

Remarks by HR/EUSR Valentin Inzko at a Ceremony Marking the 13th Anniversary of the Helicopter Crash at Prokosko Lake “Where the Footprints of Good Men and Women Lead”



The American poet, Longfellow, writes that the lives and virtues of the dead are like “footprints on the sands of time”, which can guide the living.

On this day and in this place we remember twelve colleagues, men and women who came to Bosnia and Herzegovina to help this country and who died here as they carried out their work.

They have left footprints.

We are here to testify to the enduring value of the work they did. We are here, too, to affirm that the lives of those who have died as a result of the conflict will not be forgotten and that their sacrifice is not meaningless.

The poet sees the legacy of the dead as a call to the living. He describes how footprints on the sand can cause a shipwrecked sailor to “take heart again”.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina today we need to take heart.

The country's recovery from the trauma of the 1990s has not been smooth; just when things have appeared to get better there have been setbacks. When prosperity and peace seem within reach, the least imaginative, the least ambitious, the least generous revert to failures of the past.

On 3 October, the people will make choices that will affect not just their own lives but the lives of their children. They will have an opportunity to reject the failures of the past and return to the path of recovery. This is what our twelve colleagues were working for.

The International Community will continue to work with the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to help ensure that success prevails over failure. This is the right way to pay tribute to those who have died in the cause of peace.

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 died on this mountain thirteen years ago. We remember them with respect – and with resolve.