

Remarks by the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown at the Opening of CIMOS TMD Factory

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Two important things are being recognized today and each one in its distinct way has a direct and profound bearing on the future of this community and of this country.

We are here to mark the opening of an enterprise that will create jobs for the people of all ethnicities in Bratunac and Srebrenica and the surrounding area.

That's the first thing.

We are celebrating something practical that will put food on tables. This investment by CIMOS TMD will bring resources to this community, and these resources can be translated over the long term into improvements in amenities and peoples' living standards.

I want to thank CIMOS TMD for their positive initiative. I know that the company hasn't invested in this project for reasons of altruism – nor should it have done so. It has made a hardheaded business decision based on the long-standing tradition of metal working that is a characteristic of this part of Bosnia and Herzegovina , and because the company knows that there exists a large pool of skilled labour among residents and among those who wish to return to the area. This is a sound assessment and it stands a very good chance of reaping a positive commercial dividend. We all hope that it will.

CIMOS is investing in BiH because it believes that the combination of skilled labour, competitive wage rates, abundant resources and proximity to markets will make the investment profitable.

I believe that more and more international companies are going to reach the same conclusion, particularly when the country's Euro-Atlantic integration process moves into the next stage and Bosnia and Herzegovina starts to be viewed not as a casualty of turbulent times but as a promising emerging market.

More investment will mean more jobs, which will, in turn, mean higher living standards – and after long hard bitter years of dislocation and deprivation, higher living standards are something that the people of this country are entitled to expect and, indeed, entitled to demand.

Now, what is the second thing that we are here to recognize today?

Well, none of us is unaware of the momentous and painful anniversary that will be marked by this community and this country, and indeed by the world, several days from now.

In the decade since the massacre at Srebrenica much has changed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region. The authorities in the RS and in Serbia have moved from denial to recognition of the enormity of the crime that was committed here. It is imperative that the perpetrators, the guilty ones, are caught and held to account before the Hague Tribunal.

Yet, there has in the recent past been an important sea change.

Serbian President Boris Tadic will join us on Monday at the memorial event; I applaud his brave action and the brave invitation of BiH Presidency Member Sulejman Tihic. This invitation and its acceptance represent, in my view, a first

bright beam of sunlight after a long and fearful night.

It *can* be dawn in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The watchwords of that dawn must be truth, justice, reconciliation and recovery. Recovery can only be built on justice.

That is why the practical subject of today's ceremony is so important. It's about creating jobs – but its about more than that, because those jobs are the building blocks of a future made possible by the fact that we may in Bosnia and Herzegovina be entering a new era.

How do we honour the victims of a terrible past? We can start by ensuring that this and future generations live in dignity and mutual respect. By focusing on recovery we honour the past and look to the future. A community that refuses to die, despite all, but insists on its own re-birth that is the most authentic monument to the destruction and death that was wrought here a decade ago.

The investment in this factory can be measured not just in terms of money, but also in terms of hope. It is also a vote of confidence in the future of this community and in the future of this country. The jobs that have been created here are part of a broader creation – the slow but steady emergence of a reborn postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Thank you.