



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
PRIME MINISTER

Ljubljana, 1 February 2024

Dear Commissioner,

Allow me to thank you warmly for your letter highlighting the main findings of the recently published Issue Paper on achieving justice, peace and social cohesion in the area of the former Yugoslavia. Slovenia fully recognises the importance of the invaluable work of the Commissioner for Human Rights in the field of transitional justice and related issues. Your personal commitment and dedication to the highest standards in solving the main problems hindering the region's progress in this area are highly appreciated in Slovenia.

We share your views on the unacceptably slow pace of dealing with the past in some countries that were once part of the former Yugoslavia. We are also concerned about the resurgence of ethno-nationalist discourse, the denial of war atrocities, and the continued glorification of war criminals by some political leaders and various social actors in the region. We fully share your understanding that more needs to be done to curb the rise of hate speech, inter-ethnic intolerance and interference with freedom of expression, media and civic space, as well as the activities of human rights defenders.

Slovenia believes that young people must be involved in the process of building peaceful, cohesive societies in order to meet the current challenges of building a better future for the region. Slovenia is a strong supporter of all measures that would contribute to improving the overall living conditions of young people in the countries of the region. We are also aware of the invaluable role that culture and young creative minds can play in being the first to point out the need for dialogue and to pave the way for reconciliation in many contexts.

As you point out in your letter, the issues related to dealing with the past are of a different nature in Slovenia and Slovenia has taken necessary steps to address them. Slovenia, as a member of the EU and NATO, is committed to supporting the countries in its Southern neighbourhood and I would like to thank you for recognising our unique position in relation to the region in this regard. Slovenia is a strong supporter of the European Union's

**Her Excellency
Ms Dunja Mijatović
Commissioner for Human Rights
Council of Europe**

enlargement process and is actively providing political and practical support to the Western Balkan countries. This is a key component of Slovenia's long-term policy, and will remain its commitment.

Slovenia believes that the process of bringing the countries of the Western Balkans closer to the European Union and the work of the Council of Europe's mechanisms are complementary in achieving the rule of law and respect for human rights in the region. We therefore remain committed to working with the Council of Europe and its member states to address the above challenges. In the Western Balkans, determined efforts continue to be needed to promote reconciliation and regional stability, including through the resolution of bilateral disputes between partners and of issues rooted in the legacy of the past, in line with international law and established principles. We appreciate your continued commitment to human rights and justice and thank you again for your important contributions.

Please accept, Dear Commissioner, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Robert Golob