

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The year 2006 began optimistically for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), with the incoming High Representative announcing that the state had made such progress toward normality that it would be possible to close his office in 2007. But the year ended with new concerns over continued divisions between the Serb and Croatian-Bosniak halves of the country, demonstrated by highly polarizing elections in October. The early optimism was also overshadowed by slow progress on defense sector and police reform, as well as the continued failure to apprehend the two highest-profile Bosnian Serb war crimes suspects of the early 1990s, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

Bosnia remains host to a complex peace-keeping architecture that evolved out of the 1995 Dayton Accords, originally intended to act as the basis for a relatively short-lived international presence. But the late 1990s saw the entrenchment of the roles of NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR), the UN's International Police Task Force (IPTF), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the ad hoc Office of the High Representative (OHR) in maintaining postconflict stability. The European Union has recently taken on security responsibilities, with the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM) replacing the IPTF in January 2003, and the EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR Althea) taking over from SFOR in December 2004. These transitions took place during the tenure of Lord Paddy Ashdown as High Representative. Appointed in 2002, he was also "double-hatted" as the EU's Special Representative (EUSR). He took a highly assertive

approach, using the powers of his office to intervene in domestic politics and dismiss a number of elected politicians.

If Ashdown's time in office was defined by the Europeanization of the international presence in Bosnia, 2006 appeared to offer the opportunity for a further transition. On 31 January, Christian Schwarz-Schilling succeeded Ashdown as High Representative, promising to maintain an emphasis on EU membership but to adopt a less interventionist approach than his predecessor. There was also a reorientation of the EUPM. The police mission was originally mandated to monitor and mentor the domestic police, partitioned into Serb and Bosnian-Croat forces. In November 2005 the European Council agreed to extend the mission by another two years, giving it additional coordination responsibilities for tackling organized crime. However, the force was reduced from over 350 officers to 173 in September 2006.

This reorientation reflected the fact that late 2005 had seen progress on a central issue in police reform, the unification of the divided Serb and Croat-Bosniak police forces under a single national authority. Politicians from both sides now accept this in principle, as well as the unification of their military forces, which had also remained separate since Dayton. Both decisions were preconditions for Bosnia entering into talks on a stabilization and association agreement with the EU, begun in November 2005, as well as progressing toward NATO membership. But there was little political will among Bosnian Serb leaders to hasten the implementation of police reform, and a 30 September deadline for the Bosnian Police Directorate to present a unification plan was missed.

This lack of progress reflected broader political tensions. In April 2006, Schwarz-Schilling urged the UN Security Council to treat Bosnia as a “normal” state, and let the domestic authorities take their own decisions. However, the Bosnian Serb leadership in particular has continued to resist a full integration of state structures, even calling for secession on the basis of a referendum similar to that held in Montenegro in May 2006. On 1 October, the first general elections since Dayton were convened to elect a three-person presidency and national parliament, as well as separate legislatures for the Serb and Bosnian-Croat regions. Campaigning overshadowed reform priorities, and while Bosnian-ethnicity voters backed candidates in favor of a unified state, the Serb-ethnicity electorate opted for nationalists. The polls were the first carried out entirely by the domestic authorities. While voting was smooth, international observers raised questions over the conduct of the count in some locations.

Uncertainty over Bosnia’s political future has led policymakers to address the evolution of the international presence there. In August, Schwarz-Schilling announced that the Office of the High Representative (OHR) would begin preparations to close on 30 June 2007. In October, the European Council and European Commission won the agreement of EU foreign ministers to develop a “reinforced EUSR office” to inherit some of the roles of the OHR, including residual responsibilities under the Dayton Accords, facilitating local political processes, and promoting the rule of law and police reform. The Council and Commission underlined that the new office should be smaller than OHR. It is widely assumed that the OSCE’s role will continue in Bosnia, including assistance in economic and educational affairs as well as justice and defense reform.

The future of EUFOR is also under consideration. While the force originally consisted of 7,000 troops, this figure was understood to be higher than Bosnia’s conditions demanded, although it had a secondary role as a potential reserve for Kosovo Force (KFOR).

NATO Headquarters Sarajevo

- Authorization date 28 June 2004 (Communiqué of NATO Istanbul Summit)
22 November 2004 (UNSC Res. 1575)
- Start date December 2004
- Senior military representative Major-General Richard O. Wightman Jr. (United States)

OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Authorization date 8 December 1995 (Fifth Meeting of the Ministerial Council)
- Start date December 1995
- Head of mission Douglas Alexander Davidsson (United States)
- Budget \$22.1 million (October 2005–September 2006)
- Strength as of 30 September 2006 International civilian staff: 109
Local civilian staff: 575

EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM)

- Authorization date 11 March 2002
(Joint Action 2002/210/CFSP)
- Start date January 2003
- Head of mission Brigadier-General Vincenzo Coppola (Italy)
- Budget \$17 million
(October 2005–September 2006)
- Strength as of 30 September 2006 Civilian police: 173
International civilian staff: 28
Local civilian staff: 215

EU Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR Althea)

- Authorization date 12 July 2004 (Joint Action 2004/570/CFSP)
9 July 2004 (UNSC Res. 1551)
- Start date December 2004
- Head of mission Major-General Gian Marco Chiarini (Italy)
- Budget \$56.5 million (October 2005–September 2006)
- Strength as of 30 September 2006 Troops: 5,935
Civilian staff: 85



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By the third quarter of 2006, EUFOR included slightly fewer than 6,000 soldiers, and EU governments have reportedly considered reducing it to 1,500. In the meantime, EU troops have cooperated with US forces, commanded by a residual NATO headquarters in Sarajevo, in raids to capture war crimes suspects. EUFOR was embarrassed in early January when soldiers killed the wife of one suspect during a firefight. While a number of targets were apprehended, former Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic remain free—they are believed to spend more time in Serbia than Bosnia.

While the international presence in Bosnia is thus attempting to give the state greater autonomy, political divisions have obstructed real progress in many areas. With the politics of the Western Balkans unsettled by tensions over Kosovo's future, Bosnia's transition to "normal" statehood may yet founder on issues left unresolved since Dayton. While the EU may continue to draw down its military and police presence, it will need to intensify its political efforts to persuade the Serb community that its future lies within a unified Bosnia.