

Statement by President Charles Michel, President Ursula von der Leyen and EU HR Josep Borrell on the 25th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica



On July 11, we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the genocide in Srebrenica, one of the darkest chapters of modern European history. Our hearts and thoughts are with the victims of this tragic event, their families and their loved ones and all those whose lives have been affected. We honour the memory of those laid to rest and all those still missing.

This anniversary is for us a painful reminder. 25 years ago Europe failed to live up to the promise that never again would there be such tragedy on our continent. It is also a powerful signal of the need to stand up firmly and without exceptions for the universal values – human dignity, in particular – which underpin our Union.

25 years later, it is our duty to remember. We must confront the past with honesty and look to the future with determination to support the next generations, not least young people from across the Western Balkans, in building a better common future.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has come a long way in restoring trust, within and between the country's communities. But for peace and reconciliation to continue, the way forward must include the recognition of suffering, mutual respect and dignity. Day-to-day reconciliation has to become reality in politics, in schools, in town halls, in everyday life. Leaders everywhere are responsible to ensure that public messages, as well as statues, monuments and the names of public places, streets and squares, champion the quest for reconciliation.

The European Union remains strongly committed to supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Western Balkans as a whole in fostering reconciliation and overcoming the legacy of the past, as their future in the EU is closer than ever.