



The EU's involvement in Bosnia & Herzegovina

This series of Briefing Papers aims to outline the work of the European Union (EU) in the field of Peacebuilding, how it is involved in Conflict Zones and International Actors (illustrated by Case Studies). The papers are intended to act as an introduction to this topic and to help provide understanding of the EU's work in this field.

This paper outlines the policy of the EU and the role it plays towards Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The Current Situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina

In 2004 International Alert & Saferworld reported that the security situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina is “*considered stable, albeit still fragile*” and a resumption of armed conflict between the Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs “*is no longer considered a credible possibility*”. There are however concerns over the slow economic recovery leading to new security problems, particularly criminality and corruption¹.

Why the EU is involved in Bosnia & Herzegovina

Along with the historical ties and moral obligations that the EU has in Bosnia & Herzegovina and the wider Balkan region, the EU has a vested interest in the stability of the region. The European Security Strategy states that neighbouring countries “*who are engaged in violent conflict...pose problems for Europe*” and identifies the need for a “*ring of well-governed countries to the East of the European Union*”². If the region around, which includes the Balkans and therefore Bosnia & Herzegovina, is stable then the stability and security of the EU is also improved.

Further background on the EU's relations with Bosnia & Herzegovina available from:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/bosnia_herzegovina/

EU Policy towards Bosnia & Herzegovina

The goal of EU integration

In June 2003 the European Council stated, “*The future of the Western Balkans (including Bosnia and Herzegovina) is within the European Union*”³. The integration of countries into the EU is a powerful foreign policy tool and has enabled the EU to extend “*its zone of peace and democracy across the European continent*” through expansion⁴. Bosnia & Herzegovina, along with other Western Balkan countries, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, including Kosovo (as defined by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244, have been offered the long-term prospect of accession to the EU. The European Commission's website clearly states: “*EU integration is one of the main political objectives of Bosnia and Herzegovina*”⁵.

¹ *Strengthening Global Security Through Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict*, Saferworld/International Alert, February 2004, p.10, www.saferworld.org.uk/publications/EU_presidency_04_irish_dutch.pdf

² *A Secure Europe in a Better World - European Security Strategy*, 12 December 2003, p.7-8, http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?id=266&lang=EN&mode=g

³ *European Security Strategy - Bosnia and Herzegovina / Comprehensive Policy*, Adopted by the European Council, 17/18 June 2004, <http://www.eusrbih.org/policy-docs/?cid=1,1,1>

⁴ *Europa - Enlargement Home Page*, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/index_en.html

⁵ *Europa - Enlargement: Relations with Bosnia Herzegovina*, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/bosnia_herzegovina/eu_relations.htm

The Stabilization and Association Process and the Stabilization and Association Agreement

The Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) provides the policy framework for the EU's involvement in Bosnia & Herzegovina and the other Western Balkan countries. It is linked to the process of accession to the EU. The Western Balkan countries have undertaken to meet the political and economic requirements to be considered for membership of the EU. The SAP is a partnership between the EU and each country tailored to the development level of the each particular country. In the SAP the EU offers a mixture of trade concessions, economic and financial assistance and contractual relationships⁶.

The SAP of Bosnia & Herzegovina allows for the establishment of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) to allow for formal contractual relations with the EU.

Progress Achieved

In 2003 the European Commission undertook a Feasibility Study to assess if Bosnia & Herzegovina was in a suitable situation to negotiate a SAA. The Feasibility Study set out a set of priorities (16 in total) for Bosnia & Herzegovina concluding that negotiations should be open for a SAA once “*significant progress*” had been made in meeting these.

In October 2005 the Commission assessed the progress of Bosnia & Herzegovina in addressing the priorities set out by the Feasibility Study. In its Communication to the Council of the European Union on this subject it concluded that significant progress had been made and was “*in a position to recommend to the Council the opening of negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia & Herzegovina*”⁷.

According to the European Commission website “*The establishment of a Stabilisation and Association Agreement is crucial for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s aspirations to be part of the EU. It is expected that the perspective of negotiating and concluding this agreement will act as an incentive for the acceleration of the reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*”

Financial Aid to Bosnia & Herzegovina

The EU has provided substantial financial support to Bosnia & Herzegovina. According to the European Commission website, since 1991 2.5 billion euros have been set aside to deal with the situation in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

EU Actors in Bosnia & Herzegovina

There are a number of different actors from the EU involved in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The High Representative and EU Special Representative

The Office of the High Representative (OHR) is the chief civilian implementation agency in Bosnia & Herzegovina. As set out in the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement⁸ the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Peace Agreement.

The High Representative has significant powers. The High Representative has powers “*to remove from office public officials who violate legal commitments and the Dayton Peace Agreement, and to impose laws as he sees fit if Bosnia and Herzegovina’s legislative bodies fail to do so*”⁹. These

⁶ Europa - Enlargement: Negotiations, <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/sap.htm>

⁷ Communication from the Commission to the Council on the progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing the priorities identified in the “Feasibility Study on the preparedness of Bosnia and Herzegovina to negotiate a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the European Union (COM (2003) 692 final)”, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/bosnia_herzegovina/pdf/ComEN.pdf

⁸ Full text of the agreement is available at: http://www.ohr.int/dpa/default.asp?content_id=380

⁹ OHR General Information, <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/>

powers were given to the High Representative by the Peace Implementation Council (PIC)¹⁰, at a conference in Bonn in 1997 and are referred to as the 'Bonn Powers'.

The High Representative also has the role of EU Special Representative (EUSR) for Bosnia & Herzegovina. The EUSR reports to the Council of the European Union through the Secretary-General and High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy.

Further background is available from the OHR website (<http://www.ohr.int/>) and the EUSR website (<http://www.eusrbih.org/>).

European Commission Delegation

Established in 1996 the Delegation of the European Commission to Bosnia and Herzegovina *“plays a key role in the implementation of external assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina”* and since 1998 *“manages projects directly from start to finish on behalf of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in close contact with the EuropeAid Co-Operation Office”*¹¹.

Further information is available from the Delegation's website:
<http://www.delbih.cec.eu.int/en/index.htm>

EU Police Mission (EUPM)

The EUPM was launched at the beginning of 2003 and is the first mission to be initiated under the European Security and Defence Policy. The EUPM acts as a follow up to the previous United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF). The objective of the EUPM is to *“establish sustainable policing arrangements”* so they are at the level of best European and International practice. The EUPM concentrates on the strategic priorities of institution and capacity building at management level, fighting organised crime and corruption, developing the financial viability and sustainability of the local police and the promotion of police independence and accountability¹². The mandate of EUPM was set to expire on 31 December 2005. On 24 November 2005 the Council of the European Union adopted a joint action allowing the mission to continue until the end of 2007¹³.

A Case Study of the role of the EUPM in Bosnia & Herzegovina can be found in the 2004 report by Saferworld/International Alert on Enhancing EU Impact on Conflict Prevention, *“Strengthening Global Security Through Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict”*, available to download from:
www.saferworld.org.uk/publications/EU_presidency_04_irish_dutch.pdf

Further information is available on the work of the EUPM at: <http://www.eupm.org/>

EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) - Operation Althea

Following the conclusion of the NATO mission in Bosnia & Herzegovina (SFOR) the EU launched EUFOR on 2 December 2004. EUFOR is the first mission to be conducted under the framework of the ESDP. EUFOR involves the deployment of 7,000 troops in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

The key objectives are:

- To provide deterrence and continued compliance with the responsibility to fulfil the role specified in the Dayton Peace Agreement
- To contribute to a safe and secure environment in Bosnia & Herzegovina, in line with its mandate, and to achieve core tasks in the OHR's Mission Implementation Plan and the SAP¹⁴.

¹⁰ Background information on the PIC is available at: <http://www.ohr.int/pic/archive.asp?sa=on>

¹¹ European Commission's Delegation to Bosnia & Herzegovina - General Information, http://www.delbih.cec.eu.int/en/about_us/about_us2.htm

¹² Based on the EUPM Fact Sheet, <http://www.eupm.org/FactSheet.asp?lang=eng>

¹³ Council Joint Action on the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia & Herzegovina, 24 November 2005, http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/oj/2005/L_307/L_30720051125en00550058.pdf

¹⁴ European Force in Bosnia & Herzegovina - EUFOR Mission, <http://www.euforbih.org/mission/mission.htm>

Further information on EUFOR at: <http://www.euforbih.org/>

EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM)

The role of the EUMM is to:

- Monitor political and security developments as well as border monitoring, inter-ethnic issues and refugee returns.
- Contribute to early warning and confidence building measures.

The EUMM is based in Sarajevo and it operates in Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It has approximately 120 international Monitors and 75 locally employed personnel¹⁵.

The Need for Coherence and Co-ordination

One of the key challenges with this number of actors is ensuring coherence and co-ordination in policy and activities in Bosnia & Herzegovina. This has been recognised by the EU. In a paper on *European Security Strategy - Bosnia and Herzegovina / Comprehensive Policy* (<http://www.eusrbih.org/policy-docs/?cid=1,1,1>), which was adopted by the European Council on 17/18 June 2004, it is stated that it has been decided “*that a number of arrangements would be made in Brussels and Sarajevo in order to promote coherence of the EU effort in Bosnia and Herzegovina*”. The issue of coherence and co-ordination also needs to be considered in the relationship of the EU with other International Actors in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

¹⁵ EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Former Yugoslavia, http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=622&lang=en