

Speech by High Representative Christian Schmidt on the occasion of the Commemoration marking the 30th Anniversary of the Genocide in Srebrenica in Potocari, 11 July 2025



Dear survivors, mothers and families of the Srebrenica genocide victims,

Honorable representatives of international community, countries from Europe and the world,

Dear friends,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are here to pay respects to the victims of the genocide committed in Srebrenica, in Potocari, in July 1995. Paying respects is not only about honoring the legacy of the victims.

Paying respects is also about upholding the dignity of the victims, the dignity of those who suffered against attempts to deny or relativize the genocide or any other war crimes and crimes against humanity. To the survivors and families of the genocide victims, I pay my respects for their exemplary

humanity!

Thank you for your courage and your resolve to build a better future. Thank you for never giving up.

Thank you for inviting us – those who failed in 1995 to intervene against Mladic and his accomplices' terrible extinction of so many lives. We who are here today understand that we must work together to contribute to building the future and peace. We come from all over the world to be here with you today.

Srebrenica cannot be forgotten.

I hope we will send a signal to the whole world that one can mourn on one side and work on building a better future at the same time. The UN General Assembly in its Resolution designated July 11th as International Day of Reflection and Remembrance of the 1995 Srebrenica Genocide.

This provides an important building-block for building trust in the principles of truth and justice in Srebrenica and beyond. It is also an obligation for us to work with young generations, to speak and talk about what happened, and to work towards reconciliation. This year, the remains of seven individuals killed in the genocide are brought to rest.

Our thoughts are with their families. The still unknown fate of more than 7,000 victims from across the country and a thousand more from this area is a stain on the conscience of humanity.

It is also an obligation in the spirit of Dayton. And we have to care for those who want to return and are experiencing threats instead of being welcomed back. We owe this to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its transition from a post-war society to

a modern and peaceful democracy that citizens can shape.

As the High Representative of the International Community for Bosnia and Herzegovina,

I call on us internationals not to allow the Dayton Accords to be forgotten but to fight against what made war possible, led to genocide, and made Dayton urgently necessary. Those who ignore the facts are contributing to uncertainty in the future. So let us remember the lessons learned in Dayton and let us keep in mind that the way to a democratic and non-discriminatory European country is our mandate.

Genocide denial, ethnically motivated hatred and ideas of national or religious supremacy must have no place in this country.

Srebrenica and all of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be a place of life and hope.

It must be a place offering a better future for the next generation within the EU.

The foundation for this is Dayton, its institutions, and the territorial integrity of the country.

Change and amendments have to be done together, jointly, and not unilaterally.

This is also the secret of reconciliation and the principle – never again!

Thank you.