

**SHUR Working Paper Series**



**CASE STUDY REPORT – WP5**

**Conflict Society and the Transformation of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Question**

Giulio Marcon, Sergio Andreis, Thorsten Bonacker, Christian Braun,  
Francesca Nicora, Valentina Pellizzer, and Inger Skjelsbaer  
Lunaria, Marburg University and PRIO

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**SIXTH FRAMEWORK  
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## Foreword

This report analyses the relations between the role of civil society, on one hand, and human rights safeguard and promotion, on the other, in the bloody 1992-1995 Bosnia Erzegovina (BiH) conflict. Civil society actors are considered in three periods of time: pre-war, until April of 1992; the war years, from April 1992 until the autumn of 1995; post-war, from the end of 1995 until today.

The three-phase timing has been chosen due to the specific BiH socio-political evolution. The pre-war years were characterised by BiH being part of another country, the Socialist Federal Yugoslav Republic (Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija- SFRJ) and by the difficult and slow transition from an authoritarian (at least until 1989) regime to a democratic one. The second phase – after the proclamation of independence – has witnessed open and generalised war, with de facto impossible civil, political and social activities. Finally, the end of the war and reconstruction are shaped through a new institutional reality outlined with the Dayton peace agreement (December 1995) and including the fast, and to some extent large, growth of social, cultural, environmental civil society organisations.

The specificity of BiH civil society is determined by the country's multiethnicity (with three dominant nationalities), by the important role played by religions (each one identifying with one ethnic group: Orthodox Christianity with the Serbs, Islam with the Muslims and Catholicism with the Croats) and by the hegemony of nationalist ideologies dominating BiH's politics, society and cultures. This is the context within which the report aims at shedding light on BiH civil society, including its ambiguities and peculiarities. What emerges is the diversity of answers by civil society actors, confronting themselves not only with the local political and military contexts, but also – above all during the war and post-war years – with strong initiatives by the international community and the European institutions. And in this sense the report also provides inputs to the discussion on European conflict policies, their political proposals, the humanitarian strategies implemented and the support given to local civil society organisations.

## 1. Bosnia–Herzegovina: The Conflict Context

### Introduction

The beginning of the end of stability BiH (as one of the six Yugoslav republics) had enjoyed since the Second World War, was, the death of Joseph Broz, or Tito, in 1980. His ideology of “brotherhood and unity”, characterized by many as the glue that kept the South Slav peoples together, lost political followers and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) descended into a period of political, economic and civil instability which eventually lead to its disintegration in 1991. Tito had managed, in spite of the different national identities which in the past had fought and still had hatred and resentments feelings towards one another, to keep Yugoslavia united. During World War II hundreds of thousands of Serbs had been killed, forced into concentration camps or persecuted by nationalist Croats (the so-called *Ustascia*) allied with the Nazis. Croats and Albanians still remembered the repression by the Serbs during the 1918-1929 *Serbian, Croat and Slovenian Kingdom* and the 1929-1941 *Kingdom of Yugoslavia*. Tito – thanks to his political authoritativeness and to an authoritarian regime limiting freedom of expression and association – could keep under control those nationalisms that had been so destructive in post World War I Yugoslavia. But Tito did not have the strength to eradicate nationalist ideologies and to melt them into a new *Yugoslav* citizenship beyond single ethnic identities.

Post World War II Yugoslavia was built around a fragile constitutional balance. The SFRJ's Constitution, with the 1974 reform, foresaw six *constituent* peoples (Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Slovenians, Macedonians and Montenegrins) and a considerable number of minorities (Hungarians,

Roma, Italians, Albanians, Germans, among others) with special protections. Six republics (Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia Erzegovina) and two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina, both parts of the Serbian Republic, were recognised. The federal Constitution also included self-determination rights for the *constituent* peoples: a sophisticated subtlety which would have complicated juridical interpretations in 1991 when Yugoslavia broke apart.

Republics were defined as *federal units* and did not coincide with the *constituent peoples*. The Federation's borders could be modified only with the unanimity of all republics and of the autonomous provinces, some of which were by no means monoethnic. A plurality acknowledged by each republic's constitution, recognising more *constituent* peoples within one single entity. The Croat Constitution, for example, stated that *Croatia is the Republic of the Croat people and of the Serbian people in Croatia*. The BiH one that *Bosnia Erzegovina is the Republic unifying three constituent Muslim, Serbian and Croat peoples*.

A specific issue was posed by the Serbs, large majority in Serbia, but also *constituent* people in BiH (around one third of the population) and in Croatia (where they were far less), and, due to common historic roots and Orthodox religion, with influence in Montenegro and Macedonia. Aware of its historic importance, population majority and strong state tradition Serbia's role in the Yugoslav context was dominant, with the other nationalities hardly tolerating this hegemony. In the case of BiH one should remember that it was Tito himself, in 1974, who imposed Muslims as *constituent* people of Socialist Yugoslavia, something unprecedented because nationalist Serbs and Croats had always refused to even accept the idea of an autonomous BiH since both had annexionist ambitions toward those territories.

Tito, though avoiding their transformation into political forces, was unable to overcome the nationalist logic and culture. The 1974 constitutional reform gave greater administrative and economic powers to the six republics, thus strengthening their local leaderships and militias. Yugoslavia had become a sort of a confederation, whose unity was more and more guaranteed only by the charisma of its leader. In spite of the absolute obedience towards Tito, the republics and provinces built up their identities in the Tito years, and the self-perception of being distinct from the other nationalities of the country. Above all Slovenia (with a much higher economic development rate than any other Yugoslav republic) and Croatia gradually turned critical of Serbia accused of being aggressive and overdominant within the Federation. What finally happened was – in the mid 80s – that the Communist leaderships, in order to keep power, in line with the Balkan historical and social traditions and with the crumbling Yugoslav and Eastern European regimes, embraced nationalist ideologies.

While SFRY was a communist country, Tito's break with Stalin in 1948 meant that Yugoslavia was expelled from common institutions of the Eastern bloc. The politics of non-alignment which was adopted in the aftermath of 1948 meant that Yugoslavia was not a traditional communist country despite its one-party communist political structure and socialist organization of the state's welfare and work. The people of Yugoslavia enjoyed a relative greater freedom than their communist neighbour states and could for instance travel to West European countries. But there was hardly any freedom of association and expression outside regime structures. It has been calculated that still in the 80s more than 4,000 political prisoners were detained in Yugoslav jails (Pirjevec 2000) and among all the republics BiH was the one where dissidents were most widely and intensely repressed. Tito's non-alignment choice, on the other hand, guaranteed to Yugoslavia geopolitical and economic advantages and the country, while maintaining its own independence, benefitted of Western economic aid and of an implicit protection vis-à-vis the risks of repression by the Warsaw Treaty troops. Yugoslavia a sort of "buffer state" useful to Western forces to keep security in Europe's Southern flank.

Yugoslavs, including Bosnians, saw themselves as distinctly European and felt strong links both culturally and politically to their western neighbours. The characterization of Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereafter: BiH) as a post-communist society is therefore often challenged by Bosnians and other post-Yugoslav citizens. Rather, many will insist that the post-Yugoslav republics are post-socialist states thereby differentiating Yugoslavia from other east-bloc countries. In the international literature, however, it is more common to use the term post-communist rather than post-socialist of the situation in BiH and we will therefore use this term while recognizing that this does not do justice to the non-aligned Yugoslav status and the social privileges that came with this.

Yugoslavia – within the fall of the communist regimes following 1989- broke apart for three reasons. First: nationalisms – never overcome in the post World War II times – which were the ideological and political bond of all post-communist leaderships and of the new post 1991 countries. Second: the very heavy economic crisis, with its climax between 1987 and 1990, which forced the country to the edge of bankruptcy and provided an extra motivation to the economically stronger republics to leave the Federation. Third: the role played by the international community: not only did the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (and the European Community) slow down – until the complete stop – aid, but in 1991 the European Community (under the pressure of Austria, Germany and the Vatican) gave green light to the secession of Slovenia and Croatia and, in 1992 of BiH, becoming co-responsible of the country's nationalist break-up and of the following violent conflicts. The Croat Ante Markovic was federal prime minister at the time and he took the stand in favour of Yugoslav multiethnic and multinational unity. Europe, instead of supporting a “Western”, democratic option, decided to go along with the nationalist and separatist leaderships' wishes.

The decline of communism, epitomized through the disintegration of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 took its toll on the people in Yugoslavia in much the same way as it did in the rest of the communist states. Privatization efforts affected the job market and people's economies. Secure jobs, housing, childcare and health benefits that came with many jobs in the communist system had to give way to a capitalist driven economy and greater insecurity for many. In the realm of politics new parties gained increasing popularity and power, and in the case of Yugoslavia, perhaps more predominant than elsewhere, leading to the rise of nationalist sentiments. These sentiments and ambitions eventually lead to the disintegration of the Yugoslav state and wars; and the most lethal amongst them was the Bosnian war from 1992-1995.

## **The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995)**

BiH was defined as a sort of “small Yugoslavia” (Palau 1996). In fact it was, among the six former Yugoslav republics, the most multiethnic, with three *constituent* peoples (Muslims, Croats and Serbs) and a large number of minorities. BiH was also the country's powder keg: fearing possible invasions from the East or from the West Tito had concentrated the highest number of arms factories and depots in the most central, and therefore most defendable, republic. When war broke out (1992) a large number of armaments and military sites were available to the conflicting armies, especially the Serb Bosnian one.

BiH's peculiarity was that the majority (but not dominant, as they constituted not more than 43% of the total) of the population was Muslim: this qualified both the ethnic identity (since the 1971 census Muslims were considered as “nationality”, just like Serbs, Slovenians, Croats, Macedonians and Montenegrins) and the religious one. In official documents to distinguish between the two the capital initial (“Muslim”) was used to mean the ethnic dimension and the small initial (“muslim”) the religious one. This obviously became a source of ambiguity and misunderstandings. Muslim Bosnians were Slavic people who embraced the Islam in the Middle Ages when the urban elites and the farming land owners, previously professing Christianity, changed religion during the Turkish conquest.

Differently from the other republics, where one nationality was clearly dominant, BiH enjoyed a relative balance among the various ethnic groups. And, above all, a significant ethnic mixing had occurred with mixed marriages in higher numbers than in any of the other republics. The same goes for the percentage of those in national census in BiH declaring themselves “Yugoslav” (instead of Muslim, Serb or Croat).

Also in BiH – like in the rest of former Yugoslavia – nationalist political forces and leadership developed as the Federation was about to dissolve. The three main nationalities had their three national parties. Between 1989 and 1990 the nationalist Muslims founded the SDA-Stranka Demokratske Acije (Party of Democratic Action), the nationalist Serbs the SDS-Srpska Demokratska Stranka (Serbian Democratic Party) and the nationalist Croats the HDZ-Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine (Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia Herzegovina). Founder of the SDA was Alija Izetbegovic, imprisoned in 1983 for “hostile activities inspired to Muslim nationalism” and, since

1989 BiH President. Leader of the SDS was Radovan Karadzic, the main nationalist Serbian leader wanted since 1995 as war criminal. D. Perinovic and S. Kijujic founded the HDZ, but Mate Boban was the Croat leader during the war. His death in 1997 allowed him to avoid incrimination by the International Tribunal for former Yugoslavia. In the 1990 elections the three parties collected 86% of the votes. The remaining went mostly to two multiethnic parties: the League of Yugoslav Communists (6%) and the Alliance of Reformist Forces (5,6%), which had Ante Markovic as point of reference. Both parties disappeared from the political panorama in the following months.

The different balance between nationalities made the secessionist solution more difficult than in other republics where one nationality was dominant, like in Slovenia or Croatia. Self-determination, in BiH, in order to be viable, would have had to reach consensus among the three *constituent* peoples. The Serbian nationalist leadership – representing around 31% of the population – declared itself against this way out and when, at the beginning of 1992, the referendum on independence was called only 63% of those entitled took part and voted for secession. In such a heavily conflictual situation (and with two wars in Slovenia and Croatia already fought in the summer of 1991) war in BiH became foreseeable and inevitable. And more dramatic than in the northern republics. The European Community – through a committee chaired by the French jurist Badinter- superficially and irresponsibly supported the referendum results and gave way to the recognition of BiH's independence. War broke out a few weeks later.

In April 1992 the violent conflict which had started in Slovenia and Croatia reached Bosnia Herzegovina with full force. The months that followed were marked by extreme violence, killings and mass rapes, particularly in the border areas to Serbia. The ethnic cleansing of this region meant that numerous Bosnian families were driven from their homes, men and women were separated and men were kept in detention and/or killed, while many women were raped and/or kept in detention as well. As the years went on, numerous villages were ethnically cleansed and there are heroes, villain and saints on all sides of the ethnic divides in BiH. Why the war turned so violent in Bosnia Herzegovina is still an unresolved puzzle and the theories about this vary. It is clear, however, that BiH was the most ethnically diverse republic in the former Yugoslavia, but this alone cannot explain the carnage Europe witnessed over the three years and half that followed after the violent spring of 1992. In the following we will attempt to give a brief overview of how the conflict panned out and what lead to its termination in Autumn 1995.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has historically been, and still is, a multi-ethnic state. In 1990, its population included approximately 43% Muslims, 31% Serbs, and 17% Croats. One of the beauties of the main capital, Sarajevo, is the chiming of bells from the Orthodox and Catholic churches as well as prayers chanted from the many Minarets scattered around. Sarajevo had a substantial Jewish population and a still has a beautiful synagogue. One of the world's largest collections of Jewish texts were in the National Library in Sarajevo which, tragically was burnt as a result of shelling in Sarajevo on August 26, 1992. Finally, there are many Roma people in Bosnia Herzegovina, as there are in all the former Yugoslav republics, but their exact numbers are hard to estimate. Virtually all villages and cities in BiH had inhabitants from all ethnic groups, but the composition varied with a predominantly Croat population in the Herzegovina area, and Serbs in the border areas to Serbia. When the war started this tightly knit fabric of inter-ethnic relations disentangled in ways that shocked and surprised not only the international community, but also Bosnians themselves.

It is important to note that the Bosnian war was by no means fought between warring parties within Bosnia Herzegovina alone, but with strong support and influence from the stronger neighbouring countries of Croatia and Serbia who had strong and vested interested in claiming parts of BiH as their own territory. At the most simplistic level, one could argue that the war was primarily fought between the Bosnian Muslim-majority with a Bosnian government based in Sarajevo, organized in the Army of Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Bosnian Serbs, Army of Republika Srpska whose leader was Radtko Mladic. Bosnian Croats also fought in the war against the Serbs, both with and against the Bosnian Muslims in the Croatian Defense Council. In addition to these military formations there were notoriously violent paramilitary units on all sides adding to the aggravating situation which evolved. The Bosnian Serbs were backed by Yugoslavia/Serbia while the Bosnian Croats were backed by Croatia which created a political *leadertrioika* consisting of Alija

Izedbegovic in Sarajevo, Franjo Tudjman in Zagreb and Slobodan Milosevic in Belgrade as the main stakeholders in the Bosnian war. These were the leaders who had the power to end the war and with whom international peacemakers (of which there were a substantial number) negotiated and had political talks aiming to find a peaceful settlement.

The warfare of ethnic cleansing was as unlikely as it was extreme. When Roy Gutman, an American journalist with Newsday who gave the world the first reports that there were concentration camps in BiH, his reports were met with great skepticism. People simply could not believe that this was taking place in Europe in the 1990s. Eventually the international public had to acknowledge that there was indeed systematic ethnic cleansing taking place in Europe's own backyard and the questions was 'whose responsibility it was to take action against the warring parties?' This question was again linked to an understanding of the root causes of the conflict; was this suppressed age-old ethnic hatred against which neither the UN nor the EU could do anything, or, was the conflict a result of failed economic and political policies promoted by the international community through international loans and a premature EU recognition of Bosnian independence? The leading experts on the Bosnian war vary on these points and what they emphasize as being the main cause(s) (see for instance Malcolm 1996; Ramet, 2002; Silber & Little 1997; Woodward 1995). Whatever the determining factor might have been it is clear that the daily bombardment of news-images with white Europeans being expelled from their homes, and malnourished inmates in concentration camps gazing through barbed wire in 1992, made the international by-standers react. These events took place close to home both geographically and culturally for Westerners to remain inactive.

The United Nations Security Council was summoned several times in 1992 to enlarge the mandate of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which initially was set in during the Croatian war in 1991, but which over several UNSC resolutions the mandate included several areas in Bosnia where fightings were taking place. The UN security council decided in 1993 to create some *safe areas* (Sarajevo, Zepa, Tuzla, Gorazde, Bihac, Srebrenica) and the UNPROFOR troops were stationed in these areas in small numbers, with the thought that a symbolic UN presence would be enough to secure them. The problem turned out to be that the UNPROFOR mandate was weak (the number of soldiers less than needed) and did not allow the UN soldiers to take violent action in given settings out of fear that the impartiality of the UNPROFOR would be compromised. Nowhere did this have a more tragic and devastating outcome than in the small town of Srebrenica in east-central Bosnia Herzegovina. Srebrenica had been declared a safe area, but the Dutch UNPROFOR soldiers who were there were did nothing to hinder the tragic massacre which killed more than 8000 people. The Dutch government issued an official apology to the families of the deceased but the Association of Citizens Mothers of Srebrenica and Drina valley have not been impressed and are issuing a criminal complaint against United Nations Officials who failed to do their duty.

As a direct result of the Srebrenica massacre NATO launched a military intervention in August 1995. The goal was to target Serbian artillery positions throughout Bosnia. The bombardment continued into October. Serb forces also lost ground to Bosnian Muslims who had received arms shipments from the Islamic world. As a result, half of Bosnia Herzegovina was eventually retaken by Muslim-Croat troops. Faced with the heavy NATO bombardment and a string of ground losses to the Muslim-Croat alliance, Serb leader Milosevic was now ready to talk peace. On November 1, 1995, leaders of the warring factions including Milosevic and Tudjman traveled to the U.S. for peace talks at Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Ohio. After three weeks of negotiations, a peace accord was declared. Terms of the agreement included partitioning Bosnia Herzegovina into two main portions known as the Bosnian Serb Republic and the Muslim-Croat Federation. The agreement also called for democratic elections and stipulated that war criminals would be handed over for prosecution. 60,000 NATO soldiers were deployed to preserve the cease-fire.

## **Post-War Bosnia Herzegovina**

The General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), negotiated in Dayton, Ohio and signed in Paris on 14. December 1995, laid out how Bosnia Herzegovina was to be rebuilt as a new states

after the war and how different international organizations and agencies were to play different parts in the puzzle.

The NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina came into place on 20. December 1996. The SFOR operation replaced the Implementation Force (IFOR), which had been deployed the year before as an immediate result of the GFAP. The IFOR was deployed following Security Council Resolution 1031 on December 1995. In December 1996 the Security Council authorized member states to set up a multinational Stabilization Force to succeed IFOR. The main task of the SFOR was to oversee the parts of the 11 Annexes to the GFAP that address military issues (this will be discussed in greater detail in the next section).

This peace agreement has resulted in a highly bureaucratic state which has two parallel systems of government, police, education and so forth, with federal institutions over and above the two entity levels. The civilian components of the 11 Annexes were to be overseen by international organizations within the United Nations system as well as others. In effect, Bosnia became an international protectorate where the state's military was monitored by the NATO-led SFOR forces, the police was monitored by the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF), and elections and democratic institutions were monitored by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Office of the High Representative (OHR). In combination, these different organizations made the international intervention in Bosnia the largest operation ever seen.

These different operations have gone through changes of different kinds over the years. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina (UNMIBH) terminated its engagement at the end of 2002 and its former responsibilities were taken over by the European Union. The clearest example of this transition is the fact that the IPTF now has been replaced by the EU Police Mission (EUPM) which has a slightly different mandate than the IPTF (it will focus more specifically on returning refugees and fighting organized crime in the region). The transition to the European Union has also been in the military sector and a transfer of responsibility and personnel took place in December 2004 under the name of European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR). The general aim of these processes of transformation is to make the responsibility for development a distinctly European issue and ensure that the development in the country can lead up to membership in the European Union. The last step in this process was the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement in December 2007; a prerequisite for full membership. This signing obliges Bosnia Herzegovina to go through a number political, economic and social changes which will, eventually, give full applicant status for EU membership.

In addition to the many international bodies present in the country there has also been a blooming non-governmental sector. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) in the year 2000 listed 182 international non-governmental organizations; in addition, there are 325 local non-governmental organizations that are also mostly funded by foreign organizations. Over the past years, however, many of these organizations have experienced that many donors have lost interest in working in BiH and have switched to more recent conflict areas. Consequently, many NGOs are forced to cut their activities and number of employees, and even shut down.

The presence of internationals in Bosnian is overwhelming and they constitute an important source of income for the local population. The internationals have more money than the local population and constitute an important consumer group in the country. In addition, their presence creates job opportunities for local Bosnians.

On a more general level, there is a strong sense amongst many Bosnians, that the international presence is of such a nature that it has deprived many them of a sense of ownership over their own democratic and political development. The parliamentary election of October 2002, the first election the Bosnian authorities organized without the immediate supervision of the OHR and the OSCE, showed that efforts to "educate" the BiH population in democratic values and tolerance have not provided the result the international community (IC) had hoped for. Not only was voter turnout extremely low (less than 55 %); those who showed up gave their votes to the nationalist candidates. In a critical article, Knaus & Martin (2003, p. 60) criticize the OHR and the High Representative Paddy Ashdown in 2003 in particular, for demonstrating an "Unlimited authority of an international mission to overrule all of the democratic institutions of a sovereign member state of the United Nations".

According to Sumatra Bose (2002, p. 6) the internationals also constitute yet another conflict line in this small country. This is an important factor to be aware of in EU/Bosnian relations in the future.

## 2. The role of conflict society in the conflict

### a. Securitization

#### *Introduction*

Before analysing the role of a part of civil society in *securitizing* the conflict we have to remember that civil society in Bosnia Herzegovina (and in former Yugoslavia, as well) before the beginning of the war in 1992 was weak and enough far from a fully democratic and pluralistic concept, as we understand it nowadays. In the 80s Bosnia Herzegovina (just like former Yugoslavia) went through changes from a non-democratic regime to a more open political framework. Until that time the social and civic organisations in Bosnia Herzegovina (BiH) had been linked and dependent from the State structure or the communist party (the League of Communists). No independent and free civil society was at work in BiH until the end of the eighties. Media, youth, sport, cultural and social organisations were a sort of branches of the organised communist society system. As in many regimes the political dominant structure used the "organisation of the society" as a mean to get support and consensus to the ideology and to the political structure. In this context the social and cultural organisations during the regime period worked to confirm and ensure consensus and participation to the running of the communist power in the country. Since '90s the nationalism took the place of communism as ideological cement and changed the principles of the modern State. "The ethnicity and not the citizenship became the background of the State.... Because the State has an ethnic background, it is not based on rule of law or on the individual rights, but on an identity which discriminate for language, religion, cultural values, historical belongings..." (Bianchini 1999)

Only during the sixties, and notably 1968 and the following years some dissent personalities and small groups (as magazines or circles, clubs) tried to break the wall of the regime, in the attempt to organise some debate on the democratisation and the future of BiH and former Yugoslavia. In the specific BiH case different roads have been followed. One is more related with the religious issues in which Mr. Alija Izetbegovic was involved and for which (in name of freedom and identity of the Islamic religion) he was imprisoned in 1983 with a sentence to 11 years of detention. In 1970 Izetbegovic had published the text *The Islamic Declaration* which had given him a reputation of religious fundamentalist. And it was in the 70s that the *Young Muslims* movement had been reborn, under the leadership of Hansan Cengic who, through the journal *Preporod* (Rebirth), called for the reaffirmation of Islamic identity. Croats and Serbs too were active on the nationalist front. The wave of the so-called 1971 *Croat spring* – when in Zagreb students took to the streets to demonstrate – reached also Sarajevo and woke up once again the nationalist Croat streams for which the *Napredek* movement (dissolved by the regime in 1949 and re-constituted in 1990) had been one of the main points of reference. Serbian nationalism, with the support of the Belgrade-based Serbian Academy of Sciences, made a significant comeback in the 80s and the future Serbian-Bosniac leader Radovan Karadzic was heavily influenced in those years by the nationalist elaborations of such intellectuals as Dobrica Cosic, President of the Yugoslav Federal Republic from 1992 to 1993. A second one is the effort to democratise Yugoslav socialism, as Mr. Dubcek had tried to do in Czechoslovakia. Prominent intellectuals as Mr. Predrag Matvejevic (writer), Mr. Rade Petrovic (historian) and others tried to press the regime in the direction of what they defined as "human and democratic" socialism. In fact 1968 had an impact also in Yugoslavia with demonstrations in Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo. BiH and its capital witnessed students and university requests for greater freedom and democracy, with the BiH *Union of Students* dissolved by the regime because of its role in the protests. In spite of all this, the largest dissent remained the one inspired by nationalisms and religious identities.

The result of these social and political dynamics was a sort of *underground society*, developing in the 70s and 80s, that “included even the publication of *alternative* journals, heterodox articles in the official press and lecture at the University” and “*samizdat* or illegal meetings” (Bianchini 1999). This *underground society* was an attempt to create a real and independent civil society not officially allowed by the regime. But these little fragments of social initiatives never really come up to the surface. While in the 70s *Solidarnosc*, in Poland, and *Charta '77*, in Czechoslovakia, emerged as new civil society actors against their respective regimes, no similar cultural or social movements appeared in BiH. A free civil society - with freedom of expression, multi parties system and freedom of association - will start to exist only at the beginning of the nineties with the first free political elections.

### *i. Type of actors/identity*

In the early '90s - before the outbreak of the war - the three nationalistic parties (HDZ, SDS, SDA) - with all their linked social branches - were acting exactly towards the *securitising* the conflict. All the interviews carried out by the SHUR researchers and the survey of available literature confirm this analysis. One should underline that in the context of a society, like BiH one, just opened to the democracy, political parties were the main social organised structures through which civic participation was channelled. The absence or a *not-yet-developed* structure of a civil society arena (formed by NGOs, independent media, associations, clubs) allowed (nationalistic) political parties to monopolise participation and public activism. The most relevant social organisations divided up along nationalist lines with the *Bosnia Erzegovina Trade Union* splitting into three, one for each of the largest nationalities. The *securitising* of the conflict by the nationalistic parties was implemented by reinforcing the national/ethnic identities and attitudes in the country's population. The fear to be attacked by the “others”, the threat to loose the own religious and cultural identities and the fuelling of a sort of “enemy image” were all components of a strategy, common to all nationalistic parties, of all the actors involved in the preparation of the conflict. In this (pre-war) context, other social institutions played a negative role to *securitizing* the conflict: the media system the academic institutions and the cultural system, the religious structures.

In mid-1991, in BiH, 377 newspapers and other publications were being published, 54 local radio stations, one news agency and the state RTV network were active. Many of these media had a negative role in fuelling the conflict. The media system – both the public and the private ones - manipulated the information and communication in order to support the nationalistic views and to feed the ethnic divisions in the country. In BiH the weekly *Ljiljan* was the main voice of the hardest nationalist wing of the SDA. This nationalistic attitude of a part of media system of the academic institutions and of the religious structures went on also during the war and the post-war period. Media were a major problem during all those years. This is so true that many European and international projects implemented by civil society organisations focussed on the creation, as a way to stop the conflict, of independent and trans-national networks of journalists.

The same can be noted on the academic world, universities and other public research institutions: many historians, political scientists and writers used the cultural heritage and the historical memory as a “battle arena” for claiming the national rights of own ethnic community. Intellectuals have provided all along the conflict the fundamental ideological, historical and social legitimisation needed by the political leaderships and in order to justify their decisions and actions, the nationalist leaders took on *in toto* the elaborations by the cultural and religious institutions of their own nationality. The Croats referred to *Napredek*, Muslims to the Islamic cultural and religious circles and the Serbian nationalists to the mid-80s elaborations by the Serbian Academy of Sciences.

Religions added up their own *securitizing* role in the conflict. All the main monotheistic religions (Ortodox, Islamic and Catholic ones) were linked with the leadership of the nationalistic parties and were involved in politics. They had a negative role in reinforcing in their believers the identification with the nationalistic tendencies in the country. The Catholic with the Croats, the Ortodox with the Serbs and the Islamic with the Muslims was at the end the result of a mix between

religions and nationalities. An overall complicity of religions in the process of *securitising* the conflict is apparent. “Unfortunately the role of the religions in the Balkans has been negative... the influence of the religion has been excessive. The religions didn't provoke the war, but they do nothing to stop it” (Orsolich 1995). On March 1992 (one month before the war) the Orthodox Patriarch Pavle declared in an ambiguous and sinister way: “What should the Serbs have to do, if we wanted to revenge for all we suffered in the past? Should we bury the people still alive? Should we slaughter them? Should we kill the kids in front of their parents? But the Serbs do not do this to the wild beasts, neither to the human beings”. And the *reis-ul-ulema* of Sarajevo, Mustafa Ceric said in 1993: “Now we have a State and we don't need to beg the pardon to be Muslim” (Pirjevec 2001). Among the Islamic organisations playing a significant securitising role two should be remembered: the *BiH Islamska Zajednica* (Islamic community) and the *Aktivna Islamska Omladina* (Active Islamic Youth) movement, both claiming that Islamic culture, identity and religion had to be recognised as crucial in BiH. Various attempts were tried to put together the different religions for promoting a reconciliation initiative among the communities, but with little success, and even little response.

Partly connected to religious institutions also humanitarian organisations, within this context, played a role: *Merhamet* (Islamic), *Caritas* (Catholic), the Serbian Red Cross (chaired at the time by Mr Karadzic's wife) and other minor ones, like the Serbian *Dobrotvor* (Benefactor).

Conflict securitisation has been assured also by external violent and paramilitary groups: The *Tigers* led by the war criminal Zeljko Razjatovic, called *Arkan*, from Serbia and responsible for massacres by the thousands in BiH; the *Patriotska Liga* (Patriotic League), created in 1990 by the nationalist Muslims or the mujihadin brigades from Iran and Afghanistan. The Bosnian government itself created in 1993 the *El Mudzahedin* brigade, 1,800 soldiers of Iranian, Afghan and other origins employed in Travnik, Bugojno and Zenica not only in military actions, but also in propaganda activities: a well-known publication they produced was called *The opinions we have to correct*, with criticisms to Bosnian Islamists for their being too moderate ([www.osservatoriobalcani.org](http://www.osservatoriobalcani.org)). Already before the war broke out in the Muslim field the paramilitary *Zelene Beretke* (Green berets) were active and on the Croat side the *HOS- Hrvatski Oslobodilacki Pokret* (Croat liberation movement), substituted, at the beginning of the war, by the HVO-Hrvatsko Vijece Obrane (Croat defense council), nothing but an army supported by the Republic of Croatia.

## ii. Framework of Actions

Media basically manipulated information and misled the public debate: false or distorted news were spread, exaggerations to light up nationalisms and fuel prejudices became the rule, with a use of history facts, happened during World War II and way back to more ancient times, finalised to build up hate among nationalities and deny access to any dissent, specifically to pacifist and multiethnic approaches. Several news in the broadcast programmes were systematically used to support a nationalistic approach and to discourage a multi-ethnic dialogue within the social and political situations. The disruptive reporting was very strong before the war and almost generalised during the wartime. A former Journalist of the Sarajevo daily *Oslobodenje* (Liberation) Zlatko Dizdarevic, stated: “There are some journalists that are war criminals. They have the same responsibilities of the chiefs of the armies, perhaps more” (Marcon 2000). Media manipulation spread “enemy images” which were at the basis of the war started in April 1992.

Intellectuals too, in general, contributed to the distorted and ideological interpretation of the country's historic and social dynamics. Documents, books, official statements were delivered in order to claim the own national identity and the right to play a special role in the Bosnian scenario. On March 1992 in Sarajevo (one month before the beginning of the war) a first “Congress of the Serbian Intellectuals” was organised with 500 participants who declared they wanted a division of the country along the ethnic identities. We remember that during the war many non-nationalistic intellectuals (as journalists, academics, writers and also students, young people) left the BiH to escape - apart from the war - from an cultural and political oppressive condition: this meant that the cultural scene in BiH

became increasingly influenced by nationalists. In several cases media and the academia interacted for the nationalists causes: intellectuals went on TV or wrote in newspapers in favour of nationalist theories and these opinions were presented as true and given wide public attention.

The religious institutions - also through the charity organisations (Caritas, Red Cross, Merhamet) - had an ambiguous role in influencing political and social attitudes. The Islamic institutions played an always more active role in politics and in de-secularisation of the Bosnian society. Especially in the post-war years almost all the religions played a role between *securitisation* and the *holding* the dynamics of the conflict. Via humanitarian actions (religious organisations distributed aid and helped refugees, indeed only those with their own same creed) and via objectively nationalist propaganda, constantly hammering on the need to defend the own faith against external aggressions, religious institutions (with noteworthy exceptions<sup>1</sup>) were major actors in the conflict. With regard to Judaism: since 1993 almost all the little Jewish community left BiH starting in 1993 for Israel and other nations.

International religious networks too played an important role. The *Islamic Conference Organisation* supported Bosniac Muslims at various times, with humanitarian aid and arms. The same did other European Muslim religious networks. Own mujahdin brigades from Iran and Afghanistan fought in the name of the holy war in Central Bosnia. Serbian Bosnians were supported not only by Belgrade's Orthodox Church, but also by the Orthodox Churches in Russia and in the other former USSR countries. BiH Catholics received their support from the *Caritas* and the Vatican. Pope John Paul II himself tried to visit Sarajevo in September 1994, but his arrival was blocked by the Serbian Bosnian threats.

Just to have a more complete picture on the dynamics of Bosnian civil society after the end of the war we have to remember that a relevant part of the most cultural and dynamic part of the society (youngsters, intellectuals, people with a non-nationalist background) left the country to avoid discrimination or having to live in a nationalistic and non democratic state.

In the post war period also other organisations tried to *securitizing* the conflict, as the veteran organisations (and SPONA network) in Republika Srpska, which have been interviewed by SHUR team. In the meetings with those organisations, the national Serbian identity was reaffirmed in opposition to the Muslim and Croat ethnic groups, also in terms of the separation and partition of the country. The paradigm of "enemy image" has been proposed once again also in the more recent years - after more than 10 years from the end of the war - and appears to be rooted in the fear to be discriminated or humiliated by the other ethnic groups. Organised monotheistic religions still play an ambiguous role on enforcing the stereotypes based on national and cultural heritage. The media played a less nationalist role in the post war period, but they still have little independence and the public TVs and Radios are still strictly controlled by the government and in 1997, two years after the Dayton Agreement the national TV of the Republika Srpska was stopped by the International High Representative (in charge by the international community to check the application of the peace accords) in 1997 because of the anti-Dayton broadcasts and activities. At a local level - particularly in the little villages in countryside - some cultural groups (in education, theatre, music, historical heritage) in Herzegovina and in the Republika Srpska continued to operate to underline the specific background of the peoples (Croats and Serbs) of the country.

Paramilitary organisations were active during the war in the three nationality fields. They sided regular armies outside any international humanitarian law rule and terrorised civil population forcing them to leave their own homes. The "dirty job" which regular armies, under media attention, sometimes cannot do. The worst war crimes were perpetrated, including the macabre practise of *ethnic rapes*, again, without the least respect of the Geneva Convention or of any of the other most basic war time laws

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<sup>1</sup> Like the 23 December 1992 initiative in Switzerland with the participation of the Catholic Zagreb Archbishop Duro Kokska, the Orthodox Patriarch Pavle and the Sarajevo ras-ul-ulema Haji Jakub Selimoski, who together prayed for solidarity with the victims in former Yugoslavia.

### iii. Conditions: Political Opportunity Structure (POS)

The transition from the regime of eighties to a more open political structure at the end of the decade (with the first multi-party election in 1990) emerged and polarised into two tendencies: the nationalist and the democratic/reformist, with the former overwhelming the latter - “after communism, nationalists recast discriminations along cultural lines”, using to this aim political myths or epic deeds to emphasize the differences among the identities of the three ethnic groups. 45 years of communist regime made it difficult for the society as a whole to think in terms of individual and citizens’ rights (*alpha* and *omega* of a modern civil society), also because of the communist ideology thinking in terms of classes, or similar general categories and because of the growing nationalist approach based on collective rights. The end of the regime, gave opportunities to a civil society freed from the communist control to develop their own organisations (Matvejevic 2006). It has to be remarked that the break-up of the Yugoslav State – as first effect - had immediately opened the door to the creation of new political parties. Such nationalist parties as HDZ (Croats), SDS (Serbs) and SDA (Muslims) were the most important ones and they dominated the political scene. The former communist leadership (with the relevant exception of Mr. Izetbegovic and few others) became the leadership of the new national parties and only two multi-ethnic political parties (one supported by the Federal prime minister, Ante Markovic and the other formed by Social Democrats) were active at that time, but they turned out as weak minorities (they didn't get more than 20% at the elections of 1990) in the political panorama.

In a certain way also the international community had a *securitising* role, firstly supporting the breakup of the Yugoslav Federation (opening in this way the *Pandora's box* of the conflicts in former Yugoslavia) and secondly accepting the nationalistic approach which was fostered by all the political leadership in the new republics of former Yugoslavia. As Mary Kaldor put it: “The so-called international community fell into a nationalistic trap, because it has accepted the perception of the conflict that the nationalistic leadership wanted to convince them....They were convinced that the nationalists were effectively representing all the society and the international negotiators didn't see any other solution than the compromise that the nationalists were proposing... They didn't see that ‘hate and fear’ were not endemic to the country, but a consequence of the war. In this way they helped the nationalists to get their objectives and weakened the humanitarian perspective” (Kaldor 1999, p.42). In this situation the political conditions in which civil society organisations working for *de-securitising* tried to operate turned out to be unfavourable. At the opposite end civil society actors working for *securitising* the conflict found unhoped allies in the international community, beyond their own political nationalistic leadership.

## b. Holding

### i. Type of actors/identity

Whilst using the categories of “peace-building”, “holding” and “fuelling” for describing the impact of an action, it is fairly easy to show examples for fuelling actions. Holding actions are a lot more difficult to be shown because if fuelling does not take place, the credit for this can be accounted to the holding actor; however other reasons can also be responsible for this. The categories of fuelling, holding and peace-building are in our case based on the concept of *securitisation* with fuelling being the equivalent to *securitisation*, peace-building to *de-securitisation* and holding to *non-securitisation* as used in the whole process of SHUR. In this context it is defined that four different types of *non-securitisation* can be distinguished. These are denying the asserted existence of an existential threat, warning that an addressed audience does not possess the legitimacy to decide on the adoption of extraordinary means, recommending the addressed audience to reject the call to panic policies as well as resisting the implementation of extraordinary measures (Gromes, Bonacker 2007: 18). Whilst looking at these four types it is obvious that they only take account of *securitisation* taking place or a

*non-securitising* action on the short term. For the SHUR BiH Case Study this definition has to be broadened a little, concerning the work with the data raised through the interviews that took place in late 2007. All but one of the interviewed actors respectively their organisations had taken up work long after the end of the 1992-1995 Bosnian conflict. Whilst *securitisation* still took place after the conflict, and does in some areas still today, the mass of *securitising* moves took place in the time leading up to the conflict as well as during the conflict. In this time classical *non securitising* moves took place, for instance the demonstration against the war in Sarajevo in April 1992 where the demonstrators took control of the parliament, for a short time trying to recommend the addressed audience to reject the call for panic politics. This *non-securitising* action failed at the moment when the demonstrators pulled up in front of the headquarters of the political party of the Bosnian Serbs. In this moment the Bosnian Serbs adopted panic politics and the bodyguards of Radovan Karadzic killed four civilians. This is just one example how a *non-securitising* move in this case a demonstration for peace can fail. Another is the existence of the Bihac enclave and the Agrokomerc food company. In this region around Bihac and Velika Kladusa *securitisation* did not take place because the asserted existence, in this case the ethnic misunderstanding was not seen as an existential threat, so that no fighting took place between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Muslims. On the mid-term this *non-securitising* move failed, because the Bosnian Muslim Government under Izetbegovic marked the Muslims in West-Bosnia as traitors and called for extraordinary measures which resulted in the military defeat of the West-Bosnian troops, and can be seen as a good example for *securitisation*. These two incidents can be seen as examples for attempted *non-securitisation* in a very classical way. For using the category of *non-securitisation/holding* in regard of the SHUR interviews a far broader approach has to be used, this is possible through describing holding moves as actions operating on symptoms of the conflict however not dealing with its root core. So that holding actions are merely an intermediate step, because they can prepare the ground for peace on the one hand as well as set the conditions for a relapse of escalation on the other hand. Another aspect that has to be defined before showing the actual empirical results is the definition of peace-building.

## **ii. Framework of Actions**

Like mentioned before the SHUR definition of peace-building does not overall correspond with the broad peace-building definition. In the SHUR context peace-building is seen as a *de-securitising* action meaning that an issue is shifted back from panic politics through a specific in this case peace-building action. Other actions, that may lead to a democratisation of the country and to peace-building on the long term can be seen as holding actions at present, because they deal with the symptoms of the current situation in Bosnia Herzegovina in this case lack of democracy and understanding of democracy but do not shift an issue back from panic politics. For this reason the actions undertaken by the Sarajevo University in building up a master course “human rights and democracy” can be seen as a holding move because students are trained how to react to the call for *securitisation* in a democratic manner the programme itself however does not de-securitise a previously securitised issue. Another example for holding actions can be seen in the work of Medica Zenica. This organisation helped traumatized women throughout the war and still works on this and other issues in the Bosnian town of Zenica. With these actions helping traumatised women acute symptoms of the conflict were dealt with, but again these actions did not cause any kind of *de-securitisation*, so that they can best be described as holding actions. Another interesting example for holding moves is the work of the organisation Q. This organisation tries to foster the rights of homosexuals in Bosnia Herzegovina. Homosexuality is a difficult topic in Bosnia so that the organisation had problems especially with local residents and religious groups during their campaigns. With their work they try to get an overview of the situation of homosexuals in Bosnia, through interviews with governmental institutions and through contacting the police stations to find out if there are statistics on registered cases because of sexual orientation. Furthermore they held public meetings to create awareness for the discrimination of homosexuals and are trying to build up a network so that affected individuals know whom they can respond to. All in all the actions of the organisation Q are opposed by a number of social actors, but with these actions the

organisation creates awareness on the topic of discrimination of a certain group and individuals, making them an active actor in the struggle for human rights in Bosnia. Still the actions of the organisation Q cannot be seen as peace-building moves in a *de-securitising* way because they do not refer to an act of *securitisation*. The issue of homosexual rights was not really mentioned in public before the war, and even after the war it is not a topic that is on the political agenda of any party, so that the work, that the organisation does, stands a little outside of the main Bosnian conflict but is linked through its basic aim, the implementation of human rights. In some ways similar is the situation of the European Movement in Bosnia. This NGO works on the topic of minority rights and is especially engaged in the Roma community. The Roma are the biggest ethnic group in Bosnia Herzegovina that is not a constituting nation of the country. Next to this the Roma are discriminated throughout Bosnia, as well as being affected by a extremely high unemployment and the highest analphabetic rate of all ethnic groups in the country. The European Movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina has two programmes in trying to promote Roma rights and improve their living standard. One programme aims at lobby work for Roma rights, combined with direct help. This programme consisted mainly of an information office where Roma were advised on how to cope with their situation and which possibilities of state help could be applied for. The other programme directly targeted one of the key Roma problems, the disability to read and write. For this reason classes were installed and teachers were hired. With these actions the NGO tried to improve the living standard of the Roma, and promote the human right of equality. Due to the loss of Donors only 20% of the started activities were still running at the time of the interview. Of the international Donors only a small German NGO still funded them. Different European embassies, which had been important in the past had shifted their focus to other projects and ended the co-operation.

### *iii. Conditions: Political Opportunity Structure (POS)*

All in all it is to say that holding actions can be found in a variety of different moves by local and international CSO's. Defining an action as holding and not peace-building may not correspond with the self-perception of the local actors, who would mostly state their work as peace-building. This however primarily lies in the way that SHUR defines peace-building. This does not however mean that the actions defined as holding moves cannot foster a peaceful, democratic development of the country but rather that they merely do not act *de-securitising*.

Among the political conditions, it has to be taken in consideration the international and the internal factors.

Regarding the international factors the approach of the UN and European institutions during the war was substantially characterized by an *holding* initiative with modest and non effective attempts to find solutions for ending the conflict. The main defender of this argument is David Rieff: he remarks as the international humanitarian aid has been during the war been an *alibi* to avoid a political or military intervention. "In place of a political initiative, supported by the menace of military intervention, the western countries choose the humanitarian aid able to relieve the worst consequences of a conflict that they wanted to *hold* by charitable actions. *Holding by charitable actions*, this was the definition of an UN official... The problem was how to make working the humanitarian *alibi* to justify the lack of intervention" (Rieff, 2002). The international and Bosnian CS organisations cooperating with this approach should be included -according our author- in the holding category. The international institutions supported massively the international and local NGOs delivering humanitarian aid and gave just a very little support to organisations working for peace, human rights, free of communication.

For the internal conditions, the Serb and the Croat nationalistic groups (political leaderships and social, religious, cultural *nomenklatura*) were the most interested to hold the conflict during many parts and times of the war (lasting three years and half) and in the post-war period, after the Dayton Agreement. This was the way to preserve the partition of the country in different entities and to defend a nationalistic approach. In this conditions some local NGOs -without discussing the framework of the Dayton Agreement (or claiming for full implementation of human rights), after the end of the war-

accepted an holding strategy, waiting for better times. In some case there was not alternative, because the risk to fuelling again the conflict or to not be aloud to operate. This has been particularly true for the *Republika Srpska* during the war and in the first years after the Dayton Agreement.

### **c. De-securitizing**

It is not at all uncommon for academic commentators and others to refer to the current state of Bosnia Herzegovina as a cold peace (Belloni, 2007: 1) or a faked democracy (Chandler, 2000). The reasons for this less than desirable state of peace is due to a vast array of factors; too much, and too direct, involvement of the international community, continuing tensions between ethnic groups which have not been addressed, high unemployment and lack of economic security for many families, the state structure is highly bureaucratic and complex and there is a strong felt lack of ownership over their own social and democratic development. While these characteristics might suggest a pessimistic view of the future of Bosnia Herzegovina, the current cold peace, or faked democracy, has triggered strong involvement from the civil society sector in promoting different forms of peace work. These initiatives, their modes of action, aims and opportunity structures will be discussed in more detail in this paper.

Before embarking on this analysis it is important to map out the significance of the NGO and civil society sector within Bosnian society and its intended and unintended political role. The role of civil society in BiH must be seen in the context of international interventions where reconstruction of civil society with a strong emphasis on the NGO sector is seen as way of ensuring a bottom-up, and presumably more sustainable, peace. In the Bosnian context the NGOs have been regarded as decisive tools aiming to fulfill gaps in the peace process. Belloni (2007:109) explains.

“By investing in civil society development, international agencies hoped to contribute to the idea of “ownership” of the peace process and the related need for local groups and organizations to take on an ever-expanding role in the process of democratization and peace building. [...] Bosnian NGOs have been idealized as the alternative avenue to achieve success in those areas where Bosnia’s post-war transition has been more difficult, such as minority return, the establishment of the rule of law, and the struggle against corruption and cronyism. Repeatedly, when international agencies proved unable to overcome a problem, local NGOs have been presented as the solution.”

Fagan (2005: 406) puts it as strong as saying that “[i]t seems as though all aspects of Bosnia’s internationally-led post-conflict transition hinge on civil society development”. The NGO sector in Bosnia Herzegovina is further characterized by certain distinct features. First, its claim and ambition to pose an alternative to the nationalist political elites, means that most NGOs will resist having nationalist interests, or be defined as a distinctly Serb, Croat or Bosnian group. Rather, most NGOs will strive to be multiethnic in outlook with tolerance, compromise, dialogue and moderation as their primary asset.

These multi-ethnic ambitions might mask over ethnic divides that exist within and between some NGOs while being a truly legitimate ambition and characteristic for others. Second, most of the NGOs stem from the war or post-war era. It has been a commonly-agreed perception that the communist legacy would hinder liberal peace ambitions of the international community and the civil society vision has therefore been one of mere construction, rather than reconstruction. Third, international donors fund the vast majority of the NGOs in Bosnia Herzegovina. This entails that the agendas for the various NGOs are defined outside of BiH which weakens the notion of the NGOs as guarantors of the bottom-up civil society development. One example can illustrate; the many NGOs that have addressed war-related violence against women have been provided ample resources as long as their activities have been regarded as war-related. Securing international funding combating domestic violence, a form of violence which may or may not be directly war related, have proven to be more difficult. Finally, the dynamic described above becomes even more acute when we consider the fact that the NGO sector is one of the most important and in many cases best paid, employment opportunities for many Bosnians. Fagan (2005: 408) points to the inherent paradox in the expectations to what civil society is hoped to achieve; namely, to challenge dominant political discourses and

achieve heady political objectives through using apolitical means. Civil society, then, can not be construed as independent but is an extension of and integral component of the international intervention.

In 2005 there were over 7000 NGOs in Bosnia Herzegovina. As a consequence of this overflow of organizations, the policy over the last couple of years has been one of consolidation efforts (Belloni, 2007). This has taken the form of different kinds of partnerships and an encouragement the different organizations to rely on foreign support. In effect, these processes could pave the way for nationalist interest groups with money to back certain segments of the NGO sector. One example of this was seen in the Serb Republic (RS) in November 2007 where a network of allegedly independent NGOs acronymed SPONA and backed financially and morally by the RS political leadership, organized mass protests demanding a referendum on RS independence.

The NGOs and civil society actors in this study find themselves in the midst of these processes. The mere attempt to categorize the different NGOs as belonging to a particular ethnic group or having a particular political agenda other than the humanitarian one proved difficult. Bougarel, et. Al (2007: 33) argue that the discourse of the peace process in Bosnia Herzegovina is characterized by the following dichotomies; national/international, governmental/non-governmental and political/humanitarian. The NGOs will naturally define themselves on the national/non-governmental/humanitarian axis and refute other categorizations. Needless to say the aims of the SHUR project are challenged by the inherent resistance by the Bosnia NGO community to let it be categorized according to the parameters defined in the SHUR project. The following outline, therefore, will be tainted by the challenges.

Finally, on the attempts by some international networks to prevent and/or peacefully solve the conflict. The Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) started its engagement already in March 1991 and established offices in several BiH cities. The *Verona Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Former Yugoslavia*, animated by the Green Member of the European Parliament Alexander Langer. European media and journalists groups (AIM-Alternative Information Media, *Reporters Sans Frontieres*, *Droite de Parole*, *Associazione Est Ovest*) promoted support to independent BiH journalists and European humanitarian NGO networks provided aid to those most suffering for the conflict independently from their ethnic or national belongings. And so did several Protestant churches.

### *i. Type of actors/identity*

Nearly all 27 civil society actors interviewed in the SHUR BiH case study define themselves as being involved in peace promoting activities, albeit from different angles. On a more specific level 12 organization define that their organizations focus on peace-related work in particular. These groups include a variety of organizational structures, identities and funding set-ups. In our sample two organizations are alternative radio stations, Radio EFM Sarajevo ([www.efm.ba](http://www.efm.ba)) and Radio 202. The founder and editor of Radio EFM, Zoran Catic, says that the role of his radio station is crucial because it serves as an oppositional voice to the public national radio. From this vantage point his radio has several campaigns focusing on different human rights issues which need attention according to the Radio EFM staff. He gets support from Stefan Pejovic who is the host of a popular talk-show on Radio 202 and raises awareness about human rights issues in his talks. A second group of organizations define themselves as lobby and activist groups. These include Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners Republika Srpska (and member of SPONA), Stolac Youth Forum, the Movement for Social Justice, the Center for Promotion of Civil Society ([www.civilnodrustvo.ba](http://www.civilnodrustvo.ba) and [www.grozd.ba](http://www.grozd.ba)), Plava Sphera and One World South East Europe. These groups have very different outlooks and goals, but unite in their efforts to promote human rights. In addition, there is one psychosocial organization which works with war-raped women and families where there is domestic abuse, namely Medica Zenica. Finally, one single person could also be said to be promoting de-securitizing activities through his inter-religious effort as a orthodox seminarist, namely Vladimir Ponjaric.

Of these organizations and persons we see that the media groups place a great emphasis on human rights issues in a broad sense and do not focus on particular ethnic groups but focus on the need

of particular groups of people. In the interviews they mention the need to assist the injured and disabled, people who do not get their pensions, and they try to raise general awareness about people's human rights and how they are being violated. This is important says Zoran Catic because "all human rights are being violated in Bosnia today". The lobby groups on the other hand are more diversified. The group Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners Republika Srpska (and member of SPONA) is clearly a Serbian organization which is part of a Serb NGO/lobby group; SPONA. The aim of the Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners Republika Srpska is to "document the Serbs suffering during the war, and [...] to prove the Serbs suffering during the war", according to the organization's co-founder and current president Branislav Dukic. In other words, the aim of the organization is clearly based exclusively on ethnicity. For other NGOs/Lobby groups it is quite the opposite which is the case, namely that they meticulously avoid ethnic labelling of their work and focus on broad human rights issues. In Banja Luka the Plava Sphera is one such group which focuses on human rights protection, consumer's right defence and aid to the helpless, particularly refugees and assistance to small sized enterprises. In Sarajevo One World South East Europe sees itself as an "informal collective" and is committed to a pan-Balkan peace activist ideology. The Social Justice Movement, also in Sarajevo, aims to improve the social and economic rights of exploited people, mostly for workers but also for others. Dosta is a human rights organization and the Stolac Youth Forum works with youth and they are a regional organization aiming to improve the situation for young people in the Stolac region. The Center for the Promotion of Civil Society address issues of unemployment, social status, and minimal amounts of monthly pensions. All the latter groups are centrally located in Sarajevo. In addition to these groups Medica Zenica is a somewhat different group because it is divided into two parts; a psychosocial center offering therapy to women victims of different kinds of violence while also doing feminist advocacy work. It is also an organization located outside of Sarajevo, in Zenica, in a predominantly Bosniak area. Finally, the International Peace Center and Mr. Vladimir Ponjaric, the Orthodox seminarist are engaged in peace work, or *de-securitization* on a more spiritual and individual level by having a pacific conviction in the former case and a religious conviction in the latter.

The general picture which emerges across these various groups is that in their de-securitizing efforts it is the non-ethnic and global human rights discourse which is the most common. Because human rights violations are felt and understood in broad terms, activities which may not be directly related to human rights violations in a narrow sense may be seen as such anyway. Therefore, working for the right to get pensions on time is seen as human rights and peace work.

The international networks' involvement may be summarised in two kinds of initiatives: A. The political support to BiH civil society groups (media, women in black, and similar ones), a sort of "diplomacy from below" exercise including the organisation of conferences, and international fora for the promotion and defense of human rights – like the HCA one in Tuzla, in 1994, co-organised with *Tuzla Citizens Forum*. In the media field the *Alternative Information Media* (AIM) open several offices in BiH to try, through local radio stations and newspapers, to provide independent information; B. The humanitarian aid collected in the West and delivered locally plus the hosting of refugees.

## **ii. Framework of actions**

The framework of possible actions depends on a number of factors; their international ties, their funding structure, their connections and affiliations to national authorities. If we take the view from the Norwegian Ambassador to Bosnia, Jan Braathu, as an indication of the current state of affairs we can see that there has been a move from reconstruction funding and activities to a stronger focus on institution building;

"As of 2000 we have had a stronger focus on institution building so the development went from humanitarian aid, to reconstruction to institution building even though we have elements of humanitarian and reconstruction building still going on. □...□ For instance we have a water project which involves four local communities and we have insisted that these four communities organize themselves in ways in which their experience on water management can be transferred to other

communities." <sup>2</sup>

It is clear, as was also indicated above, that funding institutions, and the international community in general is encouraging more and more civil society actors, to consolidate their efforts. This development entails that many of the actions of individual NGOs and civil society actors are part of larger campaigns launched by networks across Bosnia Herzegovina.

In very broad terms we can divide the *de-securitizing* civil society actors into three categories. First, those who rely completely, or in part, on funding from international donors outside the country. One such group is the International Peace Center which has received funding from the European Commission, the European Parliament, OSCE and the United Nations. They have also, according to president Ibrahim Spahic, recently had funding from national institutions. Their primary activities are on awareness raising about anti-war and pacifist movements through inter-religious dialogue meetings, publication of a magazine called "Why" and protests against military conscription. He sees the abolishment of compulsory military service by law as a victory for Bosnia Herzegovina and for his own efforts. The situation at Medica Zenica is somewhat similar. The organization was established in 1993 with external funding from Medica Mondiale, and NGO in Germany specializing on women's issues, and violence against women in particular. Other organizations in Europe and the USA also supported the organization for many years up until 2006 when the external funding more or less stopped. The close cooperation with local institutions such as the social center, the local police and others has, however, secured their existence. Their advocacy work has secured legislative changes regarding women's right to protection against violence. Second, there is a group of civil society actors who refute international funding because they want to be construed as completely independent and not be tainted by the international wishes for the development of Bosnia. Both media groups are examples of this. Zoran Catic in Radio EFM characterizes the situation the following way: "Media and NGOs are just looking for money and the politicians and nobody is really interested in humans, except when they are talking to the public" <sup>3</sup>

For the Stolac Youth Forum this situation is also their ideal situation, but for practical reasons they accept basic funding especially in order to organize summer camps for young people. The funding then will be project based. One World South East Europe also categorize within this group. Sanjin Buzo explains: "We always said no to whom who wanted to give us money, also to the Foreign Development Programme, because we want to be independent and our philosophy is to be self-funded. We sell t-shirts and we organize concerts and then we use the money for our activities. If you really want to improve the situation it's necessary to be independent. What we ask to people is to be involved, as individuals. If the German ambassador would like to give us support the best way to do it would be to talk about our goals and our aims wherever he goes. Support us and giving us money and expecting your logo on our promotional material is not the right way to go. For me support is when people involve themselves in action but when you ask a big organization for this kind of support they only answer it's not their agenda." <sup>4</sup>

Lastly, there are organization which are very tightly linked to the national authorities and whose funding relied on their support completely. The only example of this kind in the interview sample is the Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners Republika Srpska.

What is clear from the short outline above is that the activities and actions of these different civil society actors hinges on their funding structure. When international funding declines there is a need to focus on joint efforts and cost-effective measures. With the notable exception of the Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners Republika Srpska which is clearly focus on the recognition of human rights suffering for one particular group, the Serbs, the other organizations are multi-ethnic in their outlook and out-reach work. The *de-securitizing* efforts can be summarized as focusing on legislative measures, awareness raising, inter-religious/ethnic dialogue, psychosocial assistance and multi-ethnic activity programs for young people.

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<sup>2</sup> Quote from interview with Ambassador Jan Braathu by Inger Skjelsbæk in Sarajevo December 3, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Quote from interview by Inger Skjelsbæk in Sarajevo November 30, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Quote from interview by Francesca Nicora in Sarajevo December 3, 2007

### *iii. Conditions; Political Opportunity Structure (POS)*

While internal changes such as police and military reform are important for the international community in BiH as well as the national political leadership, these reforms are not equally salient in the interviews in the sample. These reforms are part of the Bosnia path towards EU applicant status. While the interviews for this study were taking place Bosnia Herzegovina signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) (in December 2007) signaling that they are prepared to make necessary changes in order to be eligible for application status. Interestingly, however, the path to EU membership is not part of POS discussed by the civil society actors in the study.

What appears as much more important, however, is the ramifications of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) and the highly bureaucratic form of government which was set up to ensure a balanced representation of ethnic groups in the parliament and in governmental positions including the tripartite presidency. Having a mixed ethnic background will exclude you from political positions within the current system, and this is something which is addressed particularly by the two media institutions and in their talk-shows. It is also something that was addressed in the focus group interviews. Against this background the majority of the civil society actors, to the extent that they actually talk about this, want to maintain a united, i.e. federalist Bosnia.

## **3. The relation between EU institutions and civil society**

Before analysing the relations between the EU and civil society it is necessary to briefly and in general review the role of the European Community (EC) and later on of the EU in the BiH conflict.

Before the conflict broke out the EC acted in a contradictory way. From 1989 to 1991 the EC could have determined in two ways the outcome of the crisis in the Yugoslav Federal Republic. Firstly, through a massive economic aid plan to avoid the country's financial collapse, which, as we have mentioned earlier, was at the root of Slovenia and Croatia's secessions. Secondly, by clear political support to the non nationalist leadership of the Federal prime minister Ante Markovic who, on the contrary, was abandoned by the EC in the first half of 1991. This caused the SFRJ dissolution and led to the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as independent states, a particularly heavy decision because it implied giving up the respect of the principle – solemnly reaffirmed by the 1976 Helsinki Act - sovereignty of an internationally recognised state – like the SFRJ - and of its borders. The EC choice would have had consequences above all for the BiH future. Until then the BiH leadership had repeatedly taken the stand not to go for self-determination unless the other republics had seceded. Slovenia and Croatia's secessions opened the Pandora's box. The EC underestimated the potential consequences in the multiethnic BiH: in Slovenia and Croatia the conflict lasted only a few months, in BiH it dragged on for three and half years, with over 300,000 deaths.

During the conflict the EC provided major humanitarian aid and some EC Member States supplied considerable numbers of personnel to the UNPROFOR multinational force. But the EC failed in finding political and diplomatic solutions to bring the conflict to an end. The EC was powerless due to its internal divisions and the lack of common coherent political will. The direct military intervention option was never really on the EC agenda and the diplomatic choices were often contradictory and counterproductive. Many analysts viewed the EC massive humanitarian aid as the alibi for the absence of political or military strategies (Rieff 2002). All through the conflict the EC – together with the United Nations – borne the responsibility for the diplomatic and political management of the conflict, but in the end it was the US which made the Dayton peace agreement, signed in December 1995 not by chance in a US military base, possible.

In the post-war years, thanks to the clauses of the Dayton agreement, the EC took on a greater political, military and humanitarian role. BiH *de facto* became an international, specifically European, protectorate. The EC and the EU have implemented *capacity and State building* programmes, with numerous actions in favour of the country's civil society. What has not so far been achieved – but this is a limitation for which the whole international community, and not only the Europeans, bears responsibility – is the creation of a democratic and multiethnic political and institutional system,

without the nationalist germs which have provided the roots for the 1992-1995 war. BiH after 13 years from the end of the war is still largely separated by “ethnic lines”, still witnesses the primacy of nationalist streams, still is a protectorate without political and economic perspectives for the future.

Many of the interviewed saw nationalism as one of the most pressing human rights violation and the overcoming of nationalism as one of the most important issues on their agenda. With the state presidency and most of the political parties still based on the division of the ethnic groups an end of the national politics in BiH seems to be far away. The worldwide unique state polity -the country consisting of two entities, one of these being a federation does not really give hope that a functioning multi-ethnic or even post-national status could be achieved in the next few years. With all these problems many of the interviewed only see one hope for a future multi-ethnic Bosnia Herzegovina – EU accession. The hope of those supporting EU accession is that European standards would be implemented, the economic situation would improve and Bosnia Herzegovina and nationalistic tendencies would be overcome through peaceful cooperation with the neighbouring countries inside the EU. For these reasons many Bosnians see the only hope for a stable Bosnia Herzegovina in EU accession. Due to the fact that the hope for EU accession is given in all ethnic groups it is a good possibility for the international community to put pressure on the Bosnian political establishment. As well as this it is a declared goal of the High Representative in Bosnia Herzegovina to establish the grounds for a Bosnian EU-membership. This is one reason why the High Representative in Bosnia, who is also EU- Special Representative, has to slowly work on the task to make his post and his office obsolete, because a country controlled by an EU-Representative could not become part of the Union. The reason for this is that the Special Representative would have a seat in the European Council an institution that he has to give account to. This means that the EU will slowly have to pull out of BiH as a policy controlling actor, so that the country can develop on its own and become a member of the EU on the long term. With the EU being the mayor international actor in Bosnia Herz at present, it seems hard to imagine, that it will pull out of the country in the next few years. Next to the Special EU Representative there is also a European Commission delegation in the country to control the implementation of EU funds as well as the European Union Police Mission, which aims to establish a sustainable, multi-ethnic police service, through monitoring and inspecting as well as mentoring the local police. The last mayor EU-Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina is the EUFOR. Since December 2004 the EU is in charge of the international military presence in Bosnia, having taken over the NATO led SFOR Mission. At present the Mission counts about 2500 Soldiers mostly sent from EU countries but also from associated states, making it the biggest military operation of the Union.

Although at present the EU has a special role due to the Police and Military mission as well as the possibility of EU accession, the Union has also played a major role in the Region since the fighting started in the beginning of the 1990. Beginning with the Badinter Commission to survey the status of Yugoslavia in late 1991 the EU has played an important political role as well as a humanitarian role. Since 1991 the EU has spent around 2.6 billion Euros in Bosnia Herzegovina, approximately 1 billion for humanitarian aid, implemented through the European Community Humanitarian Organisation (ECHO), this programme running out in 2001, 1.25 billion were spent according to the Phare, Obnova and Cards programme to improve the economic system of the country and support Bosnias path to EU membership. These funds were mostly reserved for institution building, infrastructural- and regional development, but to a small extent they were also used to finance peacebuilding NGO's for instance the German NGO Schueler Helfen Leben (SHL) received approx. 750.000 Euros for a three year multi-ethnic Seminar Programme. Next to these two mayor complexes of humanitarian aid/reconstruction and economic/institutional development much smaller sums were also spent for other programmes, one of these running under the title: Democracy and Human Rights Anti personnel Mine Programme, with a total Budget of almost 30 million Euros in the time from 1995 to 2006.<sup>5</sup>

All in all the European Union has funded fifty-two micro-projects concerning human rights and democratization since 2001 that have been carried out by local and international partners with a worth of almost three million Euros with another 1.4 Million Euros forthcoming as well as over eight Million Euros for macro-projects, for instance the Bosnian wide Corruption Perception Study and Corruption

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<sup>5</sup> All statistics except SHL taken from <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=clanak&CID=22&jezik=2&LID=32>

Hotline, which included sociological, psychological and economic analyses on the subject and resulted in the creation of the first dedicated countrywide database. Next to these projects funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) the EU also funds democratization and human rights projects through the Cards Programme.<sup>6</sup>

One of the Interviews of the SHUR Case Study was held with Mr. Michael Doherty head of the cooperation section of the European Commission Sarajevo Office and in charge of local funding activities. He described that the funds of the European Commission were partly given to civil society organisations and partly used for capacity building programmes for CSOs and towards a programme to improve the cooperation between CSOs and local authorities. The distribution of the funds is decided in Brussels and in the local Sarajevo Office. Mr. Doherty pointed out that mostly multicultural programmes are funded to improve the cooperation of the different ethnic groups but in some special cases it can be possible that a project of only one ethnic group is funded as long as it is not contradictory to the ideals of the Commission.

Of the interviewed NGOs and Civil Society actors only two had received funding from the European Union, Medica Zenica and the Stolac Youth Forum. In both cases the funds were only directed to one specific programme and the budget not all too high. The reason why fairly little of the interviewed were funded by the EU varies. Some organisations like DOSTA had no interest in working together with state or international Institutions and try to remain their freedom and credibility in this way. The reason for this can be found in the deep mistrust of local and international political actors and institutions, so that DOSTA for instance prefers to keep its actions on a low level than to be dependent of any kind of political actor. Other Organisations for instance the Nansen Dialogue Centre have other international or sometimes local Donors, for instance the Stolac Youth Forum received municipality funds of 50.000 Euros for renovating there headquarters. Another reason why it is difficult to apply for EU funds is the sheer bureaucracy of the institution. Especially applying for bigger funds is extremely difficult and many local Organisations do not have the knowledge to do this and would in most cases have problems with the complex system of the statement of account.

For these reasons the direct financial impact of the EU is negligible in the context of the Organisations interviewed as part of the SHUR Bosnia Case Study. Still the EU programmes to support civil society have been massive and prolonged and though not all BiH civil society organisations have benefitted from them, many did, in addition or instead of the funding invested for the same purposes also by the United Nations and by US and European foundations. On the other hand the EU plays such an important role in Bosnia Herzegovina that it does effect most Actors in some kind of way, for instance Business groups state that the EU can provide Certificates of different kinds, that could help the distribution of goods for small scale businesses and of course there is the perspective of EU accession something that most of the interviewed see as the big chance for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

#### **4. Integrated analysis of the conflict dynamics as shaped by the relation the three types of impact**

As we stated in other parts of this report the Bosnian civil society was before the war weak and not-yet-developed. During the war just few actors continued work and acted in very difficult conditions (siege of the most important towns, general ethnic cleansing, battles and spread violence all over the country), with a little possibility to influence the course of the war. In the post war period there was a strong increase of NGOs and civil society organisations, also because of the international support on specific “capacity building” projects. The result of our analysis is that media, religion and culture played an important role during the war - and before that - to *securitizing* the conflict. This is relevant because of the importance of ethnic identity, mass psychology, cultural symbols and historical myths in a national conflict, as the Bosnian one has been it. Because the conflict was “national” and “ethnic”, journalists, historians, intellectuals, priests had an crucial role to confirm with stereotypes,

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.europa.ba/?akcija=clanak&CID=19&jezik=2&LID=34>

historical legends, ethnic victimization, all the implications of a cultural and social identity based on an ethnic background. But all the non nationalist forces in culture, media and in the religious sector should be considered, they tried to oppose the ethnic tendencies. The general trend was that *de-securitising* civil society organisations didn't succeed to avoid the conflict or to influence positively the course of the war. Their role was marginal, even if they did establish strong relations with the civil society organisation of the rest of Europe thus saving the hope for a multi ethnic BiH future. They had a positive role in preventing worst violations of human rights and in spreading the information and awareness on the situation of the country to the international public opinion.

The analysis shows the need of a separate study in the three phases of the conflict (pre war, during the war, post war), because the reality and the impact on human rights by the work of civil society actors is very different in the three different periods of time. Only in post war times a true civil society emerges as a system of organisations, actors and values. Before the war - until the eighties - the civil society was an "underground society": within the context of a regime which didn't allow a real freedom of association, press and opinion. While during the war the dramatic conditions of the conflict had a strong impact in the concrete possibility to organise initiatives and activities for human rights. The pre-existing social and cultural organisations during the regime were dissolved or - in a very little number - were absorbed by the nationalistic wings during the war. The political parties - as expression of a political participation of the society - and their linked organisations, media, religion, academia had the major impact in *securitising* the conflict. Just only few initiatives were for the *de-securitising* the conflict. The Yugoslav Democratic Initiative (UJDI) and the so-called *Pre-Parliament of Sarajevo* and the *Bosnian Chart of 92* grouped around themselves tens of intellectuals, cultural groups, organisations, but this was not enough to prevent war breaking out.

Our analysis also shows a relatively larger number of civil society the organisations working for peace and human rights and a more ambiguous role of specific civil society actors like media, religions and the academia, which – because of their links with the political power - played an important role in *securitising* and *holding* (specifically some religious institutions) the conflict. The analysis shows a much narrower space for the civil society organisations in the pre/during war period and more opportunities (also because of the change of internal political structure and the international support) in the post war period. The international community had a key role in the growth of civil society actors in a top-down process which leaves doubts on the proportions of a real participation, i.e. from below, by citizens.

So, the impact of the civil society actors seems more effective in the post war period, specifically regarding the peace building process. It's difficult to say how deep and spread this effectiveness is. The peace process - after the end of the war- is linked to many conditions: the change of the internal political structure, the improvement of the social and economical situation, the integration in the European institution, the cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Beyond them other, deeper and less concrete (but more meaningful) aspects should be taken into consideration: the changes in the opinions, values and identity of the three communities. Nowadays the national ideology is still dominant among the different ethnic groups: fears and suspicions are largely spread in the communities. In this context the reconciliation represents an hard objective to be aimed at. Reconciliation represents the best background to promote human rights, still nowadays yet not fully respected in BiH. This should press –from our point of view- all the civil society actors and organisations to work more for the population and less for satisfying donors; more engaged in a "face to face" work from below, within society and less involved with a marketing approach subordinated mainly to visibility and communication of the projects. It needs more substance and less marketing. (Matteucci 1996)

Which brings us to analyse the role of the international community in the promotion of human rights from the beginning of the conflict to the post war period. The integrated analysis shows many faults on the part of the international institutions in preventing, and putting an end to, the violations of human rights. During the war a "realpolitik" approach was prevalent and the humanitarian aid was - as many authors argued - a sort of "alibi" for the lack of political initiative to stop the war (Rieff 2002, Vaux 2001). This brought a large part of the Muslim and Croat sides to harshly criticise the behaviour of the international community with the charge of complicity with the aggressors. The support of the

international community went towards the humanitarian organisations (mainly, international ones) and only in the post war period, projects and activities on human rights received increased funding. Also European institutions in some cases failed in the human rights promotion: for example in Mostar where the European administration of the city (EUAM, 1994-1996) tried, without success, to force the ethnic lines of the division of the city. The EU tried to promote human rights, but in a situation of lasting nationalistic divisions the results and approval by the BiH society were partial (Bazzocchi 2006).

With regard to the political identity classification of civil society organisations proposed by SHUR (civic, multiculturalist, assimilationist, racist), based on the integrated analysis of study cases and on existing literature, we may state that since the end of the war (1995) the number of civic organisations (many are trying to shape as “European”) has significantly increased, while multiculturalist ones have quantitatively kept basically constant, with great attention at keeping their own identity. Racist components though minoritarian did play a relevant role before and during the war. While assimilationist structures have been practically non-existent. The most radical nationalist organisations have tried to practise a sort of a “final solution” approach through the systematic expulsion or killing (ethnic cleansing) of the components different from their own in traditionally multiethnic territories.

## 5. Conclusions

As we wrote in the chapter 3, the war in BiH burst out within a substantial absence of a strong organised civil society (Bianchini 1999). The first free elections in BiH were held in 1990 (with the consequent building, for the first time after the second world war, of a multi-party political system), just two years before the war. The dominant presence of nationalistic political parties (identified with the three main ethnic groups: Muslims, Serbs and Croats) take almost all the place of the public and political debate before the conflict and at the beginning of the war. (Kaldor 1993) Just few civil society organisations (anti war groups, women, multi-ethnic organisations), in those years, played an active role to avoid the war. Significant parts of the new and few civil society organisations in pre-war times are linked with the nationalistic political parties or are the old communist (social) organisations (sport and leisure groups, professional organisations, trade unions) still surviving in the new context. Just like for the political leadership, also for the leadership of the social organisations a large part of them left the communist ideology to embrace the new nationalistic approach. We should add that the new civil society organisations were concentrated in a few towns, while de facto absent in the countryside. The new nationalistic ideology was stronger in the countryside than in towns and many authors have classified the BiH conflict also - in part - as a social conflict of revenge of the more traditionalist and underprivileged peasants against the more “western” urban inhabitants. Specifically: the cosmopolitan and open minded Sarajevo was a negative symbol for the Serb warring soldiers that added social hate to the nationalistic war ideology.

The resistance to the beginning of the war (culminated in the March and April 1992 demonstrations for peace) was spontaneous mobilization of people and citizens of Sarajevo rather than the result of a long and organised work by civil society organisations. One should remember that in BiH – and even more in Sarajevo - the percentage of the citizens defining themselves as Yugoslav was much higher than the rest of former Yugoslavia<sup>7</sup>. A specific contribution to the prevention of the war came from the international civil society organisations, like in the case of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) that supported the anti war organisations in former Yugoslavia and organised (with 400 peace European activists, mainly Italians) a peace caravan to Sarajevo (September 1991) to demand peace in the country. An Italian pacifist leader, Tom Benetollo wrote: “Sunday, 29 of September. We demonstrate in Sarajevo. We participate at a conference in a theatre, then we organise a

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<sup>7</sup> After the second world war, the citizens of Yugoslavia had to answer about their ethnic identity at a periodical census. They could be identified as Serbs, Slovenian, Albanians, Croats, Muslims, Macedonians, Hungarians, Roma, Italians, etc. There was the possibility to be defined as Yugoslavian: this meant the refusal of the specific ethnic identity for a “citizens identity” beyond the national groups. In many case it was also very difficult to select a precise ethnic identity. The large presence of ethnic mix marriages made people very unsure what to choose as their ethnic identity.

long human chain downtown reaching all the religious symbols: the Catholic Cathedral, the Orthodox Church, the Mosque, the Synagogue. People want peace, brotherhood. We meet also with President Izetbegovic to discuss our the peace initiatives ” (Marcon 2000). Other anti-war demonstrations had been organised before. More than 100,000 people gathered in Sarajevo, right before the summer of 1991, answering an appeal by the JUTEL television (close to Prime minister Ante Markovic) and already in December 1989 the film director Emir Kusturica – on the echo of news arriving from Romania on Ceasescu’s expulsion from power – had called an event for democracy and freedom in Sarajevo, in which, however, only few hundred people attended. Between the end of the 80s and the beginning of the 90s the *BiH Students Union* had become once again active and through their journal, *VALTER* (the name of one of the country’s resistance heroes) had promoted several initiatives for the democratisation of BiH.

In spite of all this, though, we can say that the few civil society organisations working during the war had a modest role to promote human rights, to avoid the war and to implement a peace building approach towards the strong war dynamics based on the “enemy image”, the nationalistic approach, the oppositions inside the multi ethnic community. On the other side the social organisations linked with the nationalistic parties played a major role in fuelling the conflict. Specifically, some components of BiH civil society had a real negative role in that period: journalist, academics, intellectuals, clergy. Most people within these categories before and at the beginning of the war nourished the conflict reinforcing prejudices, stereotypes and, generally, the “enemy image”. Media treated the news, fuelling the oppositions between the ethnic groups and constantly separating “we” from the “others”. (IPB 1996) Academics and intellectuals discussed on the legacies of the history and on the “historical memory”, bringing back in the debate the faults, the responsibility of the other ethnic groups against the *ours* in different cases, from the second world war to the middle ages period. This behaviour exacerbated the perception of each ethnic group against the others. A significant part of the religious (also the Catholic side: for example the nationalist role of the Franciscan monks in the country) were subordinated to the war dynamics. In many cases they openly supported the national warring parties, in other cases they organised the humanitarian aid only for suffering people of their ethnic side (Caritas just for Croatian refugees, Merhamet for Muslims, Orthodox charities for Serbs) and not for everybody. In those years also national humanitarian actors had a major role in *securitising* and *holding* rather than *de-securitising* the conflict.

During the war the surviving conditions of the country made the creation and the development of new CS organisations difficult, almost never on tri-communal basis. The Bosnian organisations of HCA and the *Citizens Forum* of Tuzla (the only important town run by the Socialdemocrats when the others were run by SDA, the nationalist party of Mr. Alja Izetbegovic) tried to claim the multi-ethnic background and a non-nationalistic approach. At an all-Yugoslav level other non nationalistic civil society organisations tried to unify the different ethnic groups - including the various different BiH ones - in a common effort against the war. The main organisations were the *Women in Black*, the journalists of various non-nationalistic network, the anti-war networks and the HCA network based in BiH (Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Tuzla). The women had a meaningful role: one of the few and real inter-ethnic movements: as Johan Galtung put it: “The peace movement in former Yugoslavia is mainly a women movement” (Marcon 2000). The most relevant peace civil society organisations were concentrated in Sarajevo and in Tuzla. In Tuzla - as a symbol of still lasting multi ethnic community - many European organisations concentrated their work: from HCA to the *Verona Forum for Peace and Reconciliation in Former Yugoslavia* (a peace network supported by Alex Langer, MEP), to the Spanish MPDL (*Movimiento per la Paz, el Desarmament y la Libertad*). Meetings, fora and demonstrations were organised during the war. In Sarajevo media, like *Radio Zid* and *Radio 99* or cultural organisations like *Circle 99* (a group of intellectuals around Adil Kulenovic and Abdullah Sidran) or the local *Pen Club* (writers coordinated by Trvtko Kulenovic) or the magazine *Beh Dani* and the *International Peace Centre* tried to work for living together and peace. This was very difficult because of the siege of the town and the few possibilities to communicate with the outside world. Nevertheless the presence in Sarajevo and in BiH of the international NGOs (mostly humanitarian ones) grew considerably and this was an important support for the local civil society. While the role of the very few *securitising* and *holding* organisations during the war was linked with the nationalistic

political parties and the religious institutions, the (as few as the other ones) peace building civil society organisations were supported by the international ones and by the international institutions. They didn't influence in any substantial way the course of the conflict, neither they succeeded in creating large-scale positive perceptions among the different communities. But they did positively witness a different peaceful way to face the conflict and acted as little minorities against an overwhelming war reality and logic. (Fagan 2005)

During the war the international NGOs supported population (refugees and victims), peace and non nationalistic organisation in BiH. Together with the humanitarian aid some of those organisations tried to implement nonviolent and peace activities: interposition between the warring parties, *diplomacy from below* initiatives, demonstrations (as in Sarajevo on 10 December 1992 with hundreds of participants) and reconciliation activities. It was remarkable, because unprecedented, for the humanitarian and peace organisations to work in some cases together, mixing solidarity and peace. This brought a concrete help to those BiH groups (independent media, peace groups, non nationalistic intellectuals and organisations), creating for and with them more opportunities to work in the country. (Marcon 2000).

In the post war time civil society organisations increased substantially. In few years after the end of the war, many hundreds of organisation have been created and developed. Two are the main reasons: the end of the war with a greater freedom to communicate, circulate, meet and the stronger financial and political support by the international community, specifically the EU <sup>8</sup> and UN institutions <sup>9</sup>, which – through targeted capacity building programmes- created the conditions for the birth and growth of the new civil society organisations. Just few organisations were born on a tri-communal basis. The majority was active only in their own entity (Federation or Republika Srpska<sup>10</sup>) without communication among one another.

It should be emphasized that the civil society growth does not mean in BiH - as in other likely Eastern countries after the end of the communist regimes - the same growth in the participation of the population at the public, social and political life. In fact, many Bosnian NGOs developed thanks to international funds and support and not “from below”, from the will of the people to act together as part of their civic and social engagement. Many Bosnian NGOs don't have members, community fundraising or a democrat running: they are just formed by the staff and they are 100% financed by the European institutions or by international foundations and are conditioned from them. This implies a structural weakness of civil society organisations in BiH, with weak roots in the local society and with a lack of independence from the financing institutions. Some authors (Stubbs 1998; Deacon – Stubbs 1998) had also discussed the ambiguous role of the Bosnian NGOs (by the way, like in many other countries and specifically in the developing countries) in replacing the functions of the State. Many Bosnian NGOs - according to the authors - would have been used to privatise the social and public services to serve the liberistic approach to dismantle the role of the State. As shown by the analyses and the interviews carried out within the SHUR project that there are also civil society groups which did not receive EU funding or other forms of support: they are groups (war victims mothers

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<sup>8</sup> EU integration is one of the main political objectives of BiH. The Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) is the EU's policy framework. Countries participating in the SAP have been offered the possibility to become, once they fulfill the necessary conditions, Member States of the EU. BiH is therefore a potential candidate country for EU accession. The EU/BiH Consultative Task Force (CTF) was established in 1998 as a joint vehicle for political dialogue and expert advice. Meetings of the CTF have constituted a central forum for technical and political exchanges. In January 2006, the CTF was re-named "Reform Process Monitoring (RPM)" to mark the start of a new phase in the relations between the EU and BiH, i.e. the start of the negotiations of a Stabilisation and Associations Agreement (SAA). The negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) were launched in November 2005. The SAA was initialled on 4 December 2007, and the Agreement was signed on 16 June 2008 following progress in addressing four key priorities, notably police reform, ICTY co-operation, public broadcasting and public administration reform. The SAA will constitute the contractual framework between the EU and BiH. This Agreement is a key step for BiH's aspirations to be part of the EU - [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina/eu\\_bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina\\_relations\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/potential-candidate-countries/bosnia_and_herzegovina/eu_bosnia_and_herzegovina_relations_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> on the current UN “wariness” towards its BiH involvement: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7461431.stm>

<sup>10</sup> With the Dayton Agreement (1995) the BiH was organised in two entities: a Federation controlled by the Muslims and Croats and a Republika Srpska run by the Serbs.

associations, veterans, youth groups and independent radios) rooted in society, based on volunteering and active public involvement. A two-dimensional development is apparent within Bosnian civil society: on one side the gradual professionalisation and economic dependency from international institutions of the more structured non-profit NGOs, while, on the other, small organisations, with strong identity, but marginalised in their relation to national and international bodies. Also: some organisations are the product of the conflict while others aim at independent participatory citizenship. The obstacles to the greater development of multiculturalist civil society organisations rest with a national political context which is still characterised by separation and division among the various nationalities, by the war heritage of hate and fears and by the absence of a unitarian State able to favour dialogue among ethnic groups.

A certain part of the Bosnian civil society organisations in the post war period have dedicated their work to the promotion of human rights (sometime just for the persons of their own ethnic group), but just few tried to promote a real reconciliation among the different communities and tried to work at State level and not only in their own entity. In these years the civil society influence in the field of human rights was more meaningful than during the war. The large number of NGOs, the free opportunity to operate regardless any conditionality and, above all, the sensitiveness and support on this matter of the international community in charge for the implementation of the Dayton Agreement made the difference. The Bosnian NGOs operated in various ways and topics on this level: for the punishment of the war criminals, for the truth of the war victims (as the association of the mothers of Srebrenica interviewed by SHUR staff), for the right to return of the refugees to their home, for the right to the expropriated people to their properties. Still today some issues - like the truth of the victims and the war responsibilities - are very sensitive and source of troubles and divisions among the communities.

The conclusion is that in the post war times the role of civil society organisations, and in general, of civil society actors have been more influential on politics - at both national and international level and affected the values and the opinions of society in a broader way than before. The culture of human rights and the need of a lasting peace have been permeating parts of the society. But still too few people believe in a true reconciliation among the communities and too few civil society actors work for this aim. NGOs have too weakly rooted, the media system plays a better role than in wartime and religion is less subordinated - with the exception of Islam - to political power than in the past. Nevertheless only some, important, but just some, steps have been walked towards peace grounded on reconciliation and the full respect of human rights. Most remains to be done. If civil society organisations and actors will be able to find more support within BiH society and to be more effective in their political proposals and in practices, the future will be a brighter one, for the country and for all of us.

## Acronyms

CS	Civil society
CSO	Civil society Organizations
DPA	Dayton Peace Agreement
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Organisation
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EUAM	European Union Administration of Mostar
EUFOR	European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina
EUPM	EU Police Mission
GFAP	General Framework Agreement for Peace
HCA	Bosnian organisations of HCA
HDZ	Croatian Democratic Union
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IFOR	Implementation Force
IPB	International Peace Bureau
IPTF	UN International Police Task Force
MPDL	Movimiento per la Paz, el Desarmament y la Libertad
OHR	Office of the High Representative
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
RS	Serb Republic
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SDA	Stranka Demokratske Akcije Democratic Action Party
SDP	Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina (multi-ethnic)
SDS	Serb Democratic Party
SFOR	NATO Stabilization Force
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SHL	Schueler Helfen Leben (German NGO)
UJDI	Yugoslavian Democratic Initiative
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council

### **Note:**

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## Interviewed organizations and representatives

### ORGANIZATION

Q organizacija  
Radio EFM  
Zašto ne  
Radio 202  
International Peace Center  
Dosta  
Dosta  
Foundation for creative development (FKR)  
Nansen Dialogue Network  
Medica Zenica  
NGO Vesta  
Women and Society  
FPN University teacher of political science  
FPN University teacher of political science  
European Commission in Sarajevo  
ACIPS  
Stolac Youth Forum  
Social Justice Movement  
Food no bombs  
Federation of Concentration Camp Prisoners  
Spona (movimento non governativo serbo)  
WWCC - Center for the quality of life  
Business incubator (Ngo)  
Center for Promotion of Civil Society  
Orthodox priest  
Association of employer  
Trade Union confederation of BiH  
European Movement  
Norwegian Ambassador H.E.  
Association of Wartime Camp Inmates  
Plava Sphera

### INTERVIEWEES

Mrs. Svetlana Durković  
Mr. Zoran Čatić  
Mr. Darko Brkan  
Mr. Stefan Pejović  
Mr. Ibrahim Spahić  
Mr. Darjan Bilić  
Mr. Demir Mahmutćehajić  
Mr. Jesenko Osmanagić  
Mr. Nebojša Šavija Valha  
Mrs. Sabiha Husić  
Mrs. Amra Selesković  
Mrs. Nada Ler-Sofronić  
Mr. Dino Abazović  
Mrs. Nermina Šaćić  
Mr. Michael Doherty  
Mr. Ivan Barbalić  
Mr. Nerin Dizdar  
Mr. Goran Marković  
Mr. Sanjin Bužo  
Mr. Branislav Dukić  
Mr. Ljubo Janjić  
Mr. Miodrag Dakić  
Mrs. Mirela Zrnić  
Mrs. Maja Karić  
Mr. Vladimir Ponjarac  
Mr. Renzo Baskić  
Mr. Edhem Biber  
Mr. Predrag Praštalo  
Mr. Jan Braathu  
Mr. Murat Tahirović