



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE OSCE, UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

S t a t e m e n t

in response to EU Special Representative and High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador dr. Valentin Inzko, delivered by H.E. Ambassador Neven Madey, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia, at the 771st Meeting of the Permanent Council, 30 July 2009

Madame Chairperson,

I would like to extend warm welcome to Ambassador dr. Valentin Inzko to the Permanent Council. The fact that he has chosen to address the OSCE at the early stage of his activities as the High Representative and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a proof of exemplary cooperation which is very much needed in the actual situation.

On our part, Croatia supports the work of dr. Inzko. His valuable and wide experience, as well as the understanding of the unique complexity of Bosnia and Herzegovina gives us hope that he will address numerous challenges in a credible manner. Our cooperation, as proven by the visit of dr. Inzko to Zagreb and his talks with highest Croatian officials is sincere and constructive. That will remain our policy as Croatia, the signatory of the Dayton Agreements and the neighboring country, would like to see further stability and progress in BiH.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has our strong support in the process of reform and its Euro Atlantic aspirations. Our experience as the new member of NATO and future member of the EU, is unique and most valuable in terms of the reforms that we have undertaken as well as to the obstacles to which we are exposed. As we have repeatedly stated and confirmed we stand ready to share this “know how” with BiH authorities.

The progress of the Constitutional reform in the country is very much needed in order to create conditions for the functional and sustainable European State, with full equality of the three constituent peoples. This process was initiated through Prudski proces with many obstacles and difficulties. But there is no alternative to the reform process, as dr. Inzko rightly points out if the country, its politicians, peoples and citizens wish to see further progress, now additionally hampered by the looming financial and economic crises. International community should pursue a policy in BiH with a view to correcting possible problems which lead to alleged failures as it was described by Miroslav Lajčak in one of its recent interviews.

Recently, many international officials have referred to the difficulties (some call it segregation which I believe is not an adequate term) in the educational sector. Indeed, education is one of the most sensitive and important issues for every ethnically and religiously diversified country, and requires full attention and action. We believe that nobody can be satisfied with actual solutions, mostly the parents who live in the areas in which their people is a minority and who cannot have the education for their children in their own language. Needless to say that it hampers the process of return and creates difficult situations on the ground, which are often followed by discrimination of other peoples. This serious and urgent problem has to be addressed while fully respecting their sensitivity and concerns when they are justified.

The problem of discrimination has to be resolved on the entire territory of BiH, while respecting the constitutional right of each of the constituent peoples on education and use of its own language, as all three languages are equal.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the readiness of my country Croatia to be actively and constructively engaged in the process of strengthening BiH and we wish dr. Inzko a lot of good luck. We hope to hear from him in the Permanent Council soon.

Thank you.