

Opening Remarks of Brcko Supervisor on land expropriation in Arizona Market at a press conference in Brcko on 25 July 2002

On Tuesday, 23 July 2002, the Brcko District Assembly adopted the Brcko District Government's proposal declaring the public interest in expropriating in Arizona Market. This important and necessary step follows the Assembly's earlier actions in approving the December 2001 contract with Italproject, and approving the Regulatory Plan for Arizona Market in June 2002. I hope this now makes clear to all concerned that the land will be expropriated and control will be established by the Brcko District Government and Italproject throughout the Market.

Opponents to regulation of the Market have proposed a new draft contract that would damage important features of the existing contract, reverse the decisions taken by the Assembly, and undermine the authority of the Brcko District Government. It would infringe on the Government's power to expropriate land in the public interest. By fragmenting control, under this new proposal no one could be held accountable for what happens in Arizona Market. That has been the situation for too long in Arizona Market, and that must change.

The contract signed on December 21, 2001 between the Brcko District Government and Italproject gives everyone the best opportunity to develop Arizona Market into a new trading center with full respect for the rule of law.

Under the December 21 contract, the Government must provide access to and control over the land in Arizona Market to the contractor, Italproject. Italproject must build, operate and maintain the infrastructure as well as commercial facilities, and return them to the District after 20 years.

It is now up to the Government to implement its obligations under the December 21 contract promptly. If we do not respect existing contracts, who will invest in Brcko District?

We had many choices when we announced the tender for reconstructing Arizona Market last summer. Everyone had a chance to participate, including those who now object to the outcome. But now Brcko District has chosen. It awarded the contract to Italproject, and no one else. Those who wish to do business in the new Arizona Market must sign up with Italproject. There is no other way.