

The Moral Power of the People Will Prevail



Party leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina have fallen behind in contributing to and taking advantage of the improved diplomatic environment in the Western Balkans, High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko said today at the “Mini Balkan Summit” in Portoroz, Slovenia.

“The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina – who may stand to gain most from the regional rapprochement – have, until now, gained least,” the HR/EUSR said, and he stressed that BiH citizens cannot be denied the chance to join the rest of the region on the highway to prosperity and security because of lack of will and cooperation on the part of their elected leaders.

However, the HR/EUSR stressed that there are signs that the BiH political establishment is changing. He commended senior politicians, including Bakir Izetbegovic, for statements that have acknowledged and expressed regret for civilian deaths during the war.

“A statement will not change a country overnight,” he said, “but it can help to create a *climate* in which positive change is more likely,” he said.

Following four years of “considerable deterioration in living standards and limited progress along the road to Euro-Atlantic integration,” the October election and the improved regional environment offer “a golden opportunity to break the vicious cycle”, the HR/EUSR said.

The International Community would stay “proactively engaged” until Bosnia and Herzegovina secures full Euro-Atlantic

integration.

“It is this prosperity that Euro-Atlantic integration can bring to the peoples of the Western Balkans,” he concluded. “In Bosnia and Herzegovina not every politician has grasped this essential truth. Some still imagine they can buck the trend. I do not believe that they can. I do not believe that the people will let them.”

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