

Remarks by High Representative Valentin Inzko At the opening of the 45th Gradačac Plum Fair



Dear guests,

Everything about the fair has already been said, so I will not repeat anything.

I came here for three reasons. The first reason is obvious: today, Gradačac, which was mentioned for the first time in 1302, is the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the capital of the whole region. Although for the plum and agriculture, it is the capital all year long.

The second reason is that this is a town of successful and famous people. They are successful in the textile industry, chemical products, mechanical products, agriculture. Food production is the trend nowadays. Bio-food is important, organic food is important. There are entrepreneurs, as well. You are probably aware that, apart from large companies such as the BMW, Volkswagen and Siemens, 80% of the German economy is made up of small and medium-size enterprises and crafts which are the backbone, as we've heard today, of the local economy here as well as in Germany. The Gradačac Fair is therefore in line with current trends when it comes to food production and entrepreneurship.

This is an area of famous people. This is the birthplace of Damir Damjanović, Ana Šimić, academic Dedijer, poet Hasan Kikić, Prime Minister Fadil Novalić. This is the birthplace of the noble and courageous patriot Husein-kapetan Gradašćević. I think all of you share these traits. You are noble, you are courageous, and you are patriots. And when Šamac and the surrounding areas were flooded, you proved that you are generous people.

With regard to the elections, I ask myself, who is a good Bosniak, a good Croat, and a good Serb. I believe a good Croat, a good Bosniak, a good Serb, or a good Austrian, if you will, is the one who creates jobs, who sees to it that young people do not leave this beautiful country.

The third reason for my arrival in Gradačac is to feed – it is a food fair air all – on something you also produce: optimism, good will, and trust in your fellow man – the creative man, the working man and the successful man. It can be done. And therefore, I say to you all: thank you very much.