

**Opening of the Exhibition
"Behind the Sky"**

26 June 2025, Strasbourg (France),

Speech by Theodoros Rousopoulos
President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

Dear friends,

"There are deaths that last longer than life," wrote the French author Marguerite Duras.

Some losses, traumas, and absences outlive the span of a human life. They leave behind a void — not always visible, often hidden — but deeply felt.

Sometimes, what remains are fragments. We barely remember the colour of a person's eyes — only their silhouette, their shadow, the joy their presence once brought.

As a journalist who covered the war in former Yugoslavia — following the Gulf War and mostly during the 1990s — I have seen up close the cruelty of war. I have seen not just death, but what lingers after: the silence, the unanswered questions, the lives paused in mid-sentence.

Women and men — tortured, raped, deported. Victims of those driven by propaganda. To survive means not only to live — but to remember. To rebuild. To prevent.

This is the power of art. And this is the power of the exhibition Behind the Sky, by the artist Gordana Špoljar Andrašić

The photographs are haunting. Each face is partially hidden, their eyes covered with a white strap — as if blinded, silenced, or erased. But we must refuse this erasure. We must insist on seeing, remembering, and naming.

On behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly, I wish to express my deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and missing persons. Their courage and testimony give voice to the silenced and make exhibitions like this possible.

Thank you.