



**Statement by
H.E. Tomislav Leko, Ambassador of Bosnia and
Herzegovina to the OSCE on Srebrenica,
to the 920th Meeting of the Permanent Council
Vienna, 16 July 2012**

Mr. Chairman,

Last Wednesday, on July 11th, Bosnia and Herzegovina marked the 17th anniversary of the tragedy that happened in July 1995. in eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica.

At the days after the fall down of UN protected enclave, more than 8.000 Muslim men and boys were murdered, after the Bosnian Serb forces overran the so-called safe haven and have separated women and children from men. Mass graves were later found in the area.

Some 30.000 people from across the nation and elsewhere gathered in Srebrenica and at the Memorial Center of Potocari for the central commemoration and have paid their tribute to the innocent victims of one of the worst crime in Europe, after the World War II

The commemoration was attended by the highest officials from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the numerous delegations from many countries including the countries from the region, as well as by distinguished representatives of international organizations accredited in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Though 17 years have passed since, there are still a number of unidentified victims. On this sad occasion, 520 victims, recently identified, were buried and their families, mostly mothers, women and sisters were able to escort their beloved ones to their last rest and long awaited peace.

Totally, in these 17 years 5.657 victims have been identified and buried.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, still, there is no consensus of the political actors over the definition of that atrocity. Depending of the constituency it is described whether as genocide or, only, a crime.

In February 2007, International Court of Justice (ICJ), concurring with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) judgment, has stated that:

“the acts committed at Srebrenica ... were committed with the specific intent to destroy in part the group of the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina as such; and accordingly that these were acts of genocide”.

Two top Bosnian Serb wartime leaders (General Mladic and political leader Karadzic) are on trial on war crimes charges, including genocide, at ICTY in the Hague.



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Though it remains to investigate and finally qualify this, as well as some other crimes and atrocities committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina through 1992 – 1995 war, we in Bosnia and Herzegovina have to turn to the future for the sake of reconciliation among the peoples of the country and for the good perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In that regard, we strongly believe that the last meeting of the main political parties from Bosnia and Herzegovina with the European Commission representatives, held on June 27th in Brussels, and the Joint Conclusions from the High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process with Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Road Map for BiH's EU membership application is paving the way to a prosperous society within Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the crimes of war will be investigated, proceeded and punished, while at the same time the Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina will reconcile and unite its joint endeavors to a building of a functional multi-national, multi-cultural, multi-religious and, above all, tolerant state.

Mr. Chairman,

Concerning the statement of the distinguished representative of the Russian Federation with the respect to the forthcoming local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are due on October 7th, 2012, and in particular to the pre-election period in Srebrenica, we would like to emphasize that the process is proceeding smoothly with the full appreciation of the electoral law. To date the situation has unfolded without major incident.

This issue was also raised at the occasion of the successful recent visit of Irish Minister of State with Special Responsibility for European Affairs, H.E. Lucinda Creighton at the meeting with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Zlatko Lagumdžija, where the consent over the registration process was stated. Also, it was pointed out that there is no need for the presence of the OSCE Field Office in the Police Station and Registration Office in Srebrenica.

The activities of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Srebrenica Field Office refer to the scope of the activities which the Mission regularly undertakes, and are based on the Mission's conflict cycle pilot project, initiated in Srebrenica in February 2012, resulting in a strategy for conflict prevention and early warning. This includes confidence-building measures; assistance to the authorities, citizens, and civil society groups to build constructive links between them and governmental institutions; and maintenance of the political dialogue and exchange of information in order to defuse the tensions at the local level and mitigate the accusations of obstruction and intimidation.

Thank you Mr. Chairman