

Remarks by High Representative Valentin Inzko at the Opening of the Gradacac Fair

More Investment for BiH Workers, Farmers and Entrepreneurs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Gradacac Fair is one of the most dynamic and important examples of Bosnia and Herzegovina's capacity to prosper and grow.

The plum fair highlights, among other things, that this country is second to none when it comes to natural resources. The long-term economic potential of the BiH agro-business sector is enormous. That potential has not been fully realised yet because the relevant authorities have been slow to establish certification systems for agricultural products – but progress is being made in this area, and we hope that this progress can be speeded up in the near future.

The fact is that high-quality BiH fruit and fruit products can find a lucrative niche in the European market and in markets further afield. The workers and managers of cooperatives and farms throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina have rolled up their sleeves in order to meet the highest standards – and at the Gradacac Fair we can see just how successful they have been in bringing excellent products to market.

In this respect, I am particularly pleased to learn that the German dairy company “Zott” is opening a new manufacturing plant in Gradacac as part of a total investment worth 50 million KM.

The investors from Zott have made a hard-headed decision to put a substantial amount of money into Bosnia and Herzegovina – in a sector that is strategic, productive and labour intensive. This is an investment in BiH jobs. It's an investment in BiH prosperity. We need more such investment and we need a much greater focus by the political parties, particularly the ones that are in power, on practical policies that will make life easier for BiH farmers, BiH workers and BiH entrepreneurs.

Thank you.