



**Address**  
**by**  
**the President of Iceland**  
**Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson**  
**at the opening of Balkanpharma Plant**  
**Dubnitza, Bulgaria**  
**11 October 2002**

Your Excellency President Georgi Parvanov  
Distinguished guests, people of Dubnitza  
All of you who work in Balkanpharma  
Stjórnendur Pharmaco  
Kæru landar

We witness here today an opening which demonstrates the opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an opening which binds our countries together in a way which would have been unthinkable only ten years ago, an opening which directs us towards progress, profitability and employment in the new economy based on knowledge, skills and high technology, an opening which symbolises the Europe of the future and a world dedicated to the health and well-being of all.

We are today consolidating a remarkable cooperation which will hopefully bring profound benefits and prosperity to many Bulgarians and give people in Iceland a strong sense of how development can be achieved through partnership with good friends in the global market.

For centuries our nations relied on farming the land and harvested fish from the oceans; poverty and hardship was the people's lot, but their spirit was strong and they dreamed of better days.

At the dawn of our new era those dreams are coming true. The transformation of Europe, the evolution of democracy and economic reforms, extensive cooperation among nations – all these have laid the foundation for new forms of progress.

Icelandic participation in the pharmaceutical industry in Bulgaria – the ambitious growth which has characterised the operations of Balkanpharma in recent years and is made so evident by this symbol of advanced technology which we are opening today – proves how the new economy can benefit both our nations.

We Icelanders are proud of our democratic heritage, our peaceful and egalitarian society, the harmony which has characterised our relations with others; being small we have never been a threat to any nation.

It is in the spirit of this tradition that we come to your country, and are grateful for your friendly reception. I thank here today President Georgi Parvanov and the Government of Bulgaria, the authorities and citizens of Dubnitsa, and all our partners in cooperation in Bulgaria for your positive engagement and your dedication to making our joint efforts an outstanding success.

Only four weeks ago I received President Parvanov in Iceland for productive discussions on our mutual interests and today we come together to Dubnitsa to open the new Balkanpharma Plant, a symbol of successful Bulgarian-Icelandic cooperation.

The creation of new pharmaceutical products and export and distribution of them all over Europe, to the United States and other parts of the world shows how together we can reap the benefits of the globalized economy. By strengthening the health of millions in countries near and far we can provide them with a better life and simultaneously secure employment and well-being for ourselves.

I congratulate the people of Bulgaria and the people of Iceland on this new milestone in our joint progress. I would like to greet my fellow Icelanders with a few words in the language of our small island nation, which like your language has for centuries preserved a remarkable cultural heritage.

Ég óska stjórnendum og starfsfólki Pharmaco til hamingju með glæsilegt framtak og forystu, vitnisburð um hvernig við getum nýtt þekkingu, hæfileika, tækni, heimsmarkað og áræðni til að sækja fram á nýjum sviðum. Það er einnig ósk mín að verkin hér verði ungu fólki sönnun þess hvað hægt er að gera, hvernig unnt er að sameina íslenskar rætur og athafnalíf á heimsvísu.

I congratulate all Pharmaco management and employees on this magnificent initiative and act of leadership, this testimony to the way we can utilize knowledge, skills, technology, global markets and determination to more forward in new fields. It is also my wish that the

achievement here will demonstrate to young people what can be done, how Icelandic roots can be combined with global business.

It is my sincere wish that the young generations in both our countries will see in the fruits of our cooperation how success can be achieved, how knowledge and technology, entrepreneurship and determination can provide fascinating results.

I am convinced that the opening here today signifies a successful long-term relationship between Bulgaria and Iceland and I deeply thank the owners, the managers and all the employees of Balkanpharma for the leadership you have provided.

It is indeed an honour to be with you today and share in the opening of this new adventure.