

Brussels, 13 July 2020

Dear President Sassoli,

On Saturday 11 July, we commemorated the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, which symbolises the dark abyss of the Balkan wars and the darkest hour in modern European history. On this occasion, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša, a close political ally of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, published a tweet stating that the massacre "would not have occurred if Communist ideology had been eliminated from the territory of the former Yugoslavia and post-war killings in Slovenia and elsewhere condemned."

A few hours later, he tweeted that "the Srebrenica massacre would not have occurred if the United Nations had condemned Communist genocides the same way they condemned the Holocaust. Because this did not happen, the JLA [Yugoslav People's Army] doctrine that the opponent must be physically destroyed sprung to life again during the break-up of Yugoslavia".

We find such statements, in complete disregard of historical facts, to be a gross misinterpretation of the tragedy that unfolded in Srebrenica and a shameful political manipulation that offends the memory of thousands of men, women and children who lost their lives in one of the most tragic events in recent European history. It is undoubtable that all similar atrocities must be condemned in the strongest possible way, wherever and whenever they take place. But resorting to the political and ideological misuse and even abuse of historical facts is deeply intolerable.

The abuse and politicisation of the Srebrenica genocide for pure internal ideological and partisan purposes by Slovenian Prime Minister Janša is only the tip of the iceberg of a broader and extremely worrying trend of historical revisionism and relativism brought about by the alarming growth of far-right and populist forces across the European Union.

Such bold and unscrupulous attempts to manipulate and re-write history, especially by the highest political state representative, are sadly becoming the norm in Slovenia and parts of the EU, quickly spreading throughout the entire continent. We firmly believe that such actions cannot and should not be ignored. We, as elected representatives of the EU, have the duty to condemn this sort of political statements and communication.

We therefore call upon you, honourable Mr President, to take the necessary political initiative and launch a serious, EU-wide political discussion on this matter. As we begin debates on the Future of Europe, acknowledging and respecting historical accuracy needs to be one of its crucial pillars.

Yours sincerely,

Klemen Grošelj

Irena Joveva