



Toespraak

van de Voorzitter van de Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal, prof.dr. J.A. Bruijn ter gelegenheid van het bezoek van de Voorzitter van het Presidentschap van Bosnië en Herzegovina, de heer Denis Bećirović

Datum 3 juni 2024

Dear Chairman,

On behalf of the States General, I am very honored to welcome you in the Dutch Senate. It is a great privilege for us to receive you here today.

Your visit to the Netherlands comes at a time when our continent is faced with a military conflict within its borders. The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the violence carried out by the Russian army has shocked us all deeply.

Now, more than two years after the invasion, it seems that an end to the war is not in sight. However, the aggression of the Putin government in Ukraine once more proves the importance of European and international cooperation.

Over the past two years we have shown our solidarity with the Ukrainian governments and with the Ukrainian people, and it is important that we continue to do so.

Chairman,

The last war on the European continent before the war in Ukraine, was of course the war in former Yugoslavia. But that is also where the comparison stops, since the war that your country and other Balkan countries have fought, was a war for independence, a war within the original country, instead of an outside aggressor.

The independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 was followed by a period of war and conflict. Our countries will forever share the painful history of the fall of Srebrenica in July of 1995, 29 years ago next month.

I am glad that two weeks ago the United Nations General Assembly, with the support of the Netherlands, has designated 11 July as the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica.

It is important that not only the affected countries and the wider region remembers the genocide, but that the commemoration is recognized worldwide.

Since its independence Bosnia and Herzegovina has become a member - or is an aspiring member - of many international organisations, such as the United Nations, and the Council of Europe. And of course, since 2022 Bosnia and Herzegovina is a candidate for membership of the European Union, as was reconfirmed by the Council of Ministers in March of this year.

As you undoubtedly know, the Copenhagen Criteria for enlargement are also of pivotal importance for both Chambers of the States General. That is why it is of great value that we meet today.

International diplomacy, like our meeting today, is of great value. It is important that politicians from different countries meet each other, have a dialogue and inform each other about the situation in their countries.

As representatives of the people, we should exchange information, learn from each other and work together where possible. Finding common ground is of the utmost importance in international meetings like ours today.



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That is why I am very glad to welcome you here. Because only you can inform us firsthand about the actual situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the latest developments from your perspective.

Chairman,

Coming Thursday the European Elections are held in the Netherlands and on Sunday we will know what the results are. You may have seen the billboards across the city and the country. Elections are always exciting times, and the celebration of democracy.

Allow me to give the floor to my colleague from the House of Representatives, Mr Martin Bosma.

Hvala ti.

Thank you.