

Remarks by HR Valentin Inzko on the 16th Anniversary of the Helicopter Crash at Prokosko Lake



Bosnia and Herzegovina's Agenda

Sixteen years have passed since twelve of our colleagues died on this mountainside. With the passage of time, a distance opens up – a distance between the Bosnia and Herzegovina that they knew and the country that exists today.

The differences are significant. Our colleagues were working on questions related to freedom of movement, and the provision of basic utilities, as well as other aspects of day-to-day survival that confronted BiH citizens in the immediate postwar period.

Despite all of the setbacks and disappointments, Bosnia and Herzegovina today faces challenges that would be familiar elsewhere in Europe – how to create jobs, improve schools, provide better healthcare.

But while substantial progress has undoubtedly been made, the vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a prosperous and inclusive democracy in the heart of Europe has not yet been realised. This was the vision of the colleagues we remember here. It is the vision of Bosnia and Herzegovina's international partners, and I believe it is the vision of a majority of this country's four million people.

I also believe that progress has stalled because many of Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders haven't fully understood this vision. They haven't *rejected* it: they just haven't properly *understood* it. They are stuck in an out-of-date mindset while the rest of the country and the continent have moved on to the 21st century.

While some leaders are fixed on an outdated agenda that delivered only pain to the people of this country, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to embrace a contemporary agenda that delivers security, prosperity and European integration.

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 we will truly honour their memory – every day and in the most meaningful way – if we champion their vision of a prosperous and inclusive democracy in the heart of Europe.

When this country's political leadership understands that vision, Bosnia and Herzegovina will move forward. Let us renew our commitment to making that happen.