

Message of President Charles Michel for the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide



Today we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica. We pay tribute to all the victims and their families. And to those who still have no confirmation of the fate of their loved ones. I am with you. Europe is with you. We will not rest until justice is served.

25 years ago, horrendous acts were committed in Srebrenica. Thousands of men and boys were brutally killed and buried in mass graves. Women, children and elderly were forced away, raped and abused. We remember and we honour the memory of all those who perished and who suffered in these atrocities.

All Europeans should be humbled, and furious, at what was allowed to happen in Srebrenica. It is one of the darkest chapters of modern European history. By remembering, we renew our commitment to never let such atrocities happen again.

Such despicable acts go against our deepest European values. A quarter of a century later, they are still shocking, still almost inconceivable. Yet even today, we continue to hear similar language that led to these shameful acts. Revisionists minimise, or even deny the genocide. Others glorify war criminals.

We have a unique responsibility to lead by example. Only when all leaders recognise the crimes that took place can the peoples of your country finally heal and come together. Both the European Union and the Western Balkans have shown enormous solidarity, consideration, and care for one another. That gives us reason for hope. Today, we condemn the genocide at Srebrenica. We must remain vigilant and challenge hatred and intolerance, in Europe, and in your country.

Now is the time to overcome the dark legacy of the past. The EU is the greatest peace and reconciliation project ever. From the ashes of World War Two, the Union has shown what can be achieved when peoples reconcile, and come together. We hope and trust to see you advance on your European path. Only when we learn from the past, can we build a better future for the generations to come. They deserve peace, justice and true reconciliation. In our common house – Europe.