



INSTITUTE FOR THE RESEARCH OF GENOCIDE
CANADA

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The Honourable Dr. Ailish Campbell
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RE: Urgent Appeal Regarding the Upcoming Presentation on Croatia's Heritage in the EU Parliament

I write to you with a sense of urgency and deep concern regarding the impending presentation by Croatian Member of the European Parliament Željana Zovko on the Republic of Croatia's heritage, particularly focusing on the Old Bridge of Mostar, located in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The event is associated with the 20th-anniversary celebration of the reconstruction of the Old Bridge and is scheduled to take place in the European Parliament tonight.

The Old Bridge is being portrayed as part of Croatia's heritage. We firmly believe that such an interpretation undermines historical accuracy and facts and could potentially lead to a misrepresentation of cultural heritage. As a Member State of the European Union (EU), Croatian officials and representatives have a legal and moral duty to bring truths out into the open before the international community and simultaneously build pathways of reconciliation in the Western Balkans' post-war era following the brutal conflicts in the 1990s.

The President of the City Council of Mostar, Salem Marić, issued a statement in response to the upcoming event organized in Brussels by Željana Zovko. Marić articulated that “the Old Bridge in Mostar is an integral part of Bosnia and Herzegovina's cultural and historical heritage, contributing to the broader global heritage. It would be appropriate for Croatian Member of the European Parliament, Zovko, to represent it accordingly.”

In light of this context, I humbly and respectfully urge you to consider taking a resolute stance against this presentation in cooperation with the Government of Canada. It is of paramount importance and our collective responsibility that esteemed institutions such as the EU uphold the integrity of historical facts and the legacy of international legal tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The verdicts rendered by the ICTY incontrovertibly establish that the destruction of the Old Bridge in 1993 was carried out by members of the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) as part of a joint criminal enterprise led by the late President Franjo Tuđman. The Republic of Croatia's unwillingness to acknowledge these historical facts and its persistent, deliberate disavowal and undermining of ICTY verdicts raises serious concerns about its integrity and goodwill toward the international community, including its EU partners.

Preserving truth and justice is vital within the context of the EU. Any attempts at inaccurate portrayal of historical and cultural events anywhere in the world by its Member States should be met with rigorous renunciation.

Your attention and action on this matter are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Emir Ramić
Director
The Institute for Research of Genocide Canada