

# Remarks by PDHR Bruce G. Berton on the occasion of the 16th anniversary of Brcko District



*Check against delivery.*

**Brcko, 08 March 2016**

Ladies and gentlemen, citizens of Brcko District, I am happy to be here with you today, to mark the 16th anniversary of Brcko District. I am also pleased that, aside from congratulating you on your anniversary, I have an opportunity to congratulate you on a date which will no doubt be remembered as historic for this country.

The 15th of February, the date when BiH submitted the application for EU membership, will be remembered as a milestone in its post-war history. Every anniversary is an opportunity not only to celebrate, but also to reflect on the time that is behind us – on results, achievements and those things we could have done better.

I remain confident that the progress achieved in Brcko over the last 16 years represents a success in terms of implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Brcko has been a shining example of what we in the international community keep repeating: when there is a will, there is a way. Brcko District institutions have made it possible to resolve issues

and challenges in a way that could be used as a model for the rest of the country.

However, we all recognize that progress in Brcko has stalled and this needs to change. We are aware of the problems that citizens of Brcko District face today. These are the same problems faced by the rest of the country. And, just as with others throughout BiH, the citizens of Brcko expect their elected leaders to deliver concrete positive results. So please allow me to use this opportunity to once again remind members of the District's Government and the Assembly that institutions of the District must not be held hostage by party politics. We need to see the District's institutions convening and working hard in the interests of citizens now!

You have been elected to solve problems, no matter how difficult they are. If you work towards a common goal – which should be the improvement of the citizens' lives in a prosperous District – you will be able to find solutions. I hope that, thanks to your efforts, Brcko will once again lead the country by example.

I want to assure you that the international community remains committed to working with you, with citizens of Brcko District, and with all people of this country, in order to build a successful and prosperous democratic country able to take its place in the European family.

Let me conclude by extending my very best wishes to the women of Brcko District, and to women throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina and all over the world, on today's occasion of International Women's Day.