

27 September 2026

Marta Kos
Commissioner for Enlargement
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Dear Commissioner Kos,

We are writing to express grave concerns about the recent developments in Serbia and the implications for its EU candidacy status. Recent statements and actions by Serbian government officials have made a mockery of the rule of law and of other fundamental key values as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty of European Union.

As many as six Serbian state officials were involved in the funeral in Serbia for convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić. One state official accompanied the coffin on the plane. State resources were used to facilitate the funeral in Serbia. For example, military personnel of the Republic of Serbia met the plane and received the coffin. The funeral and burial glorified Mladić who had been convicted of genocide and sentenced to life in prison. These events and statements were well documented by the media.

Patriarch Porfirije, head of the Serbian Orthodox Church, led the funeral and glorified Mladić during his remarks. He reportedly stated that Mladić's "name will remain deeply woven into the memory and prayers of the majority of the Serbian Orthodox people, who regard him as a soldier and commander who, in a difficult and tragic time, stood at the head of his people's army and laid down his life for the freedom and survival of his people."

Sadly, this praise of someone convicted of the Srebrenica Genocide, as well as of crimes against humanity and other war crimes across Bosnia and Herzegovina, by a Christian Orthodox leader can only remind us of the Serbian Orthodox Priest who blessed the members of the Scorpion [Škorpioni] unit before their deployment to Srebrenica in 1995. The Priest urged them to fight Bosnian Muslims saying: "Turks are unlike other men, they are all beasts from Asia." The brutal murders of unarmed men and boys committed by the Scorpions were recorded and used in legal proceedings at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

The recent funeral glorifying Mladić perhaps helps us further understand President Vučić's desperate opposition to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution adopted in May 2024, a Resolution that designated July 11 as the annual International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica. Vučić's opposition to the Resolution is just another example of his rejection of the rule of law, since the atrocities at Srebrenica have been judged to be genocide by two international judicial bodies, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Court of Justice.

The involvement of Serbian officials and religious leaders in the funeral of a convicted leader of Bosnian Serb Army is a reminder of the ICTY findings of the involvement of the Republic of Serbia and many Serbian nationals in Joint Criminal Enterprises that directed the commission of war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-1995. One such Joint Criminal Enterprise sought to

“permanently remove non-Serb populations (principally Croats and Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks) from large areas of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

The Joint Criminal Enterprises in 1990's sought to achieve a “Greater Serbia,” which has even recently in 21st century been rebranded as the “Serbian World”. The Serbian World can be seen as an extension of the territorial aspirations of the Russian World, as Putin has emphasized his intention to unify “Orthodox peoples.” Russian volunteers served alongside Bosnian Serb military personnel from 1992 - 1995.

Hence, the implications of the funeral glorifying Mladić in Belgrade are wide-reaching and deeply troubling. They require a concrete and decisive response from the EU.

In light of these documented transgressions of international law and European values, as well as the clear breach of EU-Serbia Stabilization and Association Agreement by Serbia (SAA), we urge you to reassess Serbia's path to EU membership unless they make a credible commitment to fulfilling their obligations from the SAA to combat genocide denial and the glorification of convicted war criminals. Further, we implore you to stop any further funding by the EU towards Serbia and impose sanctions on government officials of Serbia and Republika Srpska who played a role in the glorification of Mladić. These statements and actions should not be appeased.

The glorification of Ratko Mladić sends the wrong signal to future generations as it represents the crimes committed as heroic and threatens a repetition of those very crimes. We expect the European Commission to respect its own rules set for a democratic and peaceful future for Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region by affirming the importance of the rule of law and European values.

We would also like to draw your attention to the comprehensive document you received on 20 September 2026 from the group Kosnica, Registar 145a that addresses these concerns about the glorification of Ratko Mladić in detail. We kindly ask you to take this letter, as well as all these incidents and the policy of Serbian leadership over the past decades into consideration when preparing your next annual progress report for Serbia at the end of October 2026.

I kindly ask you to confirm receipt of this letter at your earliest convenience to me and to the group ‘World for Bosnia’ (in cc). We look forward to your response.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Pettigrew, Ph.D.,

CSU Professor, Southern Connecticut State University

With support of ‘World for Bosnia’ initiative represented by Associations from:

Australia (Bosnian Community Council New South Wales – Safet Alispahić)

Belgium (on behalf of For Bosnia Association, Brussels – Adem Pobrić)

Bosnia and Herzegovina (OPTIMISTI 2004 – Satko Mujagić, and Association of Women Victims of War - Bakira Hasečić)

Canada (Institute for Research of Genocide – Emir Ramić)

Croatia (Association of Young Bosniaks and Friends of the City of Rijeka and Primorje-Gorski

Kotar County – Mensur Ferhatović)

Denmark (on behalf of the Alliance of five Bosnian associations, SBHUD – Edin Hajder)

Finland (Bosnian Cultural Center and Football Club Bosna – Nedžad Jakupović)

Ireland (Bosnia and Herzegovina Association of Ireland - Mirza Čatibušić)

Italy (Associazione “Bosna in cuore” – Rome, “Bosnia ed Erzegovina Oltre i Confini” – Piacenza, “Associazione culturale Bosniaca ODV” – Biella, “Associazione Ljiljan” – Piancamuno, “Associazione Nema Problema” – Bologna, “Džemat Biella” – Biella – Fatima Neimarlija)

Luxembourg (Srebrenica Committee Luxembourg – Adnan Halilović)

Netherlands (Association of the Survivors of the Srebrenica Genocide 1995 – Azret Hrustić)

Sweden (BHRF – Alliance of associations of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Adnan Mahmutović)

United Kingdom (Bosnia UK Network, Sabit Jakupović & Srebrenica Genocide Survivors – Mujo Delić)

United States (Patrick McCarthy and Bekir Hodžić, Board Members, Working Group for Bosnia and Herzegovina.)