Remarks by High Representative and EU Special Representative Valentin Inzko at the Memorial Ceremony for Victims of the Srebrenica Genocide

Srebrenica, 11 July 2010

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The Legacy of Hate Rejected

Respected mothers and women of Srebrenica, dear relatives, brothers and sisters, distinguished mourners.

We are gathered here, on the European Remembrance Day, to remember – with honesty and with the deepest compassion – the horrific genocide of Srebrenica.

We are also gathered here to observe the most ancient and sacred human right, the right to a decent burial. Personally, I believe the first burial marked the beginning of human civilization. And to prevent a funeral represents a fundamental break with civilisation. This is a central aspect of society and of our common humanity.

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Today we are laying to rest 775 brothers, husbands, fathers and sons, 775 citizens of this country, 775 cherished human beings.

Facing the magnitude of this respectful act, we are overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness.

Powerlessness, because we cannot give life back to a single one of our brothers. A feeling of powerlessness, because we cannot dry a single tear of any mother or alleviate her sorrow.

But we can give powerful testimony of profound human solidarity.

We stand in solidarity with the bereaved. They are not alone. The huge community of mourners – here and around the region and around the world – is proof of this. Today we are all relatives, today we are all brothers and sisters of the dead.

With humility, we pay our deepest respects as the dead are laid to rest. We are here with them, because we do not want to forget a single one of the deceased. To forget the dead would be akin to killing a second time.

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But we should not only remember. We should not simply be passive observers.

We have a duty too.

Our duty is to act.

First, to establish the truth and that those who participated

in the killings at Srebrenica are punished and that justice is done.

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I believe that decent people, of whatever country, of whatever community, of whatever ethnic group, will prevail over those who spread hate. I believe that decent people will prevail over those who question the Srebrenica genocide. They have no future They are not a part of our civilisation. That is why we welcome every sincere apology, every honest effort in this regard, to prevail over evil and hatred.

We stand for a future built on justice and love.

That is our sacred duty to the living and the dead.

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Allow me finally to express to all the families, to all the bereaved, our heartfelt condolences.

To the deceased we wish eternal peace.

May they find a special place in paradise. We are certain that such a place is waiting for them, for those who died on God’s path.

May they rest in peace in this holy cemetery.