

Remarks by High Representative Valentin Inzko at a Ceremony Marking the 15th Anniversary of the Helicopter Crash at Prokosko Lake

Progress Cannot Be Stopped Forever

The men and woman who died on this mountain fifteen years ago were engaged in the day-to-day work of peace implementation – but they were engaged in something larger too.

It was Dostoevsky who wrote that “the battlefield is in the human heart”.

The colleagues we remember today played their part in a contest between optimism and pessimism, between progress and stagnation, between honesty and corruption.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina this contest still has a significant impact upon the difficult and incremental business of peace and political and economic transition..

When leaders give in to pessimism and bitterness, when they accept a status quo that is permeated by corruption and failure, then every citizen suffers — just as the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are suffering today

But I do not believe that pessimism and bitterness can prevail. Progress can not be stopped forever. Political leaders will not be able to deny a better future indefinitely.

I believe, with Dostoevsky, that in each human heart it is the good that prevails more often than the bad.

I believe this because the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown in the last twenty years – in a way that has not been required of citizens in more fortunate countries – a courageous and inspiring resolve to keep bitterness and despair at bay.

That is a lesson, I think, that this country’s leaders must learn from the citizens they presume to lead.

Our twelve colleagues gave their lives for the belief that the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina can live in dignity and peace. I share that belief and I believe every decent citizen of this country shares it.

Today we honour the memory of Peter Backes, Livio Beccaccio, Andrzej Buler, David Kriskovich, Leah Melnick, Charles Morpeth, William Nesbitt, Marvin Padgett, Thomas Reinhardt, Jurgen Schauf, Georg Stiebler and Gerd Wagner.

We reaffirm our commitment to the mission – to *their* mission – of bringing lasting peace to this country.