



Protection of nature in BiH

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*"Giving Armed Forces BiH the funding to better equip itself would not only improve its current capabilities, but also allow EUFOR to diversify the areas of training and mentoring"*



**ARMED FORCES OF BiH**

**MORE  
THAN  
JUST  
AN ARMY**



Trained and Supported  
by EUFOR

## In this issue:

- 03 Editorial / EUFOR Commander
- 04 EUFOR Events
- 06 EUFOR / Interview with the Special Advisor  
- Colonel Martin Trachsler
- 09 EUFOR/AFBiH / Dual use of forces
- 10 EUFOR/AFBiH / "Dynamic response" in Manjača
- 12 EUFOR/AFBiH / First anniversary of floods
- 15 EUFOR / Interview with the EUFOR Chief of Staff  
- Zoltán Mihócza
- 17 EUFOR/AFBiH / Capacity building and training
- 20 EU / Stabilization Association Agreement
- 23 EUSR / Newly appointed EU Special representative
- 24 EUFOR Elements / LOT Bratunac  
and LOT Travnik activities
- 26 Inside BiH / NGO "Duga"
- 28 Inside BiH / Protection of nature in BiH



Page 04



Page 10



Page 12



Page 20



## IMPRESSUM

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**Dear readers,**

Bearing in mind the serious challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina was faced with last year, 2015 appeared as a year of better opportunities, which nonetheless require both decisive commitment and resources.

The EU perspective became more tangible with the 'EU new approach for BiH' launched in December 2014. This led to several concrete political steps throughout the past six months. Notably, in the frame of this process the Stabilization and Association Agreement was brought fully into force on 1 June and anchored the country to the EU accession path, while BiH partly adopted an Agenda for reform which shall respond among other things to protesters' grievances of February 2014.

While political progress takes shape, the political and security situation is still affected by potential destabilisers. Political exploitation of the attack on the police station in Zvornik or the recent resolution of the RS National Assembly to call a possible referendum on State level judicial institutions and the authority of the High Representative are clear signs of hampered political progress. These developments remind us of the importance to tackle such issues on a daily basis. The emerging Reform Agenda and the Structured Dialogue on Justice constitute the most appropriate forums for this. In that sense, not only ensuring a safe and secure environment but also moving the country forward in political, social and economic terms remain essential tasks for the EU in BiH.

Supported by EUFOR capacity building and training, Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, have shown both the willingness and determination to respond to challenges. One only has to remember their tireless contribution during the flooding of last year to see the human and professional qualities their men and women demonstrated. However, the



professionalization and modernization process of AFBiH remains constrained by budgetary issues, as these demanding activities have underlined the requirement for more equipment, more funding and more investment. Quite simply for AFBiH to reach its potential, it needs to be given the tools to accomplish its tasks.

Giving AFBiH the funding to better equip itself would not only improve its current capabilities, but also allow EUFOR to diversify the areas of training and mentoring. We have the expertise of 22 nations at our disposal and could provide additional training in a number of new areas if AFBiH equipped itself accordingly.

Bosnia and Herzegovina should be proud of the progress made by AFBiH in the past decade. While AFBiH is a comparatively young force, the resources needed for its development should be recognized in order to further upgrade itself to international standards.

*Sincerely Yours,*

**Major General  
Johann Luif  
Commander EUFOR**



## **General Wilz appointed as new NATO HQ Sarajevo Commander**



### **The Princess Royal visits EUFOR**

On 10 July 2015, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal visited European Forces (EUFOR) personnel based in Camp Butmir.

Commander EUFOR Major General Johann Luif greeted The Princess Royal with an Honour Guard, alongside NATO and UK representatives. The Princess then spoke with Major General Luif and Commander NATO Brigadier General Giselle Wilz about the role of EUFOR and NATO within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Wing Commander Heather Millar of the Royal Air Force, Senior National Representative for the UK Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina said:

“It was a real honour and privilege for the UK personnel to meet HRH The Princess Royal at Camp Butmir today. She had a genuine interest in our important work, showing her continued support for the UK Armed Forces around the world. Her visit was a great boost for morale and has left the contingent in Sarajevo feeling highly valued and appreciated’

Commander EUFOR Major General Johann Luif welcomed the new Commander NATO HQ Sarajevo, Brigadier General Giselle M. Wilz, who took over in June from Brigadier General Petty, after he completed his tour of command. Major General Luif said that he was pleased to welcome Brigadier General Wilz and stated that “The partnership between EUFOR and NATO is essential, and I am looking forward to continuing its success together”. The two Headquarters work closely together in supporting the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Armed Forces (AFBiH) since its creation in 2005.

## Operations Chief of the Turkish General Staff visits EUFOR

Operations Chief of the Turkish General Staff, Lieutenant General Erdal Öztürk, visited in June the Turkish national contingent serving in Operation Althea. During his visit to Camp Butmir Lieutenant General Öztürk took the opportunity to meet with Commander EUFOR, Major General Johann Luif. Major General Luif thanked Lieutenant General Öztürk for the continuing support of Turkey to the EUFOR mission and the professionalism of the Turkish soldiers under his Command. Turkey is one of the largest of the 22 nations which contribute troops



to EUFOR Operation Althea. Turkish personnel hold key positions within EUFOR Headquarters. The LOT houses in Zenica, Zavidovići, Travnik, Jablanica and Livno are Turkish-led and one of the Multinational Battalion's companies is also Turkish.

## BiH Ministry of Security and UN award EUFOR

On the occasion of the anniversary of the catastrophic flooding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina awarded EUFOR a letter of appreciation for the assistance during last year's natural disaster.

EUFOR helped to evacuate the population in flood affected areas last year. After the evacuation EUFOR's support continued with the transport of goods and supplies to affected areas all over BiH. During exercise Joint Effort 14 EUFOR reserve troops from Slovenia, Austria and the United Kingdom participated in dealing with the aftermath, removing the consequences of the catastrophe.



EUFOR's Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, Colonel Savaş Celepoğlu, received the certificate on behalf of the EUFOR Althea Headquarters, and said that EUFOR is always ready to support the BiH population.

## BiH's contribution to peace in the world

The documentary "Bosnia and Herzegovina - 15<sup>th</sup> year of participation in Peace Support Operations" was recently presented to the officials of BiH and the International Community, including a delegation from EUFOR. Bosnia and Herzegovina has deployed 1,000 members, of which 34 were women, to Peace-Support Operations so far.

Minister of Defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Marina Pendeš, welcomed the soldiers who have contributed to peace serving in missions in Africa and Asia. She stressed that BiH, as a member of the UN, showed the commitment of its armed forces in stopping armed conflicts and establishing stability



in crisis regions. The first BiH soldiers to be deployed went to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo and Mali. After the establishment of the BiH Armed Forces, troops went to Iraq and Afghanistan, where they showed a lot of knowledge, skill and ability in performing complex tasks.

# The Weapons and Ammunition Surplus - still a burning issue in BiH



**Interview with the Special Advisor to the Commander of EUFOR on Ammunition, Weapons and Explosives - Colonel Martin Fritz Trachsler**

The presence of surplus ammunition in BiH could become a direct risk to human security, but also constitutes a financial and administrative burden for the AF BiH. As part of the Defence Reform in 2007, the AF BiH defined the size, structures, unit location and equipment required for prospective use of ammunition, weapons and explosives. Large amounts of ammunition, small arms (rifles and pistols) and heavy weapons were not of use anymore, and therefore remained as surplus. In 2008 the “Agreement on Final Disposal of All Rights and Obligations over Moveable Property” that continues to serve defence purposes, transferred the ownership of all moveable defence property, including all weapons, ammunition and explosives to the State of BiH (Ministry of Defence).

In February 2013, the International Community (including key players – OSCE, UNDP, NATO and EUFOR, USA, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, NPA (Norwegian Peoples Aid), based on an initiative of the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe and EUFOR ALTHEA Operation Commander at that time, General Sir Alexander Richard David Shirreff, agreed on a common goal and programme for the treatment of ammunition, weapons and explosives. The most important point was the common finding that ammunition and explosives should be treated according to international standards and that a life cycle management for them should be established.

**A Special Advisor for a complex subject**

Two years ago, Colonel Martin Trachsler was appointed as Senior Ammunition and Weapons Advisor (SAWAD) to Commander EUFOR and Senior Project Leader (SPL) to EUFOR Mobile Training Teams, which are part of the Capacity Building & Training programme. (CB&T). He already had experience and a well-developed network of contacts, as he had been deployed earlier in BiH as Military Attaché for Switzerland and later on worked as Senior Project Leader for EUFOR Mobile Training Teams. “From the absolute beginning it was clear that BiH has to take over national ownership of this issue. For this responsibility, the Ministry of Defence installed different boards on strategic and operational levels. The Minister of Defence of BiH took over the lead of

Alongside other members of the International Community, EUFOR provides expert advice within the framework of its Capacity Building and Training programme and works in support of BiH in order to build their capacity to manage the excessive stockpiles of ammunition and weapons. In order to assure that this important project receives continuous support, EUFOR set up a Special Advisor who is responsible for coordinating all activities of the International Community and local authorities on ammunition, weapons and explosives related issues.



the Strategic Committee, a board that consists of the heads of the international supporters and advises the Minister”, explains Colonel Trachsler. He adds that the Deputy Chief of Joint Staff for Resources, currently Major General Senad Mašović, heads the Coordination Committee, which is a coordinating board on the operational level. A Taskforce, an organisation that coordinates and provides relevant information on all projects dealing with ammunition, weapons and explosive (AWE), has also been established.

Speaking about the establishment of boards on different levels, Colonel Trachsler says that three additional working groups were also established under the lead of the Coordination Committee. “They are led by the Armed Forces of BiH and deal with concrete implementation of projects. These groups are: Working Group Krupa (depot for ammunition), Working Group Glamoč (destruction by open detonation) and Working Group Doboj (destruction by deliberation)”, he explains.

### **What to do with the surplus of ammunition?**

Colonel Trachsler remarks that outdated ammunition can be very dangerous: “We all have to be aware of that. Therefore it has to be destroyed as soon as possible. The surplus of useable ammunition can be donated or sold. The challenge is now to establish the capacity and capability for a proper

AWE management system in order to store the good prospective ammunition, donate or sell the good non- prospective ammunition and destroy the dangerous ammunition”, he emphasizes.

### **No clear overview of the stored AWE**

“One of our goals is to have a 100% inventory of the AWE. This is currently ongoing. Each single piece has to be sifted through and recorded. In doing so obviously unusable ammunition is sorted out. For the near future, we plan to develop the capability within the Armed Forces to do chemical analysis for ammunition and explosives. Presently the ammunition is only checked visually”, Colonel Trachsler points out.

### **Too many storage sites**

The AFBiH has to guard 17 different AWE sites. This is too much and causes a burden on the forces. “The final goal is to have 3-5 sites. Three sites are, with international help, currently being brought to an international standard and we will see what happens to the others. However it can be stated that the total amount of ammunition needed for the actual structure of the Armed Forces of BiH is around 6,000 tons. This amount can be stored on three locations. From my point of view, the additional two are not needed”, he says.



## Dangerous unusable ammunition has to be destroyed

Colonel Trachsler says that due to different reasons the destruction of unusable old ammunition got stuck in past years. "It went down to 600 tons per year which is far too little. The available capacity to destroy it is not fully exploited. Last year we could have improved the amount up to 1,200 tons and we aim to double the amount this year up to 2,200 tons. This includes also the ammunition donation of around 572 tons BiH provided to the Iraqi Forces to fight against ISIS (ISIL)."

## Surplus of good AWE can be sold

Talking about the surplus of good AWE that can be sold, Colonel Trachsler explains that there is a value on the stocks, but so far they haven't got a clear picture of the amount. A transparent process which is agreed by all involved partners to sell AWE on the international market does not yet exist. This is something they are working on. Therefore, there is still much work ahead, but resources are limited. "It is a big challenge for the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of BiH to solve the surplus of AWE. Furthermore, available resources, such as trucks, packing material, and a lot of other logistic materials needed are not sufficiently available. We also have to take into account that this is not the only area which the Armed Forces in its ongoing reform process have to deal

with. However it is important to state that BiH with its responsible agencies is dealing with this problem actively", emphasizes Colonel Trachsler.

## Important role of EUFOR's Capacity Building and Training Programme

Colonel Trachsler says that the most important issue is assuring that the storage sites are well secured. "The first step was to provide training for the guards. Additionally, we trained personnel how to treat, to store, and to label ammunition. As this dangerous material also has to be transported, training was given in packing loading and securing it on trucks, and in how to react in case of a fire.

Our principal is to train and equip. The International Community constantly supports the development of the AWE management with donations. With any new equipment, such as forklifts or chemical kits for analyzing ammunition and explosives, training must be set up. Once the training was provided by the International Forces, but now the Armed Forces of BiH have to implement it into their training plans to be self-sustainable. I am happy to say that we have managed to establish a training cell within the

Training and Doctrines Command (TRADOC). It is essential that the AFBiH has clear doctrines for the treatment of AWE. We help to develop them either based on already existing ones or if not existing, by using UN or NATO standards", concludes Colonel Martin Trachsler.







# Dual use of forces

## How Armed Forces can support the population

As part of its Capacity Building and Training Programme EUFOR organised training on disaster relief, protection, rescue and military assistance in Derventa. Together with the Engineer Battalion of the BiH Armed Forces, Civil Protection, Police, Fire Brigade, and Red Cross, the members of the Mobile Monitoring Teams (MMTs) from Austria and Slovenia carried out a training entitled “Natural disasters, earthquakes and floods-remediation areas after earthquake and floods”. Milorad Simić, Mayor of the Derventa municipality, said that this kind of exercise brings progress and increases community preparedness. “Good cooperation between the local communities and the Armed Forces is extremely important. The members of the AFBiH played an important role and have shown a huge responsibility at the time of the floods last year, which largely prevented even greater disaster for the population and infrastructures”, he said.

## Good team-work can overcome this kind of emergency situation

The training on Disaster relief, protection, rescue and military assistance was based on a scenario where heavy rain and an earthquake threatened

villages by the river Ukrina in the northeastern part of BiH. In cooperation with Military, Civil Protection Department, Fire Department, Police station and the Red Cross, a local Crisis Centre (CC) in the municipality of Derventa was established. Crisis Centre implemented measures in the line with the situational awareness picture. Unfortunately, at this time the actual weather conditions got closer to the scenario, so that the level of preparedness within the Crisis Center improved from hour to hour.

Major Milan Kristović from Slovenia said that EUFOR began last year with the training of members of the Armed Forces and that the completion of the joint practical exercise has been planned for October this year in Derventa. “The goal of the training is to enable members of the Armed Forces to assist civilian authorities when it comes to natural disasters. Major Kristović added that the entire training programme has been created by EUFOR, and that the theoretical and practical part of the training will be completed with equipment that will be donated by the United States worth over a million dollars.

Head of the Derventa Civil Protection Department, Dragoljub Kukić, emphasized that in the case of natural disasters the priority is rescuing the population, and then remove the consequences of the disaster. The training will be realised during the next few weeks, but certain incident situations will be practically exercised in October where all the participants will demonstrate their ability to respond to real situations.

# Dynamic Response

## - Building on experience

Exercise Dynamic Response, held from the 8<sup>th</sup> until 12<sup>th</sup> of June in Manjača, was designed around the theme of 'Helping civilian structures in the event of flooding'. The scenario was based closely on the devastating flooding experienced last year.

### Civil and Military Cooperation

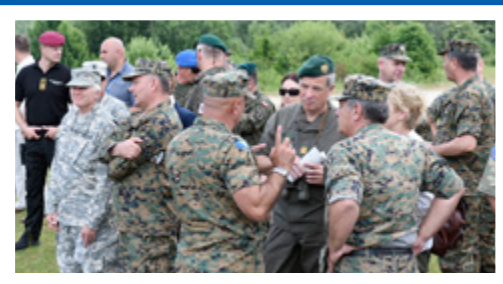
The first part of the exercise enabled the command teams to practice their response to a humanitarian disaster. For the first time, this exercise was attended not only by military forces but by members of the Civil Defence of the Republic of Srpska and Federal Civil Protection Administration of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In an interview at the event Major General Mirko Tepšić, AFBiH Deputy Chief of Joint Staff, spoke of this combined approach: "This was a good way to improve our cooperation and coordination to

execute tasks we had given ourselves after the lessons learnt in the floods last year, and this is the way cooperation with civilian organisations can be improved".

### Impressive Demonstrations of Rescue Techniques

Commander EUFOR Major general Luif visited the exercise and met with the Major General Mirko Tepšić, and Brigadier General Radovan Ilić,





6<sup>th</sup> Brigade Commander. He received a briefing on the planning and execution of the exercise, before observing a live demonstration of Flood Rescue techniques. These involved not only AFBiH soldiers, but members of local Mountaineering and Rafting clubs. The visit concluded with an exhibition of the AFBiH Combat Simulation Centre, a facility used extensively during the planning of Exercise Dynamic Response.

Watching the demonstrations Major General Luif commented: "What we saw today was very impressive. It is very important to have such exercises in order to be prepared for real missions. I am very proud as Commander of EUFOR that we were closely connected with this exercise, to give them the advice to develop this very challenging situation".

### Monitoring and mentoring

EUFOR provided 18 staff officers in Embedded Advisory Teams and as subject matter experts in areas ranging from Air Operations to Logistics to support the exercise. These EUFOR personnel passed on their knowledge and experience to the AfbIH involved during the exercise, supporting them as they progress in their ability to manage incidents like the simulated flood.





# First anniversary of floods

Landslides triggered by unprecedented rains in BiH last year left hundreds of people homeless, while thousands have fled their homes in neighboring countries. It was the region's worst flooding ever.

According to newspapers reports, over 1.2 million people, or around 40% of the BiH population, were affected at the time by the most severe floods ever recorded in the country. Apart from the direct consequences of the flood waters submerging dozens of towns and villages, there was also a higher incidence of landslides, exposed landmines and post flood infectious diseases. Many people killed, hundreds left homeless, a billion euros of destruction and the threat of years of economic hardship. The catastrophic floods that hit Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also Croatia and Serbia, were the worst in their history.

## AFBiH - More than just an army

At the time, the Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) showed remarkable courage and selflessness, engaging all available human and material-technical assets in

rescue and relief operations. Since the first days of the bad weather in the country, the Armed Forces have given their best to rescue the people who have been affected by floods. 1,500 soldiers were constantly engaged in the most critical areas around the country, saving tens of thousands of people. Eight helicopters, 50 boats, and dozens of ambulances were deployed daily to help children, women, and the elderly and infirm people.

The anniversary of the heavy flooding is an opportunity to remind everyone about these events, and of what the members of the AF have done.

"With our land and air forces, we saved 8,000 people from floods. Immediately after their rescue, we helped these people to get to the centers established by civil authorities, but many of them were placed in our barracks in Bileća, Tuzla, Zenica, where we received more than 3,500 people. In the beginning, when it was impossible to deliver water and food and medical supplies, the Armed Forces transported by air over 1,000 liters of bottled water and food, and in the end we were the ones who provided direct



Lieutenant General Anto Jeleč

support to civil protection in their work. We were extremely satisfied with this initial effort, however we realised that flooding would not be short-lived, that it would take a longer time, and when we had finished our job in Maglaj and Doboj, we were engaged in Šamac, Orašje, Brčko, Bijeljina, and the Sava river basin. I can tell you that it was effective, but the assistance that we have received from neighboring countries, EUFOR and international organisations, was enormous", said Lieutenant General Anto Jeleč, Chief of Joint Staff AFBiH.

Lessons learned during the flooding will be a commendable basis for corrective work in the future

in order to simplify procedures for more efficient action of the Armed Forces of BiH during natural disasters.

"We have learned a lot, and convinced ourselves that the regulations governing the use of forces, requests being indicated by the civil structures and approvals given by our superiors are slow. We were very often executing tasks before we even got approval and helped the population where the civilian structures could not. The exercise, which we had planned with EUFOR at the time, which should have been held in Manjača near Banja Luka, we turned into a disaster-relief operation, aimed at eliminating the consequences of the disaster. We have concluded that the soldiers themselves, their preparedness and courage are the better side of the armed forces, and that the equipment was quite outdated, quite incomplete, not adopted and inoperative. We learned the lessons that we should carefully change our plans for training and co-operation with the civil authorities, and we have received support from all relevant structures, that in the future we will be better trained and prepared and that one of the priorities will be the purchase of equipment for this purpose"; concludes Lieutenant General Anto Jeleč





During the floods and rehabilitation of floods recovery, the EUFOR assistance has been invaluable. EUFOR involved its human and technical resources in lifesaving activities at that time. As the Commander EUFOR, Major General Luif states, it was an essential contribution of EUFOR to the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina who were affected by floods last year. "Fortunately, it was possible to contribute with our helicopters but also with our soldiers from our units we had here. In that time we also had two reserve companies in the theatre we could immediately deploy, and we also received additional crews for our helicopters to give proper help", he says.

and Austrian Mobile Teams together with soldiers from the engineering battalion to train them and to show them how to construct such bridges and that is, I think, a very important contribution and we also try give them some training in how to reconstruct destroyed roads, how to deal with aftermath of landslides or how to reconstruct and reinforce destroyed river banks. Therefore, it is very important that the units here have the knowledge and they can deal with such tasks on their own if and when requested by the civilian authorities", the EUFOR Commander concludes.

Co-operation with EUFOR as well as other countries when it comes to a fight against disasters will be continued in the future. Practice has shown that with common action and solidarity it is possible to operate effectively and to achieve a lot.

Chief of Joint Staff of AFBiH, Lieutenant General Anto Jeleč, points out the importance of common training with international partners:

"From lessons learned, it appears that in the future we have to train together with EUFOR, but also with partners from the region and the NATO headquarters, who provide instructors or equipment that will help us to equip our armed forces. We should not forget that the minefields issue occupied an important place during the floods. The washed-out mines posed a danger in flood-prone areas, and a lot of effort was invested in the process of identification and clearance of mine contaminated areas", the Lieutenant General Jeleč concludes.

EUFOR has continued its mission of capacity building and training for the members of the AFBiH to operate in conditions of natural disasters, but also in the reconstruction of infrastructure destroyed by floods. Commander EUFOR continues and explains how the mission regarding the floods of last year is not yet accomplished. "We use the training here in BiH with engineering units to reconstruct bridges which were destroyed during the floods. So, that is an on-going procedure and we do it with Hungarian



## Interview with the EUFOR Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Zoltán Mihócza

Brigadier General Zoltán Mihócza (Hungarian Army) recently assumed the post of Chief of Staff of EUFOR Headquarters Sarajevo. In this interview he mainly focuses on the BiH Armed Forces capacity building and training support as the main task of EUFOR's mission.

A 35 year military career, featuring a high level of experience and education gained in his country and worldwide at prestigious military schools and academies, Brigadier General Mihócza said he is looking forward now to facing the challenges of the international environment as the new Chief of Staff of EUFOR in BiH.

The Brigadier General highlighted the role of the soldiers of EUFOR that come from 22 different nations serving in Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying that they also support the country on its future path into the EU. "As the new Chief of Staff of the Headquarters EUFOR, I feel honored to have the opportunity to address you, the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I am fully aware of the difficulties which had to be overcome on the way to a safe, secure and democratic country. However, progress has been made, and the Stabilization and Accession Agreement that entered into force is a big step

forward towards European integration, but also a prosperous future. Nevertheless, it is not only EUFOR and the International Community alone who should feel obliged to mark the way ahead for BiH. It is every single one of you, who plays an important role in the development of your country", Brigadier General Mihócza said.

### Working together for a great success

EUFOR's key role is to provide capacity building and training support to the BiH Ministry of Defence (MoD), and the Armed Forces (AF). The outstanding cooperation with the Armed Forces of BiH is very well known. "The Armed Forces of BiH have made very significant progress in their contribution to BiH's progress from being a security consumer to a security provider, which is a big step forward. Cooperation between EUFOR and the AFBiH is well established. Since the implementation of the Capacity Building and Training (CB&T) programme in 2010, EUFOR has given strong support to this development process. This programme provides the BiH authorities with military expertise and technical support. This is done in close coordination with NATO by training, mentoring, monitoring and advising the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces BiH throughout their

command structures”, the Brigadier General explains and continues: “The second part of this cooperation is the humanitarian assistance. We reached a certain success in this area as well. EUFOR training was provided to the AFBiH to assist them to respond to different incidents such as the devastating flooding last year. So, the CB&T programme is still on going. This March we signed a Road Map Agreement for 2016/2017, when we identified two additional areas of cooperation and training - Engineering and Military Policing - which will contribute to the increasing skill set of the Armed Forces”, EUFOR Chief of Staff said.

### **Helping to make BiH a safer and more secure place**

Alongside the support to the MoD and AF BiH, through the Capacity Building and Training programme and throughout common exercises, Brigadier General Mihocza reminds our readers on the main goals of EUFOR mission in BiH. “Our mission and mandate consist of three pillars. The first is a comprehensive approach which is a military and

civilian approach, which means that we are assisting AFBiH and BiH to step towards the full membership of the EU. The second part of our mandate is an executive one. It means that we are helping the local authorities to provide a safe and secure environment for the citizens of this country. A crucial part of EUFOR’s work in this pillar is the maintenance of good situational awareness, to be well informed about what is going on on the ground. For this reason, we have a large number of LOT houses all over BiH, which enable us to “feel the pulse” of the population, developing and maintaining good relationship with the people. Personnel from the LOT houses also have an additional task - they are assisting the locals to conduct a Mine Awareness programme and to train the citizens to be familiar with the risks of the mines. More than 1,700 people have already received this training in 2015. And the third pillar is the non-executive one, and refers to the already mentioned CB&T programme”, Brigadier General Zoltán Mihóczy concludes.





## Training on the River of Suturlija

Training was delivered and supervised by the EUFOR Mobile Training Team as a part of the EUFOR Capacity Building and Training programme

Members of the Armed Forces BiH (AFBiH) gave a significant contribution in assisting the civilian authorities during the May 2014 floods. During the assistance they displayed their selflessness and courage when saving people and property, helping to deal with the consequences of the flooding, and reaffirmed the importance and role of the AF in responding to natural disaster. The floods were an opportunity to apply in practice the knowledge gained in various training activities, but also to improve the system for providing assistance. For this reason the training for operations during natural disasters, carried out by the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, was an opportunity to learn new lessons.

The training was carried out on the River of Suturlija, a tributary to the River Vrbas, under the mentorship of a EUFOR Mobile Training Team (MTT).



“The situation here is that a bridge was washed away and civilians cannot cross the river. Our specialists, soldiers from the AF, now need to save those people. They will do it by building a rope toboggan and a load bearing construction made out of trees, on top of which they will place planks, thus creating a bridge for people to cross a river. I am very satisfied with the AFBiH soldiers, who have shown a lot of interest in learning new things and applying this newly acquired knowledge”, Captain Markus Wallner, EUFOR MTT Commander said.



For the members of the Reconnaissance Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade participation in this training is an important step forward for more efficient and safe operations during natural disasters. Lessons they

learned will be of use to the members of the unit with no previous experience in such interventions and to others also, as they will improve their knowledge and competence.



## Impressions from participants

*"Considering that I participated in such training for the first time it was very strenuous, but interesting at the same time. I think that I am now trained for alpine rescue operations and I would like to use this opportunity to thank the team from Austria, who invested a lot of effort into passing their knowledge to us", Sergeant Dragan Šantor said.*

*"The objective of this training is to make sure that a person is evacuated as quick as possible, using a minimum of equipment and respecting all safety imperatives, for that is always the number one concern, Captain Enis Herić, Reconnaissance Company of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Commander said.*

*"Today we are working using new techniques, i.e. the way the EUFOR team does it, using as little equipment as possible, and improvising. We use ropes, we lower injured persons from rocks and transport them across the river, or in other words, we are providing a kind of assistance to civilians which we can provide at this moment", Staff Sergeant Miloš Prošić said.*

The Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade gave us his impression of the significance of this training, the significant role of the EUFOR MTT and the training itself, which required full commitment and concentration from each participant. "This exercise has been carried out in excellent cooperation with EUFOR, especially their advisory team from Tuzla, which comes from the Austrian Contingent. They helped with this because they possess very high level-skills in this field. They passed their knowledge to our soldiers from reconnaissance and infantry units, who will in the future be able to provide adequate assistance in such situations. The most important thing for us is to acquire the knowledge in accordance with the "train the trainers" principle,



so we would be able to train other soldiers in this battalion and the brigade", Brigadier General Radovan Ilić, Commander of the 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, said.

In the second half of May, and June, on the slopes of Mountain Konjuh, and Goražde area, members of the AFBiH, also had an opportunity to improve their alpine rescue techniques in support of civilian authorities during natural disasters, with expert assistance from the EUFOR MTT.



# Stabilization Association Agreement

**The Stabilisation Association Agreement - the gateway for candidate country status for EU accession**

One of the main objectives of the foreign policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the accession to full membership into the European Union. The signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) on 16 June 2008 was only one third of the path towards the EU that BiH has traveled. Seven years later, the European Union foreign ministers have decided to activate the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 1 June 2015, the SAA finally entered into force. This means that BiH should now progress much faster towards candidacy status and negotiations on fully-fledged membership.

**BiH prepared for the EU membership – or the beginning of a fairy-tale?!**

The SAA should allow BiH to move forward in its relations with the EU and it should provide a positive stimulus to continue socio-economic, judicial, and other necessary reforms for the EU integration of the country. The main objective of the agreement is to allow the country to prepare itself for future EU membership. From now on, it should be the main framework for relation between the EU and BiH. Its entry into force should increase the confidence of domestic as well as foreign investors. The companies from BiH, but also the EU, will have access to new markets, will improve business opportunities, which would lead to economic growth and employment.

Although local politicians gave pretty euphoric remarks, saying that this is a giant step of BiH towards Europe, there are still doubts of the population who say that all this again depends on politicians and their willingness to pass new laws and introduce reforms. That is why it is no wonder, that majority of the population is not so euphoric.

### **The best-case scenario**

After the SAA entry-into-force, it is expected that BiH submits the membership application. A year later, a positive answer should come, and BiH could receive the status of a candidate. The Acquis Communautaire, which is the total body of common EU law accumulated by then, should be received when the negotiations start, which is expected to happen two years later. For example, the Acquis that Croatia received in 2004, consisted of 35 chapters. These chapters again consisted of about 1500 instructions on how to harmonize the laws of a country with the laws of EU. Nine years later, neighboring Croatia became EU member (2013). Negotiations on the BiH's membership should end in some ten years and BiH could become a member of EU in 2025 ?!

Although it is very hard for anyone to give any prognosis, in the reality it is most important to first receive the membership candidate status. Today, BiH is far from EU standards in its economy, primarily because of its poor regulations and lack of macroeconomic, industrial and development policies. State, entities, cantons, cities, municipalities – it will be difficult to organize the transposition and efficient implementation of the EU legislation, to reach an agreement on how to present it properly to the EU in negotiations and to follow the implementation of the undertaken obligations. Getting the green light for the candidacy of BiH will surely not be so simple. But if there is the political will, all of these processes could go a lot faster.

### **The EU's commitment to help the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfil their aspirations**

The SAA marks the country's pledge to take measures and introduce reforms which will eventually transform it into a modern and prosperous democracy, offering its citizens opportunities and quality of life. It will create new quality jobs, and help the country to take full advantage of its young and dynamic workforce. Increased cooperation with other European countries will mean progress in key areas such as fighting organised crime and solving cross-border environmental problems.

Although there is still a long way to go, the new phase in the relations of BiH with the EU starts. The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina have shown a strong desire for change and hope that with this agreement, their future finally can start.



#### **Main SAA elements:**

- Promoting the free movement of goods
- Creating efficient institutions
- Developing a market economy
- Reducing crime and corruption
- Developing democracy, human rights, and an independent media
- Improving the region's transport infrastructure

## New chapter begins for BiH

The Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) entered into force on 1 June 2015. The SAA establishes a close partnership between the EU and BiH and deepens the political, economic and trade ties between the two parties. It is from now on the main framework for the relations between the EU and BiH, further preparing the country for future EU membership.



“Today’s full entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement is a milestone on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU path. Political clarity, decisive action and a real, coordinated effort by institutions at all levels are now needed to develop and implement the reform agenda. Tangible results will be fundamental for the Council to consider a membership application in the future. An overwhelming majority of BiH citizens want their country to join the EU and the leadership of the country needs to redouble its engagement and meet citizens’ expectations,” said Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission.

“I welcome the entry into force of the SAA as a defining moment in the relations between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as an agreement which firmly sets BiH on an EU-accession path. At the same time, the SAA also brings new responsibilities stemming from its implementation and for BiH authorities to deliver upon. The Commission will spare no effort assisting the country’s authorities in the implementation of the necessary reform agenda,” said Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations.

## New quality in BiH-EU relations

The SAA will more specifically upgrade the EU-BiH relations through the establishment of a dedicated institutional framework: SAA Council, SAA Committee as well as sectoral Sub-Committees; a SAA Parliamentary Committee will also be established between the European Parliament and BiH Parliamentary Assembly. The entry into force of the SAA will also increase the confidence of investors both domestic and international in the country. It will allow both Bosnian companies and EU companies to access their respective markets. This is conducive to enhanced business opportunities for both the EU and the BiH based companies and would stimulate economic growth and employment.

Finally, the SAA will also contribute to the progressive alignment of BiH norms and legislation with the EU legislation, thus benefiting BiH citizens through better quality, healthier and safer goods. The trade part of the SAA entered already into force entered already into force on 1 July 2008 with the Interim Agreement. It still needs to be adapted to take into account the traditional trade with BiH before Croatia’s EU accession.

The first meeting of the Stabilization and Association Council is expected to take place in the second half of 2015.

## Newly appointed EU Special Representative

Ambassador Lars-Gunnar Wigemark has been recently appointed as EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Head of the European Union's Delegation in Sarajevo. Lars-Gunnar Wigemark has 30 years of experience in the Swedish and European diplomatic services.

### Full commitment to the EU future needed in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a European country and it can and will join the European Union. That much is clear. But exactly when this happens depends on how quickly and effectively your authorities and leaders implement the necessary reforms to advance the country along its EU accession path. Reforms are what the recently adopted new approach of the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina is about: by re-sequencing the process, the focus is now on achieving real progress on concrete reforms, improving the lives of people in the country and modernizing the state to meet EU standards and the demands of EU membership. Only this way can the vicious circle of political and economic stagnation in Bosnia and Herzegovina be ended.

We all agree that you, Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens, have been waiting for results from your authorities for too long. Citizens deserve to benefit from membership in the European Union and the advantages that come with it. The ball is now in Bosnia and Herzegovina's court to do something about this, and action is needed to get that ball moving.

I am cautiously optimistic that real progress can be achieved in the next few years. But at the same time we need to be realistic about the challenges that lie ahead. The reform process will not be easy and many difficult decisions need to be made – but we believe that the EU-related reforms are the right answer for providing Bosnia and Herzegovina with a positive perspective for its future.

Why is the prospect of EU membership and the reform agenda so important for Bosnia and Herzegovina? I would briefly like to highlight two major issues in this regard, both of which are fundamental for the future of this country.

Firstly, the economy needs to be strengthened to improve living standards and get people into jobs. The statistics show how dire the situation is. More than 60% of young people

have no job and overall hundreds of thousands of people are unemployed, which is an enormous missed opportunity for a country with so much

potential. The socio-economic reforms initiated by the EU in the Compact for Growth and Jobs and endorsed by the International Financial Institutions are designed to give the economy the boost it desperately needs. For instance, the business environment needs to be improved to attract investments and spur growth, and barriers to jobs need to be broken down to facilitate hiring new employees in the private sector.

Secondly, advancing on the EU accession path requires Bosnia and Herzegovina and its different levels of authority to be working more efficiently and effectively together. A stronger spirit of solidarity and mutual cooperation between the politicians and authorities of this country is urgently needed. Instead of partisan or divisive, zero-sum politics, joint agreement on priorities and actions, which are in everyone's common interests, need to be reached. For instance, in order to take full advantage of the EU's financial support, the country needs to be able to speak to the EU with one voice through effective co-ordination. Political will and the ability to compromise are vital in achieving this.

Effective coordination, however, does not mean that authority or competencies must be given up. It does mean that a new way of managing common affairs, as politics is often characterized, is required. And if politics can lead the way, I am confident that other areas of the society will follow suit and see a positive impact from closer cooperation between the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The time to act on these and other priorities is now. Your neighbours in the region are getting closer to the EU, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is lagging behind. It does not have to be like this – together we have to change that picture and create a momentum for change which leads to a better future. The EU has achieved much in its history to date – more peace between countries, more justice and more prosperity. We want citizens here to share that too.

I hope I can count on your active and vocal support in advancing Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession path!





## New playground for children in Srebrenica

The Commander of the Austrian EUFOR contingent, Colonel Jürgen Wimmer, and Deputy Mayor of Srebrenica, Ms. Biljana Rakić, recently opened newly built playground in the kindergarten "Fledgling" in Srebrenica. The funds of 20,000 KM to build the playgrounds were handed over by the Austrian Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) which operates within the EUFOR mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In addition to the playground, the CIMIC also provided some other means necessary for the running of kindergarten, such as learning materials. Kindergarten "Fledgling", the central kindergarten in the city and another two regional playhouses in Skelani and Potočari, are attended by about 100 children.

It all started in October last year with a meeting between the EUFOR Liaison Observation Team Bratunac and the Director of the Srebrenica kindergarten. The Austrian LOT Officers had noticed the poor and dangerous condition of the outdoor playground at the kindergarten, and held a joint meeting with the mayor of Srebrenica to discuss how the Austrian Civil-Military Cooperation team,

led by 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Andreas Grassberger, could help to improve the facility. The subsequent project, which was funded by private and corporate donors, included building an outdoor playground with swings, slides and climbing towers as well as a large sandpit. Furthermore, a partnership was established between the kindergarten in Srebrenica and an Austrian kindergarten from Vienna, which has provided the toys.

"We are pleased that a positive image about Srebrenica goes out again. The fact is that in our city there are more children than the capacity of this facility can manage, therefore our future goal will be to expand this capacity, to have enough space for our children", said Biljana Rakić, Deputy Mayor of Srebrenica.

"I would like to appeal to our citizens to make sure that everything stays in this state as it is now and that this court does not suffer the fate of many others," said Vesna Jovanović, director of the kindergarten "Fledgling".

During his speech, Colonel Wimmer highlighted that cooperation between the ethnicities as well as cooperation with the international organisations and EUFOR is the key to achieving a peaceful future for the children of BiH.





## New equipment for Travnik hospital

In May 2015 the Turkish contingent via EUFOR's Liaison Observation Team (LOT) in Travnik donated new equipment worth 31,200 Euros to the maternity department of the Travnik hospital. The equipment was handed over in a ceremony attended by local medical and government officials.

The Turkish Senior Military Representative to EUFOR, Colonel Savaş Celepoğlu, said he was pleased that the Turkish donation will help young people in this municipality. "In this hospital, around 200 babies are born every year. We hope that thanks to our donations, the future of these children will be facilitated", Colonel Celepoğlu said.

The hospital director Mirsad Granov said that Turkey's donation is of great importance for the hospital, and that finally after two years they succeeded in solving the problem of transporting babies in incubators.

"Thanks to the Turkish army, together with incubators we have 14 other very essential medical supplies too," Granov said, and added that the donated equipment will raise hospital services to a higher level.



Members of the Turkish military mission mingled with the patients of the Pediatric department and handed them gifts



"During our regular meetings with the local people in the hospital we have noticed that the hospital would benefit from more equipment for new born babies. Seeing the opportunity, CIMIC project was started, resulting in the donation of the equipment", Major Erdogan Soyliyen, LOT Travnik Commander said.

# “Duga”

## Strengthening the role of women in family and society

Humanitarian Women’s Association “Duga” (Rainbow) was founded in 1992 and it has the same mission today as at the time of its establishment - raising the quality of life for families and individuals, strengthening confidence and empowering women and young people. In its 23 years of existence, “Duga” has supported over 150,000 people economically.

“The Association came into being by the spontaneous action of a group of proactive women from Banja Luka, whose aim was to help vulnerable groups in the society in those conditions: Women and children, victims of war, refugees, and local population of all ethnic and national backgrounds”, Ms. Galina Marjanović - president of the Association, explained in the interview for “Teme”.

Among the many members of “Duga”, there are female doctors, psychologists, economists and other successful women who, beside humanity and dedication, very early recognized the need to develop civil society and non-governmental organizations as the third sector. Thus, they attended

different seminars and conferences on a voluntary basis to be able to assist their clients in the most appropriate manner.

“Today, the services of our association are based on the social program, whose aim is to empower women and their families economically. We implement various activities in the field of culture, tradition (by making ethno souvenirs and traditional handicrafts), health, human rights, tourism, and through educational and creative courses we provide support to the young people and the development of civil society”, says Ms. Marjanović.

## A major contribution to women's economic empowerment

### To what extent can women influence changes in BiH society?

**Mrs. Marjanović:** Women can contribute to changes in all areas of the BiH society, but with greater support from the authorities at all levels, a far greater understanding of society and the creation of better conditions for all of society.



### What do you consider as your greatest success so far?

**Mrs. Marjanović:** Success is our continuity, our human mission; the biggest success is that, through various forms of aid, with great enthusiasm, we have helped more than 150,000 people so far.

### Can you describe your cooperation with international organizations and achievements?

**Mrs. Marjanović:** In some of our earlier projects, through UNDP we implemented different projects funded by the EU IPA funds. We cooperated with SFOR, UNHCR, *Women Shelters*, *Malteser Hilfsdienst* and ODA (Official development assistance), as well as with entity and state level ministries. I must stress that the handicrafts made in our creative workshop have been listed in the UNESCO book "Traditional art and crafts in BiH". "Duga" was selected by the Council of Ministers of BiH to exhibit its works at the Shanghai Expo in 2010. In Seoul, at the Women's Invention Exposition, "Duga" won the bronze medal. In 2011, the Association was awarded the City Plaque for



Humanity. In 2012, the Association became a member of the Rural Women's Support Network. Last year, the Zmijanje embroidery of our association was added to the UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage list, as the first example of intangible cultural goods coming from BiH.

**Tradition is important to preserve the identity of a society. In addition to language and culture, it adds character to the social environment.**

The activities of "Duga" are carried out mainly through charity work, manufacturing and selling traditional handicrafts, vocational rehabilitation, organisation of courses, exhibitions, folk festivals and social events.

"As far as the educational program is concerned, around one hundred women are producing traditional handicrafts in the workshop organized by "Duga". With expert assistance from ethnologists, designers and artists they are producing exclusive items of clothing and souvenirs. These courses are attended by girls and women of different age, many of whom exhibit interest in old crafts", Ms. Marjanović emphasised.

"Duga" wishes to remind the public and citizens about many years of its humanitarian and creative work and to show that, after 23 years, with enthusiasm, love and kindness a lot can be done for the community. All of that can be achieved thanks to the devoted members, volunteers, their generous humanity and commitment.



# Protection of nature in BiH

## World Environment Day

World Environment Day is celebrated every year on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June in more than 100 countries around the world, on the anniversary of the UN Conference in Stockholm (1972) dedicated

to the environment, when the United Nations Environmental Protection Program was adopted (UNEP). This day is celebrated to raise global awareness to take positive environmental action to protect nature and the planet Earth.

Features of the celebration of World Day of Environmental Protection have up to now included initiatives for land protection, water, the ozone layer, preventing unfavorable climate change and the support of sustainable development. This day is marked throughout the world with events including street rallies, bicycle races, concerts with positive messages on environmental protection, tree planting, recycling, and cleaning campaigns.

This day brings together people from all sections of society in a joint effort to make their environment cleaner, greener and more beautiful, both for itself and for future generations, too.

The European Union supports the environment sector in BiH, which is very important sector in the process of joining the EU and takes up nearly one-third of the acquis of the European Union. Support to BiH assigned to this sector in the first generation of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA 2007-2013) amounted to about 90 million. This includes significant investments in infrastructure in order to ensure improved treatment of waste water, prevention of further pollution of groundwater for drinking thus reducing the risk for health, improving access to safe drinking water and improving waste

disposal, all in accordance with the standards and demands of corresponding EU legislation on environmental protection.

## Nature protection in BiH

The developed world has already largely applied the criteria according to which the civilized maturity of a nation is also measured by its attitude toward natural and cultural-historical heritage. All EU countries have adopted legal measures for the protection of certain locations that are of importance for the conservation of nature protected areas.

## What is the attitude of Bosnia and Herzegovina to this?

According to a European Commission report, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made limited progress in the area of environmental protection. As stated, BiH should adopt the Framework Law on Environmental Protection, fully take over the EU Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment, and develop systems for monitoring air quality. The little information in this field, which can mainly be found on websites of the entity ministries, has not been properly sorted out and categorized to enable easy use by all interested parties.

Environmental protection and nature protection are two basic legal concepts in the approach to the environment. Environmental protection limits the impact of industrial plants on the environment, while nature protection limits changes in the nature and ecosystems. Environmental protection focuses on the areas intended for construction, industry, traffic and communications, agriculture and other human activities, whereas nature protection focuses on areas of special natural value in which introduction of changes to the ecosystem is either not allowed or very restricted.

Unquestionably, Bosnia and Herzegovina abounds with a large number of natural resources that deserve to be placed under some form of protection. Unfortunately, there is still not a system efficient enough for the protection of the rare and endangered species and extremely valuable natural landscapes. Consequently, they are not managed in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Given the current general situation in BiH, and not just that in the field of nature protection, it is clear that radical steps must be taken in order to move ahead in the field of nature protection.

This cannot and won't happen until the public gets involved in providing support to relevant institutions which deal with issues in this field. This in particular refers to non-governmental organisations, the media, universities and scientific institutes which should contribute each in their own way and in accordance with their capabilities. Only in this way is it possible

Hutovo Blato is located in the south-eastern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In an area of 7411 hectares, there are numerous pools and lakes. Research results have shown that in this area live 165 species of birds from 39 families, 22 species of fish from 12 families and 610 species of vascular plants. The International Council for Bird Protection in 2001 has included Hutovo Blato on the international list of important bird habitats. Hutovo Blato is also located on the list of wetlands of international importance according to the Ramsar Convention. Hutovo Blato is registered in UNESCO.



to create a general climate in the society that would lead to significant processes in establishing large protected areas.

Sixteen nature landscape reserves, eight strict nature reserves, three national parks, eight special nature reserves and one hundred and ten natural

*Una – Martin Brod*



### **Strict nature reserves**

1. Rainforest Perućica within the Sutjeska National Park
2. Rainforest Lom on the Klekovača Mountain near Petrovac
3. Rainforest Janj near Šipovo
4. Rainforest Žuča-Ribnica near Kakanj
5. Rainforest Plješeвица near Bihać
6. Forest Reserve Omar near Skender Vakuf
7. Forest area Bukov Do near Ljubinje
8. Forest area Masna Luka on the Čvrstica Mountain

### **National parks**

1. Sutjeska - Tjentište
2. Kozara - Prijedor
3. Una – Martin Brod

### **Special reserves geological**

1. Vjetrenica Cave - Popovo Polje
2. Bijambare Cave - Olovo
3. Hrustovača Cave - Sanski Most
4. Banja Stijena Cave - Rogatica
5. Sand Pyramids – Miljevina, Foča
6. Lednica Cave –Resanovci, Grahovo

### **Ornithological**

1. Hutovo Blato Wetland- Čapljina
2. Bardača Lake - Srbac

### **Nature landscape reserves**

1. Trebević Mountain -Sarajevo
2. Jahorina Mountain - Pale
3. Suvajsko Highlands -Bosanska Krupa
4. Neretva Canyon – Jablanica, Drežnica
5. Rakitnica Canyon –Bjelašnica, Visočica
6. Vrbas Canyon – Jajce, Banja Luka
7. Ujčica Gorge-Kladanj
8. Čude Gorge -Olovo
9. Miljacka Gorge – Pale, Kozija Čuprija Sarajevo
10. Janj River Gorge – Otoka near Šipovo
11. Source of the Buna River – Blagaj, Mostar
12. Bašajkovac area - Livno
13. Kruščica area -Vitez
14. Tisovac area -Busovača
15. Bistričak area -Zenica
16. Cicelj Mountain -Čajniče

monuments on BiH's territory have been declared protected areas. These data tell us the number of the protected areas in BiH is generally very small.

The situation in the field of nature protection in BiH, according to many non-governmental associations, is a reflection of the general situation in the country. Non-observance of the basic legal norms and unplanned development have led to a large scale destruction of the environment, including extremely valuable nature sites. Generally speaking, the environmental awareness and nature protection in BiH are at a very low level. This has to do, on one hand, with a lack of basic culture and an insufficient level of education of the population, and on the other hand, with a clear desire on the part of one segment of the population to earn a profit by various unacceptable means, whereby they won't stop at making even the most drastic interventions in the environment. The absence of an efficient legal system gives rise to and tolerates actions that should be sanctioned in accordance with the existing legislation. Besides, the fact that some areas have already been declared protected there is no guarantee that their ecosystems will be preserved in accordance with the type of protection envisaged for a particular area. For this reason, the task of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as their representatives say, is not at all easy. The constant

### **Maglić (Sutjeska National Park)**





## *Bijambare*


### **Currently protected areas in BiH which operate in accordance with the law**

Sutjeska and Kozara National Parks, Hutovo Blato Nature Park, Blidinje Lake Nature Park, Natural Monument Skakavac, Prokoško Lake Natural Monument, Bijambare protected landscape, Source of the Bosna River (Vrelo Bosne), Bardača Wetland, Una National Park.

pushing of the environmental issues out of the sight of the public in favor of other “more important” issues has led to an even more negligent attitude towards nature.

It is only logical that, in addition to competent institutions, the initiatives and ideas about activities for nature protection must also come from NGOs and local communities. However, local communities don't often recognize the advantages and opportunities that arise from the protection of specific nature sites and species. On the contrary, such activities are right away being dismissed for often unjustified reasons, which is obviously due to a lack of information or ignorance. Such attitude only hinders the implementation of legal procedures for the protection of nature sites which the relevant

entity and cantonal ministries have currently been conducting. Therefore, ecological organisations are the ones that should make the initial basic steps in protecting the nature. Despite it all, a hope remains that BiH's authorities and the public will recognize the importance of the protection of nature and protected nature sites, especially if it is known that the sector of environmental protection is one of the sectors most highly prioritized by the European Union in the EU integration process.



## *Prokoško lake*



# MORE THAN JUST AN ARMY

ARMED FORCES OF BiH



Trained and Supported  
by EUFOR