EU completes its police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM BiH), the first mission under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), completes its mandate today. Initially launched on 1 January 2003 for a period of three years, EUPM continued its mission beyond this at the request of the authorities of BiH, regularly adjusting its size and role as necessary as part of the EU's efforts to support the rule of law.

High Representative Catherine Ashton said: "EUPM BiH has in many respects contributed to shaping our common security and defence policy and the EU's role as a security provider. Since 2003, we have developed the capacity to deploy efficiently both civilian and military means on various continents, and our neighbourhood has always been a priority. The completion of EUPM reflects the progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina in strengthening the rule of law. The mission's achievements will be sustained through the EU Special Representative Peter Sorensen to support further improvements and accompany BiH on its path towards EU accession. I pay tribute to the current Head of Mission Stefan Feller and his three predecessors, to all police officers and experts from all over Europe and beyond and to the local staff who have participated with dedication in this mission."

EUPM worked as part of the broader EU rule of law approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the region, supporting relevant law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system in the fight against organised crime and corruption, in enhancing the interaction between police and prosecutors and in fostering regional and international cooperation.

EU support to the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue notably via the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA) and the Office of the EU Special Representative, which inherited EUPM's remaining key tasks and will now be reinforced with a new Law Enforcement Section.

On 25 June, the Foreign Affairs Council reiterated its unequivocal support for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU perspective as a sovereign and united country enjoying full territorial integrity. The Council also reaffirmed its intention to "further reinforce the EU role in the country as of July 2012, including by further increasing EU’s presence in the field and on law enforcement, rule of law and economic matters, also following the closure of EUPM".
**Background information**

In nearly a decade of its involvement, EUPM worked diligently to create, under BiH ownership, a modern, sustainable, professional multi-ethnic police force, trained, equipped and ready to assume full responsibility for upholding law enforcement to international standards.

EUPM also provided operational advice to the European Union Special Representative (EUSR) and contributed to ensure that the Union was fully informed of developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over the last decade, more than 2,300 men and women participated in EUPM BiH: 1,786 police officers and 154 international experts of various professional backgrounds from all 27 EU member states, Canada, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine, as well as 487 staff from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUPM was successively headed by late Commissioner Sven Fredrisken of Denmark, Commissioner Kevin Carty of Ireland, Major-General Vincenzo Coppola of Italy and Commissioner Stefan Feller of Germany.

Factsheet on EUPM BiH  
Council Conclusions on Bosnia and Herzegovina, 25 June 2012  
European Commission Press release: Launching the High Level Dialogue on the Accession Process of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
EU relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina  
EUPM webpage