Remarks by Principal Deputy High Representative David Robinson on the 17th Anniversary of the Helicopter Crash at Prokosko Lake

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Commitment to the People of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Honouring our colleagues, who died here 17 years ago, we reflect on their commitment and the commitment of all those who are working for Bosnia and Herzegovina's future.

It is a commitment built on the conviction that the good which exists in most people is bound to triumph over the ill will of a small minority; the conviction that the most daunting practical problems can be solved with effort and imagination.

I have been privileged to take part in peace efforts in different parts of the world. In some places reconciliation and recovery have been seriously challenged but my experience has always been that the desire for peace, the desire for justice is invariably stronger than a readiness to resort to conflict.

I have seen again and again that despite setbacks and wrong turnings, constructive outcomes can be achieved.

This commemoration is one of the first official events in which I have participated as Principal Deputy High Representative, and I think that's fitting – because when we remember the sacrifice of our colleagues we remember the seriousness of purpose that brought them to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the enduring value of what they were trying to achieve.

Today, in 2014, we share that purpose. And we continue to work towards the same goals that they were working towards: helping the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina build a sovereign, secure and prosperous democracy.

After an extended spell of economic difficulty and political gridlock – compounded in recent months by natural and industrial disasters – the people of this country are preparing to go to the polls, we hope in great numbers. Whoever the citizens elect can count on the continuing support of the International Community. We are committed to helping Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people recover from conflict, and we will continue working until that commitment is fulfilled.

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.

I believe that as we remember what happened here 17 years ago, we should focus on the courage and confidence of our colleagues who died. Because their courage, their confidence, their optimism did not perish on this mountainside.

We remember them in the most meaningful way – by renewing our commitment to the great cause for which they were working when they died, the cause of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.