

Introduction

Moving out of the Dayton Era into the Era of Brussels?

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The Dayton Agreements ended the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in November 1995. They paved the way for the country's development in the framework of a semi-protectorate. The political system is now based on two "Entities": the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and Republika Srpska (RS), each with highly distinctive political and administrative structures, and a presidency at state level, consisting of a Bosniak, Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb representative. Above these, the High Representative (HR) functions as the chief authority with legislative powers (including veto powers). International troops and police are still present in the country, as are international organisations which strive to support human rights, peace and development.


High Representative Paddy Ashdown is convinced that Bosnia will "survive as a state, albeit not a centralised one of classic European tradition – more Belgium, probably, than France", and he is "confident of that, because Southeast Europe is not what it was. Tudjman is gone. Croatia's ambitions are now focused on Brussels, not Bosnia. Milosevic is in The Hague, overthrown by a democratic revolution" (Ashdown 2004:41). He pointed out that regional stability is an important and necessary factor for success in post-conflict regeneration. According to Paddy Ashdown, Bosnia has made "huge progress" in the sense that it has gone "beyond cold peace, moving out of the era of Dayton and into the era of Brussels" (ibid.). At the same time, he made it clear that Bosnia "still has a long way to go" in order to join the European Union.

Ten years after the war and ten years after Dayton, it is time to review the efforts of post-war regeneration and peacebuilding from different perspectives. This book strives to contribute to a better understanding of the present situation in Bosnia in order to identify the needs for future policy options. Insiders and outsiders, experts working *in* the conflict and *on* its transformation, have been invited to join in a retrospective view and tackle overarching questions: Which

conflict lines mark the present society? Have the underlying causes of conflict been addressed? What are the obstacles to conflict transformation and what has been undertaken to overcome them? What are the potential and responsibilities of international support and what are the limits to external intervention? Which dilemmas do international and local actors face in post-war regeneration and peacebuilding? What does “civil society” mean in Bosnia and how is it related to state-building and democratisation? What is the potential of CSO actors and which contributions have they made so far in order to support the peace process? How can people constructively deal with the past in order to design the future in the region of former Yugoslavia?

This book presents the views of practitioners, academics and policy advisors who have been or are still dealing with the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina and have substantial knowledge of the situation in the Balkans. Insiders and outsiders, local and international experts have participated in this project. They analyse topics which have been the focus of international state reform, democratisation and peacebuilding efforts (such as police reform, regulation of the electronic media, fostering local self-government and reform of the education sector) and also give insights into facets of society which have been beyond the main areas of interest of high-level politics, such as the reality of returnees in rural areas, the activities of the labour unions, the potential of inter-religious dialogue, initiatives for youth empowerment and approaches to dealing with the past by encouraging people to take responsibility and by raising awareness of the social factors and attitudes which contributed to past wars (and might be the cause of further outbreaks of violence if they are not tackled by society). The authors do not present panaceas or blueprints for peace processes. They point out problems and dilemmas, and some of them raise important questions. Some of them try to identify indicators for progress and political change. Positive results are highlighted, as well as negative trends. All these contributions may help to determine whether the hypothesis that Bosnia has moved “beyond cold peace”, that it has left the “era of Dayton” behind and entered a new era, is borne out by reality.

The contributions are structured in four sections. The *first section* provides an overview of important political and socio-economic developments in Bosnia over the last decade. This includes achievements and obstacles to the implementation of the Dayton principles as well as problems of economic development and refugee return. The *second section* focuses on the problems and dilemmas of building a civil society in Bosnia. This includes the question of how to design democratic and participatory political structures which promote the development of civil society. The *third section* places special emphasis on



the role of youth in post-conflict areas and looks for adequate ways to address the needs of young people in community-building, education and development policy. The *fourth section* looks at initiatives for setting up mechanisms for truth, justice and “Dealing with the Past” in Bosnia as well as the other countries of former Yugoslavia. The *final contribution* assesses lessons and dilemmas from the peacebuilding experience in Bosnia.

1. Ten Years after Dayton – An Overview

James Lyon, an analyst working for the International Crisis Group, examines which of the objectives set out in the Dayton Agreement have been implemented over the past few years and in which areas of government policy further reform is required. He identifies a number of obstacles in Bosnia’s political structures. A major factor, in his view, is the continuing lack of willingness to compromise on the part of nationalist forces and political hardliners – an assessment which is confirmed by many other articles in the book. However, one problem was created by the Dayton Agreements themselves, namely that the international community has implicitly recognised ethnic divides. The scope for obstruction was also encouraged by the fact that Bosnia was not made a genuine protectorate. In a genuine protectorate, the international administration would wield full powers to impose sanctions and would have the authority to exercise its monopoly of force to ensure that the requisite measures were implemented. Instead, a semi-protectorate was created in which police powers remained with the existing, highly dubious and corrupt administration.

Hopes that reforms could be achieved within this very sensitive area were dashed when the completion of police reform – a reform project which had benefited from massive support from the international community – ran aground in 2004 when the government of Republika Srpska would not cooperate. Bosnian Serb hardliners flatly refused to countenance a single police force because control of their own police was seen as a key pillar in maintaining a nationalist mini-state. Their refusal also brought efforts to align Bosnia more closely with Europe to a standstill. The Serb side finally relented, but only under massive pressure from the EU and the HR. After a year of blocking the move, on 5 October 2005 RS leaders caved in to international pressure by agreeing to establish a single police force in Bosnia after the US, EU and HR had set a deadline. This breakthrough means that work can now begin in the foreseeable future on establishing a single police force on a statewide basis, provided that there are no further obstructions in implementation. Even so, it is highly unlikely

that the new police force will come into being for another five years, as High Representative Paddy Ashdown pointed out.¹ The good news is that – as a result of the agreement – Bosnia has got the green light from Brussels to start talks on greater integration with the EU.

The RS leaders' refusal to cooperate and support the establishment of statewide institutions is symptomatic of many policy areas (*see, for example, the article by Tanja Topic on the media and Astrid Fischer's contribution on education reform*). This lack of cooperation has made the debates about how much longer the Office of the High Representative should remain in place and whether it should be replaced by an EU-led mission even more difficult. It also complicates discussions on whether or not the Office of the High Representative (OHR) should have its powers curtailed.² According to James Lyon, ten years after Dayton, the time is still not ripe for the international community to withdraw and give up control, and there is still a very long way to go until Bosnia can survive on its own. The Dayton structures have prevented Bosnia from creating a reform consensus within the country. Lyon criticises the half-hearted implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords and the fact that the international community has left Bosnia “with an unreformed economy, unreformed politics and a ‘Frankenstein’ political structure”. In his view, the international community and the OHR have served a similar function to training wheels on a bicycle. Some might argue that the training wheels should come off sooner rather than later, but without these wheels – the author argues – at this stage the bicycle would simply fall over. He recommends that the international community should remain engaged in Bosnia for some time, “making the square wheels round and putting in place a chain to turn the wheels”.

The Need for Economic Development and Democratic Planning

The post-war period in Bosnia was marked by numerous intersecting lines of conflict within Bosnian society. Besides the tensions between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks (due to nationalist identities which were mainly expressed in terms of religious affiliation), new conflict lines have emerged between refugees/internally displaced persons and the local population, between people returning from abroad and local communities (or displaced persons), between urban and rural populations, and between the employed and the jobless. The parlous state of the economy has proved to be a contributory factor which worsens the potential for conflict and the willingness to vote for nationalist parties.

¹ www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,,1585623,00.html.

² The European Stability Initiative (1999; 2000; 2002; 2003) has focused strongly on this question. For a comprehensive discussion of the “ownership process” in Bosnia, see also Solioz/Dizdarevic 2003.

An important question is how to guarantee economic consolidation and development in Bosnia. The war destroyed 80% of the country's industrial plant and large parts of its infrastructure. Key markets were lost, and many products which were once produced by the country itself now have to be imported. Shortly after the war, there was a burst of economic growth but this was mostly due to international aid programmes and the demands of a "labour market" which had been created by the presence of large international organisations.³ Economic growth decreased again when the international presence dwindled and aid organisations left the country. Although the United Nations Development Programme has noted a slight rise in the Human Development Index in recent years (from 0.718 in 2000 to 0.781 in 2004, see UNDP 2004:104) and the World Bank has therefore reclassified the country from a post-war to a transition country,⁴ the index of economic, political and social security is still trailing behind most other Southeast European countries.⁵ GNP in Bosnia-Herzegovina stands at around 60% of its pre-war level, with industrial production at just 30%. Agrarian production is still one of the most important pillars of the Bosnian economy.

In short, there is a lack of investors, capital and jobs. Unemployment currently stands at 42% (around 40% in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and 50% in the Republika Srpska). The "unofficial" unemployment rate is assumed to be even higher. Research by the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues at the start of the decade revealed that around one-third of the jobless are younger than 27, and two-thirds are below the age of 35 (IBHI/UNDP 2000:30). This shows that teenagers and young adults who should be entering professional life are most affected by the economic situation (*see also the article on the "Need for Multi-Dimensional Youth Work" in this book*). It is also estimated that a huge number (up to 50%) of the jobless are active in the shadow economy and black market activities.

Consequently, economic consolidation is one of the most important challenges at present. The deficits and dilemmas of international intervention strategies in this field have already been analysed and criticised. The European

³ The development of an international humanitarian aid industry which replaced the public sector and hampered the establishment of a local labour market has been criticised (Schneckener 2003:58). Many skilled persons decided to work for the "internationals" due to higher salaries. As a consequence, qualified staff were lacking in other sectors of society and state-building (notably the education sector).

⁴ See Bosnia and Herzegovina's Transformation, Success and Remaining Challenges, 10 July 2005, web.worldbank.org.


⁵ For an in-depth study of the economic situation, see UNDP 2004. BiH thus falls into the group of medium-developed countries, ranking higher than Albania and Turkey but lower than Bulgaria and Macedonia. The problems of economic development in Bosnia have been investigated extensively by Donais 2002 and 2005, Donais/Pickel 2002, Ehrke 2003 and Pugh 2005.

Stability Initiative (1999-2001) and International Crisis Group (2001) have pointed to the lack of coherence and coordination of the interventions of the donor countries and a lack of consistent reform policy in the economic sector (see also Donais 2002; 2005). Some experts (Pugh 2005; Pugh/Cooper 2004) take the view that many of the problems have been caused by the intervention itself, which – through the transfer of financial aid – contributed to perpetuating the war economy. The World Bank states that the country received a total of \$5.1 billion for reconstruction in 1996–1999 and another \$983 million from the International Development Association and Trust Fund money in the period 1996–2003. On a per capita basis, this is more international financial support than any other post-conflict area has received to date (World Bank 2004:xii). The World Bank regards its own intervention in the field of reconstruction as effective in general, but self-critically states a) that results are not satisfactory in supporting private sector development, b) that the privatisation process has not turned out well, and c) that tax evasion and corruption remain serious problems (World Bank 2004:xiii).

The situation is further complicated by a lack of coordination and democratic planning by the Bosnian elites who have failed to strive for policy coherence in this field. This has been highlighted by the *European Stability Initiative* (ESI), an experienced policy institute dedicated to socio-economic and political analysis in former Yugoslavia. ESI evaluated the political economy and planning capacities as well as their impact on different policy areas in Bosnia. The field of reconstruction and refugee return serves as an example. This study illustrates that corruption and lack of democratic planning capacities have contributed to making the return process even more difficult. According to the authors, the absence of reliable information on matters of public policy is proving to be a serious obstacle to development. This seems not to be primarily a problem of supply (as the results of external and internal investigations add up to a substantial body of knowledge) but rather of how this information is used within the policy process.

Bosnian society faces overwhelming problems associated with structural economic legacies inherited from both the pre-war past – Tito's "system of socialist self-management"⁶ – and the war itself. According to the authors, the Yugoslav system of government distributed important public functions across

6 The economic system of "workers' self-management" introduced by Tito in the 1950s was not the Soviet-style planned socialism which existed in other socialist countries. Tito's system was based on decentralisation. The factories were designated "organisations of associated labour" which were intended to control their own means of production and plan their output autonomously according to demand. Workers' assemblies or councils decided on all matters relating to production and appointed the management staff.



a wide range of autonomous institutions. It also blurred the dividing lines between the public and private spheres, often mixing production, regulation and policy-making within the same institutional setting. As a consequence, autonomous institutions developed interests of their own which often diverged from the public interest. In the public sphere as much as in the private economy, they tended to run down the value of their assets over time. Self-management weakened the capacity of government to control the use of public resources and to ensure that they were used to further public policy. As a result, much of the strategic policy-making capacity was located outside the administration and the role of the state was limited to mediation. This legacy, as ESI's analysts point out, survives in Bosnia "in numerous hybrid, semi-public institutions and agencies. Overcoming the self-management legacy means subjecting these institutions to clear lines of authority back to an elected government, and ensuring that they are permanently accountable for their use of public resources. It also means drawing clear lines between the public and private spheres." It is common practice to date in Bosnia that public and semi-public institutions cling to their privileges, allowing public resources to be wasted and public services to decline, while deferring difficult decisions and pushing costs and problems into the future. This strategy, according to ESI, is reaching its objective limits. ESI's most important message is that Bosnian governments will need to find ways to increase their effectiveness dramatically, without consuming more resources.

Dealing with economic development and overcoming the legacies of the past are a prerequisite for good governance outcomes. To improve the performance of the Bosnian government, the basic premises of politics need to change. The authors see an urgent need for "an open discussion of what is really happening to the Bosnian economy, and a willingness to recognise the structural legacies of the pre-war mode of development". A concerted effort to collect information on what is happening in Bosnian society, from the village level to the macro-economy, is required. The authors also say that there is a need for civil society to be created with the ability to push the process of state-building: citizens would need to demand that their governments respond to their problems, and new interest groups would need to begin to believe that it is worthwhile asserting their interests through the political system. And, most importantly, Bosnian society – as well as the Bosnian political and intellectual elites – would have to discard the "authoritarian temptation" that is such an enduring legacy of the pre-war system.

The Continuing Challenge of (Lasting) Refugee Return


Refugee return has been one of the enduring challenges in post-Dayton Bosnia. According to UNHCR, around 2.1 million people (half the population) were forced to leave or fled their home areas during the war in Bosnia. Of these, about 1.3 million people became refugees, dispersed throughout 25 countries, including the neighbouring states of the former Yugoslavia, Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia. About one million remained in Bosnia as internally displaced persons (IDPs). The demographic impact of the war was dramatic, as no community exists in Bosnia where pre-war ethnic composition remained intact (Heimerl 2005:377). In the first years after the war, international organisations focused very rigidly on ensuring that every person returned to the towns and villages they had lived in before the war in order to guarantee implementation of the Dayton principles. Special emphasis was placed on “minority return”. It was argued that the international community should insist on this in order to make it clear that it would not accept the division and reorganisation of Bosnia according to ethnic criteria that had been established during the war. But the “year of return” in 1998 turned out to be a failure as local communities did not cooperate adequately⁷ and very few people decided to go back and live in areas where they would form part of an “ethnic” minority.⁸

The failure of the “year of return” illustrated that a multiethnic Bosnia cannot be achieved by bureaucratic force and announcements on paper. Former HR Wolfgang Petritsch asked whether the direction chosen by the international community made sense, arguing: “Critics of a policy which fails to support the full enforcement of the return process will object that the international community is capitulating to the Serb, Croat and Bosnian warlords. However, restoring the old ethnic map of Bosnia and Herzegovina seems impossible. No one can expect displaced persons to return to places where they feel unsafe and where they feel that they have no prospects for the future, simply in the name of lofty political goals. The multiethnic and multicultural Bosnia which diplomats and artists constantly hark back to cannot be re-established in its old form – if, indeed, it ever existed in the first place and was not just wishful thinking”.⁹ The international community’s strategy in the field of refugee return therefore had to

⁷ UNHCR launched the “Open Cities Initiative” in 1997 and announced that local communities which actively encouraged minority return would benefit from more international aid than others. Only 11 cities in the FBiH and 4 cities in the RS responded to this initiative.

⁸ Lack of security and unresolved property issues were contributory factors. It was only in response to pressure from the international community that, in 1998, the entities amended their property laws, which were incompatible with the Dayton Agreement and impeded the process of property restoration and the payment of compensation.

⁹ Petritsch 2001:313 (translation by Hillary Crowe).



change. UNHCR still promoted minority return but only in line with the principle of free choice. With this decision, it was acknowledged that those families who had lost their property and would not return also had the right to the restoration of their property. The number of minority returnees did not increase until 2001. It seems that the trend changed in 2002/2003. At least UNHCR expressed satisfaction about the increasing willingness to return in general, and also among people returning to areas where they represent a minority (compared with other ethnic groups). After several years of reluctance, more than 300,000 persons have finally returned to areas where they now constitute an ethnic minority.¹⁰

In 2004, international reports announced that more than one million former refugees had returned to the places they fled or were expelled from during the war.¹¹ But it is still an open question whether this process is a lasting one or will lead to further re-migration. It has been reported that in some cases large scale return to so-called “ethnically cleansed” areas changed ethnic relations and marginalised hardliners’ dominance in a local community. Prijedor has been presented as an example (Belloni 2005). But this seems to be an exception from the rule rather than a typical pattern. The reality of Bosnia ten years after the war is that the majority of cities has one dominant ethnic group making up nearly 90 percent of the city’s population, as *James Lyon* points out. According to Lyon, minority refugee returns to the RS and the Croat majority areas have been “extremely disappointing” and those to Bosniak-controlled areas are still not satisfactory.

Monika Kleck, who works for the Freudenberg Foundation (Tuzla) and is a co-founder of the NGO Amica-Prijateljice, also questions the “success story” with regard to return. She critically evaluates the shortcomings of the reconstruction programmes set up by the international organisations. She has carried out empirical research on the situation of people who returned to Eastern Bosnia in recent years. Based on her own observations as a practitioner and on several interview series, she illustrates the reality of returnees in rural regions and “minority areas”, where people often feel unsafe and desperate. Her report points out that in many cases, return to rural areas was not a “free choice”; on the contrary, many people simply had no choice and no alternative options. She also shows that “return” is still not a lasting and irreversible process. In many cases, returnees have faced severe security problems (such as anti-personnel mines or

¹⁰ The International Crisis Group reported that more than 367,000 Bosnians returned to live as minorities in areas governed by former foes (International Crisis Group 2002b:Summary). See also Cox/Garlick 2003:65.

¹¹ UNHCR reported on 21 September 2004 that out of a total of two million refugees and displaced persons, 1,000,473 people had returned to their home areas; of these, 440,147 returned from abroad and 560,326 were internally displaced persons. www.unhcr.de/unhcr.php/1103.

threats and violence from hardliners in the local community) and have had to contend with a devastated infrastructure which cannot satisfy even the most basic needs. Moreover, most of them have to cope with a lack of economic prospects. Very often, women and older people have been the main losers in this process. Incoherent reconstruction strategies and a lack of coordination among competing (rather than cooperating) agencies have exacerbated this situation. International activities in this sector have clearly failed to respond to local needs as they have not aimed to reconstruct functioning local communities, as the author points out.¹² From this experience, lessons should be learned in order to plan post-war recovery and regeneration more effectively in other post-conflict areas.

2. Building Civil Society in Relation to Political Structures

Since Bosnia's progress towards European standards in governance and reform politics is still threatened by potential obstruction from political hardliners, the international community "must seek new partners in the country – as well as in the broader region – that would enable them to place pressure on recalcitrant parties and individuals", as James Lyon suggests. He thinks that the non-governmental sector, particularly those organisations devoted to building civil society, could be such a potential partner: Bosnia needs an active civil society sector that is supported by local donors and activists. Such a sector could exert significant influence on local politicians to push Bosnia further along a path of European integration. However, "due to a lack of local funding and ingrained cultural prejudices, at present the civil society sector is often marginalised and overshadowed by larger international organisations, both governmental and non-governmental" (James Lyon).

Unlike in Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro, civil society groups rarely existed in Bosnia before the war. In the years after 1989, i.e. in the period preceding the war, some non-governmental social policy organisations started to develop.¹³ But not all of them necessarily pursued an emancipatory approach. Since the war, Bosnia has faced a phenomenon which can be observed in many post-war regions:

¹² This problem has also been pointed out by Paul Stubbs (1998) who analysed international return policies in different areas of Bosnia and Croatia in the late 1990s.

¹³ For instance, the Association for a Yugoslavian Democratic Initiative (UJDI), the Anti-War Campaign Sarajevo, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly, the Citizens' Forum of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the People's Front. Some were also initiated by political parties, especially the SDP (former League of Communists) and the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats. Some civil initiatives also developed during the war, such as the Tuzla-based Citizens' Forum. Moreover, a variety of Track II interventions by international CSO actors were launched in and for Bosnia during the war (Large 1997).

the rapid growth of an “NGO sector”, consisting both of international and local initiatives.¹⁴ Local NGOs were almost completely dependent on foreign funding. The dangers of NGO sectors which form “fragmented, artificial societies” and do not have a sufficiently broad social basis have been discussed extensively by academics and practitioners in recent years.¹⁵ One of the main dangers is that they undermine the process of state-building. It has also been pointed out that a massive increase in the number of NGOs does not automatically denote the emergence of a civil society. What is also certain is that initiatives undertaken by NGOs are not necessarily intended or able to contribute to peacebuilding.

The question is whether – ten years after Dayton – we can speak of a “civil society” existing in Bosnia at all. *Ismet Sejjija*, a lecturer at the University of Tuzla, states that Bosnian reality is marked by the existence of a “civil sector”, rather than a mature “civil society” as it is understood in Western European countries. He systematises the genesis of the civil sector and also self-critically highlights the phenomenon of “projectomania”, which leads to a situation in which local NGOs lose contact with society, developing their agendas according to donors’ expectations instead of responding to social needs. But to draw the conclusion that all CSO actors are just part of the “charity business” and “driven by foreign agencies” would also miss the point. There is no reason for a generally negative judgement, but there is a need to differentiate. According to Sejjija, the existing “civil sector” has at least opened space for intercultural and interethnic cooperation and for projects spanning the two entities (Federation and Republika Srpska). This space would never have developed within the political structures in Bosnia, which were closed and organised along the lines of ethnic confrontation. CSO initiatives have helped establish a different culture which is open for social change and development of a pluralistic society. The author argues that the civil sector has some potential to develop further towards a civil society, which should support and, at the same time, effectively control state structures. This is why the international community should not stop supporting CSO actors who are working on a non-profit basis and are committed to human rights, peace and development issues or the empowerment of women or youth. But apart from the NGOs, the potential of other important CSO players such as the labour unions and the media should also be taken into account.

14 The International Council of Voluntary Agencies listed 420 (136 international and 284 national) NGOs in BiH in 1999 (ICVA 1999:IV). The number decreased to 280 (84 international and 196 national) in 2002 (ICVA 2002:I).

15 For a critical analysis of NGOs in war regions, see Roninger/Gynes-Ayata 1994 and Ropers 1998:30. For a comprehensive survey of the dilemmas of peacebuilding through civil society in general, see Douma/Klem 2004. On the problems of building civil society in Bosnia, see Belloni 2001; Chandler 2004; Smillie 1996.

The Trade Unions

The development of the *trade unions* illustrates that ethnopolitical conflict lines are not only reflected by the political parties and state administration, but also by civil society. The war and the division of the country into two entities have significantly impacted on the development of trade unions in BiH. After the system change in 1990, the trade union confederation which had existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina while it was still a constituent republic of Yugoslavia initially remained in place, bringing together 32 trade unions in the newly independent state. The war, though, brought trade union work to a virtual standstill, with most trade unions falling apart.¹⁶ After the end of the war, new trade union structures began to emerge. The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bosnia-Herzegovina (SSSBiH) in Sarajevo staked its claim to be the leading trade union organisation at a nationwide level, seeing itself as the natural successor to the earlier Bosnian confederation. In the RS, however, a second confederation (SSRS) was formed. At first, the Bosnian Serb confederation was used as a mouthpiece by radical nationalist politicians. It was only with the formation of a more moderate government under Prime Minister Dodik that a new course was adopted. By the end of the 1990s, 23 trade unions had been established in the FBiH and 15 in the RS (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 1999).

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One problem is that the trade unions were barely involved in the privatisation process and were unable or unwilling to make a constructive contribution to it. The fragmentation of the confederations along ethnopolitical lines has also meant that during this period trade unions had little political clout and made virtually no contribution to positive social reform. Very few of the sector-level trade unions have attempted to cooperate at inter-entity level.¹⁷ It took nine years of tough negotiations and the mediation of international trade union representatives to achieve an agreement between the FBiH and the RS on the formation of a joint confederation. The agreement was finally signed in May 2005 – ten years after the war.¹⁸

The trade unions have not actively obstructed the development of a pluralistic, democratic and multicultural society in Bosnia, nor have they promoted

¹⁶ Only the Trade Union Confederation in Sarajevo and a few individual sector-level trade unions (metal, textiles, banking, mining, electricity, police) continued to exist.

¹⁷ These include, for example, the Food and Agricultural Workers' Union (PPDiVUT), which was working towards this objective as early as the 1990s while pursuing a targeted policy of involving young people in trade union activities.

¹⁸ Agreement on Founding the Confederation of Trade Unions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed by the Trade Union Confederation of Republika Srpska (SSRS), the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SSSBiH) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) in Sarajevo, 25 May 2005.



it, as *Jasmin Redzepovic*, team coordinator of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions makes clear. In his view, the future challenges facing the trade unions, and their possible contribution to social development, mean forging a culture of dialogue and nonviolent conflict management between trade unions, employers and politics. A further challenge is to establish minimum standards of social security, especially for pensions and healthcare, and achieve greater social justice, which must include strategies for effective poverty reduction, curbs on the shadow economy, and tackling youth unemployment.

Media Development: The Need for a Public Broadcasting System and Media Education

The role of the mass media in the wars in former Yugoslavia has been analysed extensively (Beham 1996; Calic 1995:108-117; Kurpasic 2003; Reljic 1998:41-60). Many news agencies, newspapers, radio and TV stations supported the distribution of propaganda, hate speech and the promotion of enemy images and, by doing so, actively fuelled the outbreak and dynamic of violence. Social reality was interpreted along ethnic lines. Warlords were able to seize control of the media and silence their political opponents while securing public endorsement of the hostile images projected by the media.¹⁹ State television and the newspapers became mouthpieces for propaganda and warmongering (Reljic 1998:55). The lack of pluralism in the ownership structures of the media and the absence of any legal guarantees of media autonomy cleared the way for Bosnia's broadcasting systems to be bent entirely to the will of the nationalist leaders. During the war in Bosnia, three ethnically structured, separate media systems (radio and TV) were established. As hate speech and nationalist reporting threatened to damage any attempt to build a new Bosnian society after the war, the international community's intervention focused on a reform of the electronic media as well. Establishing a public service orientated, statewide broadcasting system was a key priority.

Tanja Topic, who works for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Banja Luka, analyses this difficult and painful process, which was marked by a series of political obstructions. As a consequence, the public broadcasting system and standards of reporting still have a long way to go before they meet the standards required by European institutions. The author also critically investigates the cooperation between international and Bosnian authorities. She argues that international pressure was absolutely essential in order to prevent further

¹⁹ For a detailed investigation of enemy images based on interviews with soldiers in the Bosnian war see Basic 2004.

nationalist indoctrination and to make at least modest progress towards reform in this field. But she also points to the dilemmas which result from the lack of ownership of the process. The reform is not based on broad support from local stakeholders. In order to change the situation, apart from international pressure, efforts must be made to sensitise journalists and provide them with better training. Moreover, Bosnian society must also be better educated and empowered to critically review and evaluate the news, says Tanja Topic. Instead of just consuming and accepting a low level of information, it is the responsibility of every member of society to demand high-quality news reporting.

The Role of Religious Communities and the Potential of Inter-Religious Dialogue

Socio-economic upheavals were one of the key factors leading to the escalation of violence and conflict in the former Yugoslavia and political differences which emerged, for example, over the recognition of minority rights and self-determination and issues concerning the legality of partition.²⁰ Besides these factors, however, cultural differences (such as the rural-urban divide), a lack of social cohesion and shared values and the search for collective identities (Riedel 2005) also played a role. By building on ethno-national ideological constructs and religious identities, the warmongering actors were able to build up their power base and assert their own interests. With the backing of loyal supporters in the media, they were able to instrumentalise nationalist ideologies and national mythologies surrounding the birth of their nation. These notions fell on fertile ground, thanks to the widespread existence of stereotyped perceptions among the different regional, political and religious camps.

Culture-centric arguments and a belief in the fundamental (cultural or moral) superiority of one's own religion and world view existed in all the Bosnian conflict parties before the war. They were expressed most vociferously by the Serb side, which clung to the myth, portrayed in their epic poetry, that the Serbs were "the heavenly people" (*nebeski narod*) – in other words, "God's chosen people". However, the Islamic Declaration penned by Alija Izetbegovic was also based on the supposed superiority of Islamic culture over secular principles of social order. The Croat nationalists, for their part, saw themselves as the authentic representatives of Central European culture and civilisation and

²⁰ For a comprehensive analysis of the background, causes and dynamics of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, see Calic 1995, Gagnon 2004, Woodward 1995, Malcolm 1996:234-271 and Morton et al. 2005. Beyond the above-mentioned factors, a militarisation of the state apparatus and developments in the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) contributed. For an analysis of the relationship and tensions between militarism, nationalism and Yugoslavism (ideology of the defence of the national unity and territorial integrity of the Yugoslav state), see Aranburu 1997:44-78, 173-258.

viewed the other ethnic groups and cultures as “barbaric” (Calic 1995:112). Besides promoting the notion of their own superiority, all the ethnic groups strongly evoked the image of discrimination and physical threats supposedly suffered by them, bolstered by historical myths and collective trauma (this even included the stylisation of the threat of genocide) (Calic 1995:113).

National tensions between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks were largely expressed in terms of religious (Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim) affiliations. Religious fundamentalists existed in all the ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina, with the result that, in the propaganda, the war in BiH took on some of the features of a “religious war” – a situation which was reinforced by spiritual leaders on all three sides (Deschner/Petrovic 1999:329). Many historical stereotypes and prejudices were further entrenched by the experiences of war. This situation is still impeding the development of peaceful community relations and a functioning post-war order in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is defined as a secular state, and religious dogmas should not have influence over law or policy making. Yet, the overlap of religious and ethnic identity has resulted in the use of religious symbols for nationalist purposes. In some cases this led to discrimination, for example by the Serbian Orthodox Church in the RS, where the constitution promoted the exclusion of Croats and Bosniaks in the past. This was eliminated by constitutional amendments and legislative changes in 2002 and it has been reported that the formal dominance of religious institutions has decreased in recent years. Informally, however, religious institutions continue to influence Bosnian politics. Religious leaders’ extensive political involvement was exposed during the pre-election campaign for general elections in 2002 and municipal elections in 2004. In both cases, human rights organisations – like the Helsinki Committee²¹ – reported that religious leaders tried to influence election outcomes and steer the electorate toward the nationalist parties (SDS, SDA and HDZ). International analysts have pointed out that hardliners from all religious communities are an obstacle to political transformation and that the interference of religion in politics “produces a two-fold effect: (1) the ethnic religious elites have grown into influential interest groups in BiH’s political discourse, often impacting policy outcomes, and (2) the fragmentation of the political agenda along ethnic nationalist lines, and subsequently the process of ethnic homogenisation is being perpetuated”.²²

21 Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Campaign in the sign of religious leaders, Press Release, 29 September 2004, www.bh-hchr.org/Saopstenja/29-09-04.htm.

22 Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2006: Bosnia-Herzegovina, October 2005:4, www.bertelsmann-transformation-index.de.

Zoran Brajovic has dedicated himself to inter-religious networking and, in his doctoral studies at Bonn University, has explored the relationship between cultural identities, confessions and nations in the Balkans. In his article, he investigates the cultural and religious divide and the potential of inter-religious dialogue for peacebuilding and reconciliation. He concludes that important efforts have been made to bring together people from the Catholic and Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish communities in Bosnia. Most of these endeavours are based on the conviction that – despite their significant differences – the Christian, Muslim and Jewish religions share quintessential values. However, these efforts were generally undertaken by a few individuals and did not involve the religious communities as a whole, nor have they had any impact on wider society. Moreover, these initiatives still cannot be considered part of genuine inter-religious dialogue, according to the author. He argues in favour of a broader dialogue aimed at general theological exchange, not only involving people from the Balkans.

According to *Zoran Brajovic*, ten years after the war, Bosnia still has a long way to go to establish a viable peace. Reconciliation could bridge that gulf, but it is going to be a long-term process of rebuilding relationships between opposed communities. There is also a dilemma which must be taken into consideration: post-conflict settlement concepts that are designed by external actors and are based on achieving fast results for “reconciliation” risk being inappropriate for Bosnia. They strive to restore multiethnic and multireligious tolerance, forgiveness and healing as a way of re-establishing the former way of life and societal structures, but in reality, the associated way of life no longer exists. Bosnian reality today is marked by the challenge of transition from one political and economic system to another. In the process, all available energy must be mobilised in order to establish a new model of social cohesion and visions for the future. This is why discussions on how to “re-construct” societies and social relations risk missing the point. The concept of reconciliation needs to be carefully adapted. It must – after all – be discussed within the context of justice.

The author argues that building a viable peace and a tolerant society in Bosnia is not possible without addressing religious identities. But the question remains: How should they be addressed in order to contribute to conflict transformation? He outlines several options and finally states that whatever option is chosen in the future, one principle should be clear: in a modern society, religious communities must readjust their relations with political power. The state must guarantee political plurality, while the Christian churches, the mosques and synagogues represent religious diversity and remain key civil society actors.



The Potential of Local Self-Government for Civil Society and State-Building

The question of how to build civil society is, of course, closely linked to the need to establish functioning political structures. Viable political structures are essential for the joint development and harmonisation of policy fields throughout the country and to guarantee democratic decision-making processes (see articles by James Lyon and the European Stability Initiative in the first section). This raises the issue of the mandates and powers of the state institutions and the entity/canton governments. Balancing powers at these different national and sub-national levels is very important for Bosnia's development. However, political transformation cannot focus solely on this aspect. It must also address the question of how to organise decision-making at the local level, and how to design local government structures which have the trust and respect of the citizens and encourage their active engagement in the community. This is where the principle of "subsidiarity" and the need for reform of local administrations come into play. This need has recently been expressed by the Council of Europe (CoE 2005) and there is also pressure from the European Union.

Mirko Pejanovic, a professor at Sarajevo University, focuses on the need for subsidiarity and evaluates efforts to foster the capacities of local self-government. He points out that some progress has been made in the normative and legislative segments of reform and highlights the many efforts which have been undertaken in the functional segment, i.e. in relation to the modernisation of management practices and reorganisation of structures and procedures. The third segment of reform, which concerns the territorial reorganisation of the municipalities, is proving to be the most sensitive and conflictive issue and there has been systematic prevarication in this area in the past ten years. But – as Pejanovic states – if Bosnia has a genuine desire to establish viable communities and comply with the standards set by the EU, the territorial reorganisation of its local authorities cannot be postponed any longer. This issue must be addressed in parallel with the other local government reforms. Here, BiH can draw on the experience gained by the EU Member States, many of which undertook similar reforms during the 1980s.

The development of local self-government needs to be supported at state level in Bosnia, and the central government must take an active role in this context. Moreover, Bosnian politicians must acknowledge that mere compliance with European ISO quality standards at administrative level is not enough. It is local citizens themselves who build relationships within communities. Their willingness to take an active interest and play a pro-active role will determine the

future of local democracy in BiH. In this way, the reform of local administration and the fostering of local self-government will have a direct impact on both aspects: the establishment of civil society, and state-building.

3. Targeting Youth and their Potential for Peacebuilding and Social Change

Young people in post-conflict areas offer both the potential for peacebuilding and for spoiling peace processes and fuelling violence. On the one hand, young people offer strong potential for social innovation and are therefore a promising target group for reconciliation work in war-torn societies. There is a widespread hope and assumption in the peace and development community that younger age groups (especially those born after the war) are generally more open to dialogue and cooperation, compared with the generations directly involved in the war and affected by atrocities. But to consider young people in general as natural agents for social change or peace processes would be misguided.

Young people also have a highly destructive potential which can be sparked off by society's neglect of this group or their feeling of marginalisation. Young people who have no education or employment opportunities may resort to shadow economies and illegal or – in the worst case – criminal structures. Experience in many post-war societies has shown that if no social integration initiatives are available, male youths in particular form a willing pool of recruits both for mafia-like structures and for political leaders with a vested interest in perpetuating violent conflict. The experience that young people can be both an active motor for peacebuilding and also “troublemakers” has been widely acknowledged by agencies involved in post-conflict regeneration and in academic analysis.²³

Another serious consequence of neglecting youth in post-conflict regeneration is the migration of qualified young people to countries which they believe will offer them better opportunities, a process that results in a brain-drain and the loss of the most vital resources for social development. This trend has been apparent in Bosnia-Herzegovina for many years. Around 100,000 young people have left Bosnia over the last decade, with tens of thousands currently waiting for emigration visas. Faced with these facts, High Representative Paddy

²³ This is documented, for instance, in UN-DESA's World Youth Report (UN-DESA 2003) and in a report for the World Bank by La Cava/Lytle/Kolev in 2005. For a comprehensive study on the role of youth in war-to-peace transition, see Kemper 2005 and McEvoy-Levy 2005. For a discussion of the destructive potential of youth in “new wars”, see Lock 2001.

Ashdown warned: “This haemorrhage of the young and talented poses perhaps the greatest long-term threat to this country.”²⁴

In Bosnia-Herzegovina in general, little is being done to integrate young people into the labour market. Moreover, the education system does not meet the requirements of the new market economy. In light of this situation, it is no surprise that a significant number of young people are resorting to earning a living (or financing their studies) through illegal activities, such as shadow economies and the black market.²⁵ Moreover, many young people have been attracted to jobs in international organisations, which pay very much more than the average salary. Many of those who have managed to secure a post in an international organisation have tried to use it as a springboard to emigrate abroad. The exodus is exacerbated by the following factors: there are still no training opportunities in commerce or technical occupations for young people who have no interest in, or prospect of, a university career. The Bosnian universities do not offer any practical training. Young graduates in Bosnia-Herzegovina have virtually no chance of finding work because they have no practical skills.

Although the situation has been extremely worrying for years and has worsened from year to year, very few initiatives have been launched to address the causes of migration. A couple of international organisations have supported youth projects, but they have mostly concentrated on healing (trauma work), peace education or international youth exchange. International agencies have launched several initiatives which aim to provide psychosocial support (trauma work), offer intercultural encounters and youth exchange programmes²⁶ or address educational issues (e.g. education reform). Over recent years, some activities by and for youths and young adults have been developed in the two entities comprising Bosnia-Herzegovina which can make a lasting contribution to peacebuilding. They include projects aimed at empowerment, improving life chances and developing peace skills, supporting young people’s self-organisation and establishing related youth networks. An assessment initiated by the German Development Agency GTZ in cooperation with the Berghof Research Center revealed that the priorities and strategies pursued by the local implementing agencies varied widely (Fischer/Tumler 2001): some offered young people

²⁴ Balkan Crisis Report No. 385, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, London, January 2003.

²⁵ In the survey (IBHI/UNDP 2000) which was carried out in the Central Bosnian town of Zenica, 12 percent of the young people interviewed told IBHI that they earn most of their income or fund most of their studies through black market activities.

²⁶ See, for instance, the mobile.culture.container initiative, a mobile workshop project which motivated discussion and provided a forum for exhibitions, theatre and music events at a variety of locations in BiH, Croatia and Serbia. The project was supported by the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (www.mobile-culture.org; see Duwe/Koch 2002).


opportunities for transnational or interethnic encounter, while others focused on empowerment and fostering individual peace skills. Few of them were involved in employment- and community-orientated youth work or offered vocational training opportunities. Almost all of them work under extremely difficult conditions. Youth projects run by independent groups still receive negligible support from the state's official youth, cultural and education policy and often have to rely completely on financial support from foreign donors.²⁷

However, youth support has only recently been included in the development agencies' agenda. In sum, it can be concluded that there have been no systematic attempts to include young people in reconstruction programmes and community-building, nor has there been a clear strategy to link development strategies and peace work in order to involve young people in community-building. A pilot project "Young People Build the Future", implemented by the Bosnian-German NGO Ipak in Eastern Bosnia with the support of the German students' organisation *Schüler Helfen Leben* and the Berghof Research Center, is an exception to this rule.

The article on "*The Need for Multi-dimensional Youth Work*" reports on this project and illustrates how peace and development strategies can be combined in order to support the integration of returnees. Ipak has set up a youth centre and workshops for vocational training and crafts for young people in a village (Krivevici) near Zvornik in the Drina Valley. Bosniak returnees and youngsters from local Serb villages benefit from the project, which tries to link 1) vocational training and income generation, 2) education and intercultural learning and 3) interethnic networking and incentives for young people to get involved in society. Although it is not possible to present any final results at this stage, it is clear that this project has already contributed to interethnic cooperation and encouraged young people from both sides to participate in joint initiatives to articulate their needs and engage in dialogue with representatives of local politics.

One difficulty which the project faced is that school and education policy regulations adopted at a higher level are geared towards ethnic segregation (different curricula, separate teaching languages and religious education). This makes life very difficult for teachers who are interested in multiethnic cooperation and, in many places, results in the geographical separation of children and young people from different communities. The task of equipping and reforming the school system is an urgent priority which requires joint strategies by government

²⁷ Responding to this situation, a funding programme to support youth projects run by local actors was launched by GTZ in cooperation with the Berghof Center during the period 2000–2002 (for results of the final assessment see Fischer/Fischer 2003).



and civil society actors. CSOs cannot suspend school and education policy regulations that are aimed at ethnic segregation. Nonetheless, the example of this project shows that through interethnic and inter-community networking activities, CSOs can help establish a social climate which is conducive to peaceful community relations and understanding, in which people employed in the education sector are encouraged to work towards changing the prevailing conditions.

The *interview with Lahira Sejfija and Adnan Harbic*, coordinators of the Ipak-led pilot project, illustrates the difficulties involved in carrying out peace and development work in rural post-war areas – and especially Eastern Bosnia, which is one of the regions most devastated by the Bosnian war. Apart from providing incentives for job creation and equipping young people with the skills to set up small businesses, Ipak staff believe that an important challenge is to overcome the lethargy and apathy which are widespread among young people in general but reach alarming levels in return communities. Another important challenge is to design programmes in such a way that both female and male youth can benefit and increase participation in social activity. Young people must be empowered to see themselves as active members of society. It is also important to motivate them to voice overt criticism of mismanagement at local level, prepare them for dialogue with politicians, and encourage them to take an active role in political and social affairs. The message to be conveyed is that they are not just “political pawns” and that they can really make a difference.

The article by *Steffen Emrich and Christian Rickerts* on “Peer Support and Volunteering: Peace Work Experiences of *Schüler Helfen Leben*” deals with the potential of and limits to the work of “volunteers” in civil society peacebuilding. This contribution is based on the experience of the German organisation *Schüler Helfen Leben* (SHL), which was set up as a transregional network of high-school students with the intention of helping alleviate the psychological and physical damage caused by the war in Bosnia. Comparing several models and concepts of volunteering in peace work, the authors highlight some important dilemmas. Although it is still too early to draw any definite conclusions about the structures for student representation that have been established with SHL’s support, there are indications that young people in BiH are increasingly organising, perceiving themselves as actors in the education system and articulating their views and interests. This can be viewed as a success. SHL’s experience shows that involving teenagers and young adults can give positive impetus to peace and democracy-building and can contribute to creating a civil society. The concept of volunteering has also gained ground, at least to some extent, among young Bosnians over recent years, but it is far from becoming a generally accepted way of social engagement.

After more than ten years of cooperation in the field of youth empowerment, especially supporting participation in school politics and the transformation of the Bosnian school system, the authors conclude that a great deal still has to be done to adapt the Bosnian education system to European standards.

The importance of education reform for post-conflict regeneration and as a precondition for peaceful coexistence has been widely acknowledged by international donors such as the World Bank (Buckland 2004). The special challenge involved in implementing this reform in the post-Yugoslav region has also been pointed out (Korda 2005; Perry 2003; Warshauer Freedman et al. 2004). This important policy field therefore merits a separate contribution in this book.

Astrid Fischer, research assistant at the Berghof Center, evaluates the international and local efforts to harmonise the education sector, with special emphasis on primary and secondary schools. As in other sectors, the legacies of the socialist era have to be overcome and the tendency to misuse education for nationalist and separatist purposes has to be countered. Reform initiatives in Bosnia's education sector have suffered from problems similar to those arising in the fields of media regulation or police reform. They have faced obstruction by political hardliners from all sides. Curriculum reform has proved to be a particularly sensitive issue, especially where subjects like history and language are concerned. These have been the instruments of ethnic politics before, during and after the war and still provide a key basis for segregation and the formation of identities based on ethnicity.

The author argues that there is a need for a deeper discussion of the pros and cons of integrated and non-integrated schools and for more empirical investigation of the impact of the pilot projects set up in some Bosnian regions. The article also shows that institutional reforms alone are no guarantee of education which is free from indoctrination: substantial efforts in the field of teacher training are also needed. This is the only way to guarantee qualified education which is dedicated to nurturing individuals who are capable of thinking for themselves and forming their own opinions.

4. “Dealing with the Past”: Justice, Truth and Reconciliation

The disintegration of Yugoslavia that began in 1991 killed at least 250,000 people and forced more than four million (almost a quarter of the pre-war population) to flee their homes in the following decade of warfare.²⁸ The number of missing persons in Bosnia was estimated at around 20,000 in 2004.

Civilians were both the instrument and the target of war. 2005 marked the tenth anniversary not only of the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but also of the massacre at Srebrenica, where Bosnian Serb troops, with the involvement of Serbian state special forces, overran the UN safe haven and captured and murdered 7,500 people, mainly Bosniak men and boys, before concealing their bodies in mass graves.²⁹ To date, less than one third of the victims have been located and identified.³⁰

In July 2005, at a burial ceremony in the Potocari Memorial Cemetery³¹ to mark the tenth anniversary of the massacre, the remains of a further 610 identified victims were laid to rest. The event offered an opportunity to reflect critically on the failure of the international organisations.³² The Bosnians and international representatives who gathered for the ceremony hoped in vain for some kind of address (or even an official apology) from Serbian President Boris Tadic, who was also present at the ceremony. Whereas Croatia's President Stipe Mesic apologised some time ago for the crimes committed by the Croatian side in the war in Bosnia, Bosnian and international experts are still waiting for a similar apology from Serbia. Before leaving Belgrade, Tadic had said that [Serbians] must show that there is a distance between the citizens and the perpetrators of the crime. However, neither the Serbian government nor the parliament had been able to bring itself to issue an unequivocal statement. In a declaration issued in Belgrade, the Serbian government merely condemned all crimes committed during the ten years of war in the former Yugoslavia, including the massacre at Srebrenica. However, this statement was immediately

28 See Dan Smith 2003:52. There are vast discrepancies in the casualty figures cited by the stakeholders in the war. International sources on the numbers of victims in the war also vary greatly. The most commonly cited figure is between 200,000 and 250,000 Bosnians killed, which the journalist Nick Gowling has traced back to Bosnian government officials. Articles in the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) yearbooks contain the figures of 140,000 and 200,000 as the total number of Croats, Muslims and Serbs killed. The divergence of the figures reflects their status as estimates. There has been a lack of investigation to back these up. In fact, many of the figures contained in international reports are based on local sources and have not been independently verified. See www.radstats.org.uk/n0069/article3.htm.

29 For a comprehensive study on the fall of Srebrenica, see Netherlands Institute for War Documentation 2002, and UN General Assembly 1999. A very personal report by one of the survivors is the book published by the Bosnian journalist Emir Suljagic (2005). See also the documentation from the Hague trials of those who have been held responsible for the massacre so far (Bogoeva/Fetscher 2002).

30 BBC television reports from the memorial ceremony at Srebrenica on 11 July 2005 referred to a total of 8,375 persons missing from Srebrenica; 1,976 have now been buried at Srebrenica/Potocari. The remains of around 3,000 people from Srebrenica are awaiting identification in laboratories in Tuzla and Visoko.

31 The memorial and cemetery are maintained by the Foundation of Srebrenica-Potocari, set up in 2001 with international support. See Statute of the Foundation of Srebrenica-Potocari Memorial and Cemetery www.ohr.int/print/?content_id=5868.

32 The Heinrich Böll Foundation Sarajevo published a compilation of comments by international politicians and Bosnian intellectuals on lessons from Srebrenica as a synonym for genocide (Heinrich Böll Stiftung 2005).

watered down by the comment that Bosnian troops had also committed war crimes against Serb civilians in the winter of 1992/1993. The day after the ceremony in Srebrenica, Bosnian Serbs gathered in neighbouring Bratunac to hold their own memorial ceremony exclusively for the Bosnian Serb victims of war.³³ This shows that remembrance in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to be highly selective.


The question of how society in Bosnia and in the region of former Yugoslavia should *deal with the past violence* was put on the agenda by international organisations and by local academics and practitioners. The general need for war-torn societies to deal with the past constructively has been reflected in the literature on peacebuilding and conflict transformation.³⁴ Many authors see this as a precondition for lasting peace and transformation of ethnopolitical conflicts. Western scholars usually discuss the concept in the context of reconciliation and “forgiveness” and as a precondition for prevention of further outbreaks of violence,³⁵ whereas activists from Bosnia and the region of former Yugoslavia seem to place emphasis on the acknowledgement of individual and collective responsibility (see *“Finding a Balance”*, interview with CNA staff in this book).

There have been diverse efforts to set up mechanisms for dealing with the past in the countries of former Yugoslavia, both by international and Bosnian actors. These approaches range from prosecution of war criminals before national and international courts, reform of state institutions, especially reform of the security sector and the justice system, reparation for victims, lustration, proposals for truth commissions, fact-finding and documentation, formal and non-formal education and various healing processes and trauma work in order to strengthen individual capacities to cope with past violence. *Natascha Zupan*, who has worked for the Swiss Foreign Ministry in several missions in Bosnia, Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia, gives an overview of these approaches.

33 Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 12 July 2005, www.nzz.ch/2005/07/al/articleCZoVB.

34 For an overview on discussions of “Dealing with the Past”, truth, justice and reconciliation, see Bloomfield et al. 2003 and Bleeker/Sisson 2004.

35 See, for instance, Andrew Rigby’s explanation of the need for dealing with the past: “The ‘past’ is the remembered past, and as such it is something that is constructed and reproduced in a multitude of ways ... Dealing with the past in this understanding means forgiveness on the interpersonal and collective level and coming to terms with the pain of the past in such a way as to free oneself from the determining force of a particular collective memory, forming a new memory that creates the symbolic space for people to orient themselves towards a new future which allows for the possibility of reconciliation with past opponents” (Rigby 2002). John Paul Lederach also suggests combining forgiveness with justice and truth. According to him, peacebuilding and reconciliation involve the acknowledgment of what happened (truth), an effort to right the wrongs that occurred (justice) and forgiveness for the perpetrators (mercy). The end result is not only reconciliation, but peace (Lederach 1995:20).



Psychosocial problems continue to be one of the consequences of war which are especially difficult to deal with. Soldiers, refugees and survivors of massacres and rape generally suffer severe trauma and mental health problems. Those who experienced the war at first hand often have to contend with long-term pathological conditions whose symptoms may not manifest immediately but only over time. The uncertainties of life as a refugee or displaced person, but also the physical and social insecurity associated with return processes, often lead to flashbacks and worsen the individuals' suffering. *Monika Kleck* describes this vividly in her account of the life situations of women who were displaced from Eastern Bosnia and who found refuge in Tuzla. Her research is based on her work experience with *Amica/Prijateljice* in Tuzla and several interview series with women from refugee and returnee communities.

How Bosnian society can constructively deal with the violent past in a situation where many persons are still missing³⁶ and where returnees are fearful of meeting the former neighbours who became perpetrators or claimed the “key of their neighbour’s house” (Neuffer 2003) remains an open question. The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that war criminals are still at large in some of these areas and justice still has not been done.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, striving for the punishment of those who are responsible for war crimes and human rights violations, is an important instrument of retributive justice.³⁷ ICTY has also helped to reveal facts about massacres and atrocities. Since the end of the war there have been strong voices from the region of former Yugoslavia arguing that it is preferable for domestic systems to handle their own war crime prosecutions,³⁸ but analysis of the status of domestic legal systems in these countries casts doubt on this option. Recent studies conclude that domestic legal systems in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia-Montenegro at this time are unable to handle even routine criminal matters and it would be risky to return war crimes prosecutions because those systems do not currently have the capacity or political will to support them (Zoglin 2005:41).

³⁶ In 2004 and 2005, a further 26 mass graves were located in Bosnia-Herzegovina; they contain large numbers of human remains which have yet to be retrieved and identified. The identification process is extremely complicated because remains must be removed from primary and secondary mass graves. Many of the victims were initially buried in makeshift graves; their remains were later exhumed and buried elsewhere in order to obscure the traces and make it more difficult to reconstruct the crime.


³⁷ For a review of the work of the ICTY and its implications for survivors, see the accounts by Neuffer 2003 and Drakulic 2004.

³⁸ Jurekovic 2003 gives a comprehensive overview of the different views on ICTY in the region and within international organisations.

It seems that the ICTY was and still is indispensable as far as justice is concerned. However, where contributions to the peace process are at stake, its limits have to be acknowledged. Its impact on societal peace in BiH is still not sufficiently investigated. But there are strong indicators “that it has exercised little effect on societal peace”, as Meernik (2005:287) states, and “that the impact of prior group levels of conflict and cooperation and the actions of EU, NATO and the US, and the government of Croatia exercised a greater impact on the behavior of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs”.³⁹ The Tribunal has been an important motor for public discussions, but has also fuelled the nationalist discourses about the war which still dominate the debate in some regions.

Although unchallenged and irreplaceable, justice delivered by the Hague Tribunal is obviously not sufficient to change the political climate of ethnic mistrust and hatred, as *Sanela Basic* argues in her article “Bosnian Society on the Path to Justice, Truth and Reconciliation”. Striving for reconciliation demands deeper efforts of truth-telling. Dealing with the past constructively in a war-torn society needs both justice and truth and has to involve society. Initiatives aimed at establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Kritz/Finci 2001) by contrast, have not been successful in Bosnia and the post-Yugoslav region. In Bosnia, they were rejected by political decision-makers and parliamentarians from all sides. Moreover, these initiatives have not been based on broad social support in the view of *Sanja Deankovic*, *Nedžad Horozovic*, *Adnan Hasanbegovic* and *Tamara Smidling*, activists at the Centre for Nonviolent Action in Sarajevo. They strongly support a joint approach which combines both initiatives within Bosnian society and a regional initiative that would involve people from all countries of former Yugoslavia in order to link peacebuilding efforts with constructive strategies for dealing with the past. This view is shared by several human rights organisations and peace activists in the region. Four NGOs from Serbia-Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia elaborated a joint strategy in the process of dealing with the past. The Humanitarian Law Center (Belgrade), the Dokumenta-Center for Dealing With the Past (Zagreb), the Research and Documentation Center (Sarajevo) and the Center for Peace, Nonviolence, and Human Rights

³⁹ Meernik (2005) has applied the Kansas Event Data System (KEDS) to measure the degree of conflict and cooperation among the principal ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina and “found little evidence to support the notion that the ICTY had a positive impact on societal peace in Bosnia. In fact, in more instances the effect was the opposite of that intended... More often than not, ethnic groups responded with increased hostility towards one another after an arrest or judgement” (ibid.:287). Fletcher and Weinstein even argue that expectations from diplomats and media that ICTY’s work could be expanded beyond its legal mandate and that it would contribute to “reconciliation” among former warring groups have definitely proved to be unrealistic. They come to the conclusion that attempts to link the ICTY to this broader social project, without the political will and infrastructure to support it, “undermine the important contributions that international trials can make to post-conflict societies” (Fletcher/Weinstein 2004: 30).



(Osijek) presented a project for regional cooperation in the process of dealing with the past on 21 March 2005 in Belgrade. Its basic objective is to create shared documentation on crimes and serious human rights violations committed on the territory of the former Yugoslavia which is seen as an important condition for establishing peace in the region.

The *Centre for Nonviolent Action (Centar za Nenasilnu Akciju – CNA)* has been actively involved in transnational peace work since 1997.⁴⁰ The team has taken various initiatives in this direction by gathering people from all over Yugoslavia (Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia-Montenegro, including Kosovo) in training workshops for nonviolent action and through cross-border networking.

The article “*Confronting the Past and Involving War Veterans for Peace*” highlights CNA’s experience of work during the period 1997–2005. The team has steadily expanded its range of peace education activities over recent years and is increasingly aiming to promote a social debate about the past in the successor states to the former Yugoslavia. CNA has organised public debates at which former soldiers talk about their personal experiences and views about the war. 14 public forums were held in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia-Montenegro, involving veterans who fought on different sides during the war. The forums were based on a broad-based media campaign and contacts with local politicians and administration, and aimed to encourage public debate and reflection about individual responsibility for violence and provide space for individual storytelling in local communities.

Dealing with the past, for the CNA activists, means addressing the root causes of the war and the individual attitudes which supported violence, war and atrocities (see interview “*Finding a Balance*”). These include the widespread stereotypes and enemy images against members of the other groups and peoples within Bosnia and in the region of former Yugoslavia, which contributed to intolerance and exclusion. Although regional peace agreements were enforced by the international community, the war experience left the respective societies deeply traumatised. The political situation in most of the states in the post-Yugoslav region is still unstable and marked by a negative (or cold) peace, according to the team.

CNA’s experience shows that many people in the region want to address the past and are searching for opportunities to ask questions and join in discussions on these topics, even if remembering is a painful process for them. But in their daily work, the team members also had to cope with backlashes and frustration. Overall, they feel that there is still a long way to go to achieve


⁴⁰ CNA started life as a training organisation in Sarajevo. Since 2001, part of the team has worked from Sarajevo and part from Belgrade.

coexistence, tolerance and lasting peace. But some progress has been made recently, in their view, following the publication of a video which shows the killing of several young Bosniaks in the Treskavica mountains by soldiers belonging to an elite unit of the state of Serbia (Scorpions), revealing that the Srebrenica massacre was not committed solely by Bosnian Serb militia but that troops from Yugoslavia were also actively involved. The video was broadcast by all public TV stations in Bosnia and also in Serbia-Montenegro, triggering intensive public debates. Many people in the region realised that they had to revise their views of history and the “truth” they had believed so far. According to CNA, this has created a better basis for recognising individual and collective responsibilities. This view is shared by many CSO representatives in Bosnia and the wider region. The video was unearthed by the Belgrade-based Humanitarian War Center and the human rights activist Natasa Kandic and has provided important evidence at the Hague Tribunal. This proves the significant role of documentation of war crimes and fact-finding for awareness-raising, and also demonstrates that civil society actors have contributed a great deal in this respect during the last decade in the post-Yugoslav region.

Initiatives for “Dealing with the Past” are crucial for peacebuilding, according to the CNA activists, given that there are still high levels of violence and tensions within and between states in the region. They argue that it is very important for society in Bosnia (and for societies in the entire region) to deal with the past right now, because otherwise, they will risk running into the same trap as before and will face new outbreaks of violence because important factors which contributed to the war will persist.

Talking about the lessons learned from their peace work in recent years, the CNA members made an important observation: the question whether the past has to be addressed at all is answered in a different way by different generations and “Dealing with the Past” does not have the same meaning for them. Peace education strategies have to take this into account. Young people from those generations who have not been directly involved in war often do not see a need to face the past, and argue that they do not feel responsible for the actions of their parents’ and grandparents’ generation. These people, consequently, have to be addressed in a distinctive way, compared with the pre-war and war generations. Ignoring this challenge leads to a situation in which peace work risks having unintended (negative) side-effects.

It can be concluded that peace education faces a serious dilemma. Leaving the past un-addressed – according to CNA – will necessarily mean that things are swept under the carpet. Forcing people to deal with the past is not effective as it will not change attitudes. On the contrary, it might lead to rejection or depression.



Talking about the past, present and future has to be balanced in a way which avoids exhausting and alienating people.

The book ends with general recommendations for peacebuilding and fostering civil society in the region, by documenting some of CNA's thoughts on these issues. They point out that peace has to be built from below, by citizens who are aware of their responsibility for society. In order to proceed along the road to peace, society in Bosnia – and in countries of former Yugoslavia – and the official political discourse have to overcome the widespread “victimisation” which is proving to be an obstacle to peaceful coexistence and social change. This “victimisation” has many facets: 1) perceiving the own group as the victim of the other stakeholders of the war, and 2) cultivating the feeling that ordinary people are helpless and cannot do anything to determine their own future. Moreover, people must learn to take responsibility for the past, both on an individual level and as regards the role of their “own” group. As a consequence, they need to be sensitised in order to refuse to accept violence as a political instrument and social structure. People should realise that violence does not start with an exchange of gunfire; it starts when the *Ekavica* (Serb) dialect is corrected to *Ijekavica* (Bosnian/Croatian) dialect in a bakery in Sarajevo, and when people feel unsafe and discriminated against in the towns and villages they live in. To make society aware of this, according to CNA, is one of the main challenges for peacebuilding in the present and future.

5. Conclusion


The authors and interview partners featured in this book make it clear that Bosnia still has a long way to go to achieve lasting peace. It is also apparent that for Bosnia, a window of opportunity has opened up for closer relations with the European Union, but that the country still has a long road to travel towards Europe, with many obstacles to overcome. Although various efforts to align with European institutions and norms are discernible in some areas, reform and transformation processes have only recently begun, largely in response to international pressure. They are far from complete and are constantly at risk from political obstruction. In some areas, the reforms have barely proceeded beyond the establishment of new legislation (e.g. local self-government, education). Indeed, in the sphere of police reform – one of the most fundamental and important areas – no statewide regulation exists at all and it remains to be seen whether the events of October 2005 mark a genuine change of political course that enables further major steps to be taken to bring Bosnia closer to Brussels.

The analyses and appraisals presented here from a range of social sectors suggest that the reform processes which have now begun are only likely to be maintained if the international community continues to apply constant pressure and also offers positive incentives, notably the prospect of EU integration over the long term. But will this incentive be powerful enough to win over potential “spoilers” of the peace and social transformation process? Only time will tell. Experience from other accession processes (notably Spain and Portugal) has shown that reforms were easier to achieve through EU accession negotiations. However, these examples also show that this positive development did not only depend on influence and pressure from the international community; it also needed pressure from within, from civil society actors and reform-minded groups in the economy and government apparatus, thus enabling system change and social transformation to take place.

The articles in this book make it clear that both the international actors and local stakeholders in Bosnia-Herzegovina and, indeed, throughout the region of the former Yugoslavia, must continue to work pro-actively to promote peace, and that these measures must take place at various levels and in close cross-border cooperation. They include initiatives in the fields of general and peace education to improve *individual peace and conflict transformation skills*, work on dismantling stereotypes and “enemy images” and fostering attitudes and identities which help overcome cultures of violence. Measures aimed at the empowerment of disadvantaged social groups (youth, women) and promoting the willingness to involve the general public in democratic development are also essential. They can contribute to peacebuilding, as can initiatives which are aimed at fostering *dialogue between social groups* and reforming their relationships or which seek to build intercultural understanding.

Peacebuilding strategies, at the same time, must address the level of *political and socio-economic structures* and encourage their transformation. This means creating economic prospects and social security, along with well-functioning state and sub-state structures in which legal norms can be adopted, respected and effectively enforced. At the same time, democratic participation cannot be confined to citizens’ turn-out at the elections; it must be a pro-active and dynamic part of life which enables citizens to identify with their polity and state (and this means the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina). Political decision-making processes in villages, cities and municipalities should therefore be accompanied by pro-active civic (civil society) engagement and supported by society.

More generally, the articles also demonstrate that *state-building and civil society building* are intermeshed and parallel processes which cannot be undertaken separately or, indeed, in confrontation with each other. Without a



well-functioning state, the development of a civil society is almost impossible – at best, it can only form isolated pockets of civil society activity. But without a well-functioning civil society, citizens cannot viably identify with a democratic polity. A robust civil society – i.e. the willingness of citizens to take over individual responsibility for the community – is, firstly, an important basis for controlling and containing the activities of the state; secondly, it also forms the basis for the formation of a system of values and norms which can guarantee social cohesion, transcending ethnicity and stereotyped ways of thinking.

As Vivienne Jabri (1996) pointed out, peacebuilding is a consequence of “human action, a product of human decisions made within the context of structured social relations”. This means that we have to understand it “as consisting of both processes and structures, and of a wider range of outcomes, than this is often understood both within crude conflict resolution or technicist development approaches” (Peirce/Stubbs 2000:173). What is important is a multi-dimensional approach which focuses not only on the situation in Bosnia but encompasses the entire region of former Yugoslavia (this applies especially to initiatives which aim to deal constructively with the past) and which also takes account of the overall context in South East Europe. The authors’ contributions show that *peace constituencies*⁴¹ must arise autonomously within the region, although the support of external actors is certainly important. However, these peace constituencies can only develop a dynamic of their own and support social change if they also involve stakeholders (groups, organisations or influential individuals) from civil society and the state’s institutions. Peace constituencies should not be horizontal, i.e. confined to the grassroots level, but must be vertical, *encompassing all the various levels of society* (ground, middle and top level). Government, civil society, international and national actors all have a role to play here, and there must be a willingness to learn lessons from past successes and failures.

⁴¹ Peace constituencies are alliances of many diverse civil society actors who work to counter cultures of violence and participate in building mechanisms for peaceful conflict transformation, or networks of people who have a personal interest in the sustainable resolution of ethno-political conflicts, and who possess the influence and skills to assert this interest (Lederach 1997).

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Links

Economic Reform and Political Transformation

Office of the High Representative: www.ohr.int.

OSCE: www.osce.org.

OECD: www.oecd.org.

Special Coordinator Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe: www.stabilitypact.org.

Stability Pact Anti Corruption Initiative: spai-rslo.org/new.asp.

European Stability Initiative: www.esiweb.org.

International Crisis Group: www.crisisgroup.org.

Independent Bureau of Humanitarian Issues: www.ibhibih.org.

Transparency International (BiH): www.ti-bih.org.

Reconstruction, Refugees and Return

UNHCR: www.unhcr.ch.

EU-Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe: www.stabilitypact.org.

UNDP: www.undp.org.

UNDP (BiH): www.undp.ba.

Civil Society and Peacebuilding

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International Council of Voluntary Agencies: www.icva-bh.org.

Citizens' Pact for South Eastern Europe: www.citizenspact.org.yu.

Independent Bureau of Humanitarian Issues: www.ibhibih.org.

Stability Pact & NGO-Cooperation:

www.berghof-center.org/english/sectors/stability_pact.htm.

Balkan Civil Society Network: www.balkancsd.net.

Centre for Nonviolent Action, Sarajevo/Belgrade: www.nenasilje.org.

Labour Unions

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions: www.icftu.org.

South East European Youth Network: www.seeyouth.org.

South Eastern European Labor Educators' Network: www.seelabored.org.

Media

Media Plan Institute: www.mediaplan.ba.

South East Europe Media Organisation: www.seemo.org.

Medienhilfe, Switzerland: www.medienhilfe.ch.

Inter-Religious Dialogue

- Abraham Association: www.abraham.ba.
Activities of Fra Ivo Markovic: www.crucibleofwar.com/mmlesson.htm.
Balkan Civil Society Development Network: www.balkancsd.net.
Bishop Komarica: www.biskupija-banjaluka.org;
www.freewebs.com/hrvatska-hrvati/biskupkomarica.htm.
Concilium International Journal for Theology: www.concilium.org.
Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation: www.lausanne.org.
Presbyterian Church (USA): www.pcusa.org.
Qantara: www.qantara.de.
Quakers: www.quaker.org.uk.
Religion in Eastern Europe:
www.georgefox.edu/academics/undergrad/departments/soc-swk/ree/05index.html.
The Tablet: www.thetablet.co.uk.
United States Institute of Peace: www.usip.org.
Watchman Expositor, The Journal of Watchman Fellowship:
www.watchman.org/expo/index.htm.
World Conference on Religion and Peace: www.wcrp.org.

Youth Work and Education Reform

- South Eastern Europe Youth Network: www.seeyouth.org.
Youth Resource Center Tuzla: www.omladina-bih.net/bos/main.htm.
Schüler Helfen Leben: www.sozialertag.de; www.shl.ba; www.shl-online.de.
Ipak Tuzla, Krizevici: www.ipak.ch; www.krizevici.com.
War Resisters Campaign: www.prigovorbih.org.
International Education for Peace Institute: www.efpinternational.org.
OSCE (Regional Centre Mostar): www.oscebih.org/overview/mostar.asp.

Dialogue Initiatives and Mediation

- Igman Initiative: www.igman-initiative.org.
Nansen Dialogue Project: www.nansen-dialog.net.
Office of the International Mediator:
<http://www.cssproject.org/international-mediator/index.html>.

Trauma Work and Women's Initiatives

- UHD Prijateljice: www.prijateljice.net.
Tuzlanska Amica: e-mail: tz_amica@bih.net.ba.
Vive Zene, Tuzla: www.vivezene.ba.

Medica Zenica: www.medica.org.ba.

Zene Zenama: www.zenezenama.com.ba.

Udruzene zena "Lara": e-mail: lara@rstel.net.

Udruzene Zene, Banja Luka: e-mail: natasap@inecco.net.

Dealing with the Past and Human Rights

Centre for Nonviolent Action, Sarajevo/Belgrade: www.nenasilje.org.

Research and Documentation Centre, Sarajevo: www.idc.org.ba.

Humanitarian Law Centre, Belgrade: www.hlc.org.yu.

Human Rights House Network, Sarajevo: www.humanrightshouse.org.

Center for Antiwar Action, Belgrade: www.caa.org.yu/.

Humanitarian Law Centre, Belgrade: www.hlc.org.yu/english/index.php.

Igman Initiative: www.igman-initiative.org.

International Center for Transitional Justice: www.ictj.org.

International Commission on Missing Persons, Sarajevo: www.ic-mp.org/home.php.

Truth and Reconciliation Association, Sarajevo:

www.angelfire.com/bc2/kip/english/index.htm.

International Committee of the Red Cross:

www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/western_europe?OpenDocument.

International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia: www.un.org/icty/.

Lawyers' Committee on Human Rights, Belgrade:

www.yucom.org.yu/EnglishVersion/LawyersCommittee.asp