

Relations among the countries of Southeast Europe are better than they have ever been, High Representative Valentin Inzko said today during talks with senior government officials in Bucharest, and he added that conditions inside and outside Bosnia and Herzegovina now make it possible for the country to take a significant step forward.

During talks with Mr. Bogdan Manoiu, foreign policy advisor to Romanian President Traian Basescu, and with Mrs. Luminita Odobescu, state secretary at the Romanian Foreign Ministry, the High Representative expressed his thanks for Romania's long-standing support for the Dayton settlement, not least through its active participation in EUFOR.

The High Representative noted that OHR's continuing role in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be determined by the capacity of the BiH parties to fulfil the Peace Implementation Council's five-plus-two agenda and he stressed that the OHR and the EU Delegation are working closely and in a complementary way to provide optimal support for BiH partners.

In a keynote address delivered at the Romanian National University of Defence the High Representative said he believed Bosnia and Herzegovina may be turning the corner after years of political impasse.

"BiH citizens no longer want to hear stale arguments; they want their leaders to start offering fresh solutions to problems that have gone unsolved for too long," the High Representative said.

The High Representative noted that with the adoption of several strategic laws and the reaching of agreement among the main parties on key issues "in the last few months Bosnia and Herzegovina has been able to remove serious long-standing

obstacles from its path forward. From the perspective of the first half of 2012 I believe there are real grounds for optimism – perhaps for the first time in years.”