

EUFOR FORUM

September - October 2025
European Union Force in BiH



#147



EUFOR
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA

EXERCISE QUICK RESPONSE

2025

9/9 - 26/9

Pages 6-11



Page 4

EHR/VP Ms. Kaja Kallas visits EUFOR soldiers

The HR/VP underscored the EU's steadfast commitment to regional stability and the security of Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Page 13

Power of Partnerships

This year, the complex exercise involved training opportunities with some of Bosnia's and Herzegovina's most highly skilled and talented personnel.



Page 14

EUFOR MNBN: Handover, Takeover & Farewell

Romanian and Dutch companies carried out a formal handover of responsibilities.



Page 18

Change of Command Ceremonies at Camp Butmir

Recent weeks have seen moments of transition within the EUFOR Multinational Battalion and its operational detachments.

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Captain Claire Foley

Dear readers of EUFOR Forum Magazine!

Welcome to the 147 edition of the EUFOR Forum! My name is Captain Claire Foley, I'm Irish and I am delighted to be part of EUFOR Operation Althea. As editor in Chief of the EUFOR Forum, I hope you, our readers, enjoy all the news and events that the wider Public Affairs Team and I are bringing to you in my first publication. Think of this magazine as your exclusive, behind-the-scenes pass to the very best of what happened over the last two months. So,

what have we in store for you?

September and October have been an exceptionally busy period for all members of EUFOR. September kicked off with the annual large-scale exercise 'Quick Response 2025'. This showcased our tactical capability, operational readiness and interoperability with BiH partners. We documented the complex scenarios that took place in numerous locations across BiH and captured the impressive performance shown by all involved. We have highlighted some key moments of the exercise for you to reflect on!

Shifting our focus from Quick Response, the last two months also saw us connect with the BiH community through a variety of events. We focused on engaging with the voices and minds of BiH by visiting Universities across the country, organized a number of Key Leader Engagements, and welcomed many prestigious guests to Camp Butmir. We also found time to celebrate numerous national days, host medal parades and Handover/Takeover ceremonies, cheer at sports events, and mark some poignant farewells.

As always, I would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude to all the branches who have supported the Public Affairs Office efforts on media activities for EUFOR Operation Althea. EUFOR Forum is about the troops and personnel of EUFOR. It is a chronicle of memories of your time spent in Bosnia and Herzegovina and as part of EUFOR Operation Althea. This forum is a way to share our experiences with our comrades and document it in print. Perhaps you have a story, a feature article or experience that you would like to share. If so, please contact us at euforpio@eufor.europa.eu.

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President Ursula von der Leyen Welcomed at Camp Butmir
Today at Camp Butmir, COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu had the honor of welcoming Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, alongside H.E. Luigi Soreca, Head of the EU Delegation and EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



EUFOR Aviation Detachment conducted a MEDEVAC exercise in cooperation with medical teams from Camp Butmir.

All these exercises are designed to ensure that EUFOR pilots are fully prepared to assist the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina during emergencies, even in the most extreme and challenging weather conditions.



Today, the Commander of the #NATO-led #KFOR mission, Major Özkan Ulutaş, visited the Commander of EUFOR-Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Major General Florin-Marian Barbu, at EUFOR headquarters in Camp Butmir, Sarajevo.

#TogetherStrongerForPeace



2

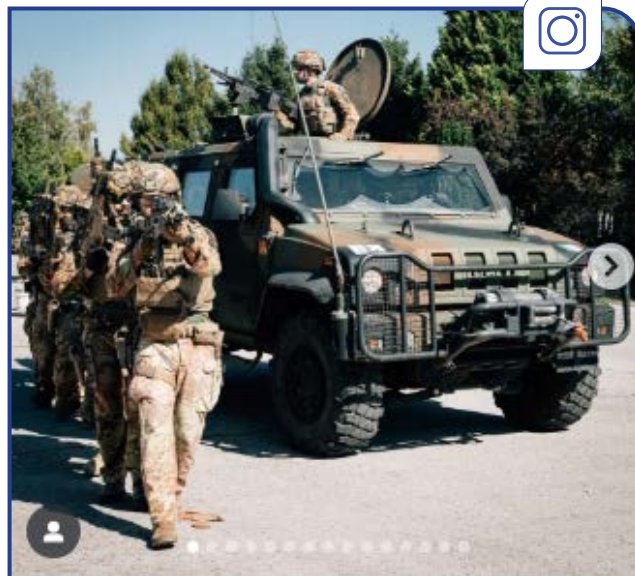
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52

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Today, the Commander of the #NATO-led #KFOR mission, Major General Özkan Ulutaş, visited the Commander of EUFOR-Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Major General Florin-Marian Barbu, at EUFOR headquarters in Camp Butmir, Sarajevo.



Close-Quarters Battle Demo at Camp Butmir

The Italian company from the EUFOR Multinational Battalion delivered a powerful Close-Quarters Battle (CQB) exercise in an urban environment.

Elite troops from the San Marco Brigade showcased precision, professionalism, and tactical expertise in operations designed for densely populated areas.

With just 4 days until #QuickResponse2025 kicks off, these drills boost operational readiness and reinforce the spirit of multinational cooperation at the heart of Operation EUFOR Althea.

HR/VP Ms. Kaja Kallas visits EUFOR soldiers



4

On 3rd November at Camp Butmir, COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu and H.E. Luigi Soreca, Head of the EU Delegation and EU Special Representative in BiH, warmly welcomed Ms. Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of the European Commission.

In the presence of Brigadier General Matthew A. Valas, Commander of NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, DCOM EUFOR Brigadier General Uberto Incisa di Camerana, and COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó, HR/VP Kaja Kallas addressed the troops. She expressed her strong support for the operation and her pleasure at meeting EUFOR

soldiers for the second time in six months.

The HR/VP underscored the EU's steadfast commitment to regional stability and the security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, emphasizing that the European Union will continue to do everything possible to prevent any security vacuum in the country.



"The world recognizes that you keep Bosnia and Herzegovina safe."



EUFOR Communication Team Connect with Academic Institutions in BiH



University of Mostar West



European University Brčko

The EUFOR Communication Team recently visited a number of universities across the country to exchange with the voices and minds of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These sessions provided students with valuable insights into EUFOR's mission and its role within Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The opportunity to deliver a presentation to students and faculty members in the University of Mostar West, University of Sarajevo, the University of Business Engineering and Management in Banja Luka and, the European University Brčko was fundamental to generating

thoughtful engagements that reflected a strong interest in peace and security topics from both the students and EUFOR's Communication Team.

The presentations sparked lively and constructive exchanges. Open dialogue was welcomed as engagement and interacting with students matters. Following each of the presentation, students actively participated in a dynamic Q&A session, fostering meaningful dialogue and deeper understanding.

These seminars are part of EUFOR's ongoing outreach efforts to connect

with academic institutions across the country. EUFOR is enthusiastic not only to share its mission and its role but, more importantly, to ensure its message resonates with those who will shape the future. EUFOR's communication team continues its efforts to connect with young people across Bosnia and Herzegovina by offering deeper insights into Operation ALTHEA through university partnerships.

We look forward to continuing this tradition of open discussion and mutual learning.

Engagement matters the voices of Bosnia and Herzegovina is valued.



University of Business Engineering and Management in Banja Luka



University of Sarajevo

EUFOR's Annual Quick Response Exercise 2025



6

The Mission: To strengthen operational readiness and reaffirm EUFOR's unwavering support to its BiH partners in maintaining a safe and secure environment across the country.

Under EUFOR's Operation Althea, an annual large-scale military exercise is conducted across Bosnia and Herzegovina, its name is Exercise Quick Response. The two-week exercise is designed to challenge the EUFOR force with simulated dynamic and 'real-life' scenarios to assess the military capability, operational readiness and interoperability of EUFOR troops and partners. It is a multinational effort and this year, EUFOR was augmented by reserve forces from Czech Republic, Hungary, military counterparts from Kosovo Force (KFOR) and supported by local agencies such as Armed Forces BiH, Mountain Rescue Teams, University of Sarajevo's Medical Professionals and BiH Law Enforcement Agencies.

This year's high-tempo exercise challenged tactical commanders and soldiers with a variety of scenarios. These events tested their ability to establish robust temporary checkpoints; identify and neutralize IED threats; secure vital installations and manage extractions; conduct medical evacuations by land and air; measure their situational awareness with public order pressures and management of Crowd Riot Control (CRC).

Each of these complex serials offered the opportunity to enhance the operational readiness of all participating forces and reaffirm EUFOR's unwavering support to its BiH partners in maintaining a safe and secure environment for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Did You Know?

EUFOR has conducted its yearly Quick Response exercise since 2012. However, in 2014, the situation changed in Bosnia and Herzegovina when a humanitarian crisis emerged. Devastating floods occurred across a wide geographical area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Exercise Quick Response was postponed and the efforts were refocused. EUFOR forces, the Armed Forces of BiH, and local authorities united together for a humanitarian response to the severe flooding. Operation Joint Effort 2014 was launched and the united agencies integrated together to offer emergency medical aid and evacuations to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUFOR was ready to respond and the live operation, 'Joint Effort 2014' endorsed EUFOR's commitment to continuously stand ready and support BiH authorities and protect the communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

EUFOR's Annual Quick Response Exercise 2025 began on September 9th and lasted until September 26th, 2025. The large-scale exercise took place across Bosnia and Herzegovina in various locations such as Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka, Livno, Orašje, Zenica, Žepče, Tuzla, Prijedor, as well as at the Svilaj and Klobuk border crossings.

Quick Response 2025 involved EUFOR troops from 25 contributing nations who are currently deployed in the theatre. These forces were temporarily augmented by reserve units from the Czech Republic, Hungary and for the first time, by international peacekeeping troops from KFOR – Kosovo Forces.

Furthermore, this year the exercise was conducted alongside the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH) and local Law Enforcement Agencies. They supported EUFOR by contributing personnel, training locations and logistical assistance throughout the annual exercise.

The exercise mission was to strengthen the operational readiness and reaffirm EUFOR's unwavering support to its BiH partners in maintaining a safe and secure environment across the country.

Quick Response 2025 tackled complex and dynamic scenarios designed to push the limits of command and control, logistical support, and operational readiness in diverse environments, including urban and rural settings across a wide geographical area of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The scenarios involved everything from securing critical infrastructure, such as Mostar International Airport, to high-intensity tactical operations and managing public order situations. EUFOR's Aviation Detachment and military medical teams joined forces with medical professionals from the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo, enhancing the exercise MEDEVAC coordination during the exercise.



To conclude the impactful exercise, EUFOR hosted a Distinguished Visitors Day in Camp Butmir.

COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu welcomed HE Luigi Soreca, EU Special Representative and Head of the EU Delegation in BiH, alongside other diplomatic and national representatives, senior officials from troop-contributing nations and the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH), and BiH Law Enforcement Agencies.

Members of the EUFOR Multinational Battalion conducted a condensed and multifaceted exercise for distinguished guests in Camp Butmir, showcasing their military skills, teamwork, adaptability and discipline in high-pressure and demanding situations.

The entire operation showcased a comprehensive spectrum of military functions and ultimately served as an opportunity to reaffirm EUFOR's commitment to regional security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Together, EUFOR and its BiH partners stand united for a safe and secure future.



EXERCISE EXERCISE EXERCISE

Exercise Quick Response was designed to enhance the operational readiness of all 25 participating forces and to reaffirm EUFOR's ongoing support to its Bosnia and Herzegovina partners in maintaining a safe and secure environment throughout the country.

EUFOR's Annual Quick Response Exercise 2025 involved EUFOR troops from 25 contributing nations currently deployed in-theatre. For the duration of the exercise, they were temporarily augmented by reserve units. This integration began on the evening of September 9th.

Reserve Troops from the Czech Republic entered Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Svilaj border crossing. This was closely followed by the insertion of Hungarian Reserve Troops, alongside NATO-led international peacekeeping personnel from KFOR, who entered Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Svilaj and Klobuk border crossing points.

For the exercise, and to even further tighten close relations, the Armed



Establishing a temporary checkpoint at Kupres

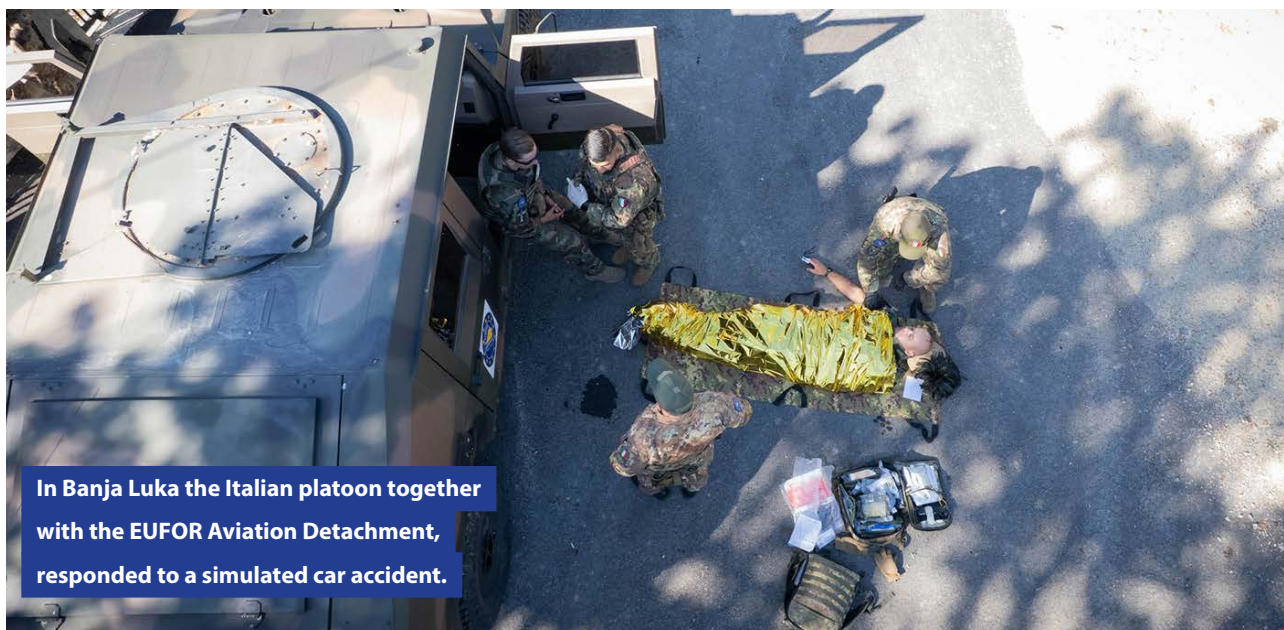
Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and BiH Law Enforcement Agencies trained together with EUFOR personnel for this large-scale military exercise.

Day 1

Day 1 of EUFOR's flagship exercise, the Italian platoon under the EUFOR Multinational Battalion (MNB), kicked off the action near Zavidovići and Žepče. During the first scenario, whilst conducting patrols in the area, soldiers were confronted by a road barricade and

discovered an improvised explosive device (IED). Their objective was to clear the route, neutralize the IED and ensure safety for all. The scenario tested the capability of tactical commanders on the ground to make rapid decisions whilst confirming the troops' tactical coordination and their operational readiness.

EUFOR's Romanian platoon faced the task of establishing a temporary checkpoint in Mrđanovci, Kupres. The purpose of



In Banja Luka the Italian platoon together with the EUFOR Aviation Detachment, responded to a simulated car accident.



the temporary checkpoint was to gather intelligence and investigate potential weapon smuggling in the area.

Concurrently in Banja Luka, soldiers responded to a simulated car accident involving EUFOR soldiers. The troops secured the area, conducted medical first aid to stabilize the injured personnel and requested immediate support from the EUFOR Aviation Detachment. Helicopters swiftly arrived and evacuated the injured personnel, showcasing EUFOR's rapid medical response capabilities and strong coordination in crisis scenarios.

Day 2

Day 2 kicked off when EUFOR's Hungarian company were deployed to Tuzla to monitor a peaceful demonstration. During the simulated scenario, troops engaged with crowd control activities, exercising their situational awareness and coordination with BiH authorities.

Elsewhere, a joint MEDEVAC occurred at Mrkonjić Grad and Kula whereby the Armed Forces BiH EOD team, EUFOR's Italian platoon and Aviation Detachment responded to a simulated car accident involving an AFBiH soldier. The

injured soldier was stabilized and extracted by the AF BiH helicopter, demonstrating rapid coordination and medical response capabilities.

Meanwhile, in Mostar International Airport, soldiers from the Romanian, Turkish, and Czech companies under the EUFOR Multinational Battalion carried out a joint operation. A strategic location for the mission and its partners, they skillfully secured the perimeter of the airport and responded to a simulated fire emergency.

Each of these multilayered exercises demonstrated rapid coordination, crisis response, and





Joint operations with SIPA at Mostar Airport

strong multinational teamwork—all in support of BiH authorities and local communities.

Day 3

The first test of day 3 began near Orašje. Soldiers from the Hungarian company under the EUFOR Multinational Battalion established a temporary checkpoint following intelligence on potential weapon smuggling. Simultaneously, to test EUFOR's ability to secure vital installations, the task was set for EUFOR's Hungarian soldiers

alongside AF BiH soldiers to secure an ammunition site in Donji Vakuf.

Day or Night, EUFOR's readiness to respond swiftly and effectively is vital. At dusk, EUFOR soldiers from the Romanian, Turkish, and Czech companies and the Aviation Detachment carried out a high-intensity operation at Mostar International Airport. The mission involved securing the vital installation, executing fast-roping drills, and conducting a MEDEVAC scenario.

Day 4

LOT houses are a vital link between EUFOR and the local communities of BiH. With over 20 LOT Houses located across BiH, it is vital that EUFOR MNBN can swiftly provide support to the local communities and comrades in BiH. For this simulated scenario on day 4, EUFOR tactical commanders were tasked with a MEDEVAC at the LOT house located in Doboj. While a simulated public demonstration took place at the location, EUFOR personnel successfully secured the area, and the LOT House personnel were successfully evacuated.

Action at Mostar Airport continued on day 4. A high-tempo hostage scenario was simulated. EUFOR MNBN soldiers and EUFOR's Aviation Detachment carried out multilayered operations to simultaneously secure the airport, conduct joint operations with SIPA and execute critical MEDEVAC procedures.

Day 5

The exercise resumed at Mostar Airport on Day 5. EUFOR MNBN troops from the Romanian, Turkish, and Czech companies, together with the EUFOR Aviation Detachment, carried out a high-



Simulated public demonstration in front of the LOT House Doboj



Hungarian EOD team and Austrian soldiers conducted a joint exercise



Extracting Embassy personnel

intensity exercise at the vital installation. Meanwhile, Hungarian troops from EUFOR MNBN carried out a critical exercise at the weapon storage site in Sinovi Posavine, near Orašje.

Day 6

Day 6 of the exercise, the high tempo of simulated multilayered events continued. At Camp Butmir, the Hungarian EOD team and Austrian soldiers from the EUFOR MNBN conducted a joint exercise. The successful interoperability between these nations was crucial. Together, they secured a designated area and effectively neutralized a simulated bomb threat within the base. The operation highlighted the importance of multinational cooperation and rapid response capabilities. Concurrently in Camp Butmir, the Albanian Platoon successfully conducted a Tactical Check Point exercise, demonstrating the ability to enforce control measures in an area of interest.

In Sarajevo, during a fictional scenario, Italian soldiers under the EUFOR Multinational Battalion offered support to the international diplomatic community in BiH. Sealing off the perimeter of the Embassies, the highly skilled troops safely extracted Embassy personnel and demonstrated a

rapid response capability in a high-stakes scenario.

Day 7

Day 7 marked the final day of the Exercise.

To close the exercise, a Distinguished Visitors Day was organized. A multilayered scenario took place in Camp Butmir and showcased the capability of EUFOR's 25 contributing nations' highly skilled soldiers. Members of the diplomatic community, national representatives, senior officials from troop-contributing nations, the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina (AFBiH), and BiH Law Enforcement Agencies

watched on as a high-tempo fictional scenario got underway.

On this final day, medical professionals from the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo joined exercise Quick Response and trained alongside EUFOR's Aviation Detachment and military medical teams to conduct a MEDEVAC. The coordination and operational efficiency conducted by the tactical commanders of EUFOR MNBN and the Medical professionals was elite. The effective interoperability of this partnership allowed for a successful MEDEVAC. It displayed the close relations between EUFOR and its BiH partners, who stand united for a safe and secure future.



Closing Ceremony concluded months of planning and cooperation

Quick Response 2025 Distinguished Guests Day



12

On 26th September 2026, EUFOR's longest-running and most impactful annual exercise 'Quick Response 2025' came to an end. To mark the end of a successful exercise and to further share the experience and its success, EUFOR hosted the Distinguished Visitors Day in Camp Butmir.

This was an opportunity for EUFOR BiH partners, diplomatic guests and

members of the media to witness the tactical capability of EUFOR's highly skilled soldiers from 25 contributing nations and its BiH partners.

The event opened with remarks from Major General Barbu and a keynote speech by HE Luigi Soreca, EU Special Representative and Head of the EU Delegation in BiH.

The closing sequence of 'Quick

Response 2025' was a rapid-fire recap of all the week's military activities that took place and was led by Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Rus, Commander of the Multinational Battalion.

The powerful live-action display represented the high standards that EUFOR strives to achieve on a daily basis and concluded the high-tempo exercise in a fitting manner.



Power of Partnerships

EUFOR's annual exercise, Quick Response, is an opportunity to reaffirm EUFOR's unwavering support to its BiH partners.

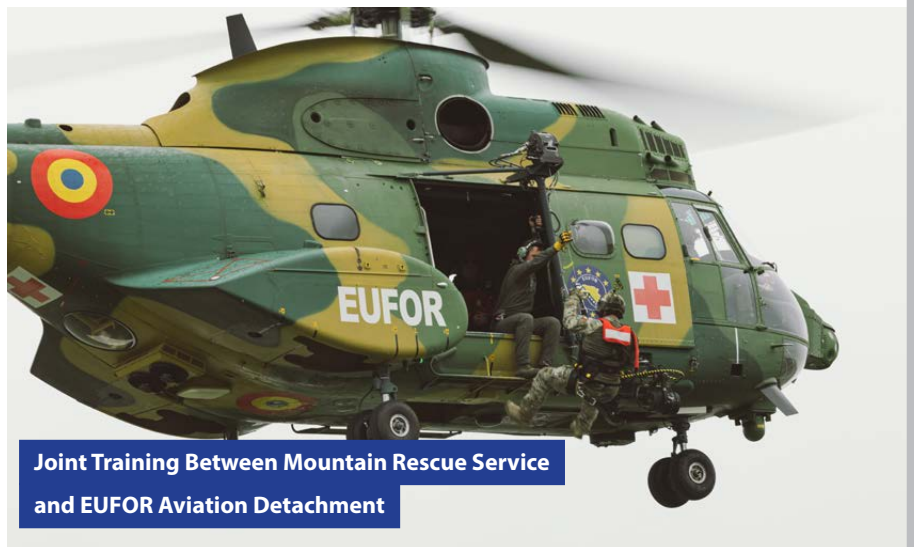
This year, the complex exercise involved training opportunities with some of Bosnia's and Herzegovina's most highly skilled and talented personnel. Medical Professionals from the University of Sarajevo, soldiers from the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, members of the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), affiliates in BiH Law Enforcement agency and the Mountain Rescue Services worked in close partnership with the soldiers and tactical commanders of EUFOR's Multinational Battalion. From logistical support to medical support, their involvement was vital to the success of the exercise. The exercise enabled these vital agencies and EUFOR to perfect their skills, showcase their interoperability and continue building on an already close and meaningful partnership.

Through and with these strong partnerships, EUFOR and its partners support a safer and more secure environment for all.

Forward, Onward, Together—EUFOR and Bosnia and Herzegovina, united in progress and security.



EUFOR & SIPA: Joint Operations in Mostar



Joint Training Between Mountain Rescue Service and EUFOR Aviation Detachment



Joint Training Between EUFOR Aviation Detachment and SIPA



EUFOR Aviation Detachment teamed up with medical professionals from the Clinical Center of the University of Sarajevo

EUFOR Multinational Battalion: Handover, Takeover & Farewell



14

We marked a significant moment within the EUFOR Multinational Battalion as the Romanian and Dutch companies carried out a formal handover of responsibilities.

We also bid a heartfelt farewell to the platoon from the Republic of Moldova and the company

from the Czech Republic, who have successfully concluded their mission.

Thank you for your dedication and service!

Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Adrian Rus, Commander of the Multinational

Battalion, presented certificates of appreciation to soldiers who delivered outstanding results and extended a warm welcome to those just beginning their journey with EUFOR.

Together for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Combat Live-Fire Exercise at Pazaric Range

Training never stops for the soldiers of EUFOR's Multinational Battalion. Constant readiness ensures every mission is carried out with precision, confidence, and professionalism. Throughout the month, soldiers from the Romanian, Turkish, Italian, Austrian and Polish companies of EUFOR MNBN participated in various training efforts. Here, we have focused on some of these combat live-fire exercises that took place at Pazaric Range.

At the beginning of the month, Italian company from Brigata Marina San Marco conducted a challenging combat live-fire exercise at the Pazaric shooting range near Sarajevo. The activity tested not only their marksmanship, but also their ability to operate seamlessly under simulated battlefield conditions.

The Austrian 5th Guard Company (KPE), part of the EUFOR Multinational Battalion, also undertook rigorous training to stay mission-ready at all times. The company conducted a live-fire exercise demonstrating professionalism, tactical skill, and high preparedness.

Most recently, the Polish Contingent under EUFOR conducted a series of shooting exercises to enhance their combat readiness. This included both standard shooting drills and military-sport competitions, featuring a qualifying shoot for the Military Shooting Badge with rifles and military pistols.

Through continuous training, EUFOR soldiers reaffirm their commitment to security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, always ready to respond whenever and wherever needed.



Italian company from Brigata Marina San Marco



Hungarian company conducted an intensive live-fire combat exercise



Turkish company



Romanian soldiers conducted live-fire exercises in challenging conditions

The Silent Story of Power and Honor

The military baton is a symbolic item. It is a timeless symbol of command that has outlasted empires and wars. It represents authority that does not need to shout.

A history forged in Silence, this article aims to provide the history and importance of the military baton.

The Beginning: When Wood Had a Voice

The baton's story began on the banks of the Nile. Beneath the shadow of pyramids, the Pharaoh raised his "heka"—a jackal-headed baton. Not a warrior's weapon, but a silent symbol of divine law. Thousands of years later, in the scorched sands of Mesopotamia, Assyrian kings lifted ivory scepters to halt charging armies. A gesture, a silence, a wordless command.

Rome: The Stick That Forged the Legion

When Caesar's legions marched toward Gaul, centurions did not shout orders. They struck stray shields with their "Vitis"—a slender vine of wood. "The baton's silence is more terrifying than bloody screams," wrote Tacitus. In Trajan's forces, legend tells of an old centurion shattering his baton against a Dacian wall, symbolizing the end of resistance. Without spilling a drop of blood.

Middle Ages: Scepter and Sword, Blood Brothers

During the Middle Ages, the baton became a sacred emblem. As a blessing, the King of France handed the Scepter to his marshal. Bertrand du Guesclin, hero of the Hundred



"Commanders come and go. The baton remains. For it belongs not to men, but to the Army itself."

Sergeant Major,
Saint-Cyr Military School

Years' War, asked to be buried with his. "The sword made me a knight, but the baton made me a leader," he confessed on his deathbed.

Prussia: The Dance of Batons

Frederick the Great watched his sergeants' direct soldiers like a steel ballet. "Every tap of the baton on the ground is a note in the symphony of discipline," he declared. In Prussian parades, sergeant majors carried "Gerten"—thin bamboo batons—hung from their belts like relics of faith. When a recruit stumbled, a discreet gesture with the baton's tip guided him back. No scolding, no shame.

Total War: The Witness That Walked Through Hell

In the trenches of 1916, as the earth groaned under shells, British Sergeant Major Percy Smith rallied

his men by rapping water barrels with his baton. "Its' sound cut through the infernal noise," recalled a survivor. Thirty years later, on Normandy's beaches, Sergeant Bill Millin directed evacuations under gunfire, his parade baton raised like an invisible flag. His photograph remains history: a wooden stick against thunder.

Why has the Military Baton stood the test of time?

In our modern world, where commands echo through radios and orders flash on the screens of tablets, the baton seems a relic. Yet it still speaks:

- It bridges past and present — When a Sergeant Major receives the baton, he is told: "This belonged to those before you. Make them proud."
- It embodies quiet authority — It never shouts or threatens. It simply "is", as it has always been.

Today, as drones fill the skies, the baton seems an ancient memory. But watch a sergeant at parade:

- When he raises his baton, he lifts

Continued on next page

not just an object—"he lifts a century of military honor".

- When he grips it tightly, it silently commands: "Attention. Our shared duty begins here."
- When it rests on his hip, it whispers: "I am the guardian of unwritten laws."
- And when passed to the next, it vows: "Take it. Preserve what cannot be spoken."

Why Do We Still Need It?

In a world rushing to forget, the military baton stands straight and silent, reminding us that some things must endure:

Discipline is not fear - it is pride.

True authority does not scream - it inspires.

And those who follow us will need not just better weapons... "but bonds to those who came before".

So when you see a Sergeant Major proudly carrying his baton at parade, look closely: it is not just a stick. It is a promise. And a story that will never end.

The Oldest Soldier

In a 21st-century military base, and as drones fill the skies, a new sergeant major raises their baton. In this moment, they understand they are lifting more than wood; they are lifting a century of military honor and understand the truth that shook pharaohs, centurions, and marshals:

Sometimes, the greatest power lies not in destruction—but in remembering who we are.

It is the oldest soldier.

And as night falls, the baton waits in the barracks—alone, silent, awaiting the day it will speak again.

by CSM Ilie Fratoșțițeanu

Courage in Action: EUFOR Soldiers Save Lives



As members of EUFOR, we here for all citizens of BiH, ready to help, protect, and serve.

On a recent patrol, the newly arrived Dutch EUFOR soldiers witnessed a shocking car accident when a truck overturned after swerving to avoid a reckless overtaking car, which fled the scene moments later.

The truck driver was found unconscious and bleeding. Without hesitation, the Dutch platoon commander and two Combat Life Savers rushed to help. With the truck door jammed, they climbed through the roof opening, kicked out the front window, and carefully removed the injured driver, supporting his head to prevent further harm.

Following precise medical protocol, they opened the airway and stabilized the driver in the recovery position. As the ambulance arrived, the team handed over full medical documentation, ensuring continuity of care. Bystanders were cooperative, grateful, and deeply moved by the soldiers' swift and selfless response.

Through their courage and compassion, EUFOR soldiers once again proved that solidarity and humanity are at the heart of every mission.

Netherlands Joins EUFOR Multinational Battalion



Dutch flag was proudly raised, at Camp Butmir marking the official start of the Netherlands Armed Forces' mission within the EUFOR Althea Multinational Battalion in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the presence of COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu, COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó, and representatives from the Netherlands, the troops were warmly welcomed by Lieutenant Colonel Ioan Vasile Rus, Commander of the Multinational Battalion, who wished them success in their mission.

Change of Command Ceremonies at Camp Butmir



Dacian Pumas Aviation Detachment

Recent weeks have seen moments of transition within the EUFOR Multinational Battalion and its operational detachments. The Italian and Slovenian contingents held formal Change of Command ceremonies whilst a new rotation took place for Dacian Pumas Aviation Detachment. Each of the changeovers signifies EUFOR's commitment to continuity in its mission Operation Althea.

On the 23rd of September, the Dacian Pumas – Rotation II completed their final mission for EUFOR Operation Althea. In a solemn ceremony, they officially handed over the critical duties of tactical air transport and MEDEVAC to the incoming Dacian Pumas – Rotation III, led by Colonel Silviu Vasile Mărincaș.



Italian Company

Later that week, on September 24th the Italian Company held its Change of Command ceremony in Camp Butmir. Lieutenant Commander Daniele Caruso officially handed over the reins of command to Lieutenant Giuseppe de Cesare, marking the successful completion of Lt. Cdr. Caruso's mission.

Transitions also took place on October 10th when the Slovenian contingent held its official Change of Command ceremony. The command formally passed from Lieutenant Colonel Ervin Hatunic to Lieutenant Colonel Jure Lampe.



Slovenian contingent

Each of these poignant ceremonies were attended by COM EUFOR Major General Barbu, DCOM EUFOR Brigadier General Incisa di Camerana, COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó, and EUFOR staff.

The ceremonies that took place in Camp Butmir were a powerful symbol of the continuity, the professionalism, and the unwavering commitment of EUFOR soldiers in Operation Althea.

Medals, Milestones & Farewells: A Powerful Day at Camp Butmir



On 29th September, Camp Butmir hosted a moving international medal parade, honouring over 200 personnel from Austria, Italy, the Republic of Moldova, and Romania for their outstanding service.

COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu and COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó were joined by H.E. Sarah Castelani, Ambassador of Italy to BiH, and H.E. Anton Păcurețu, Ambassador of Romania to BiH, to celebrate this proud moment.

Each recipient received the European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Medal for Operation Althea, awarded for dedicated service under UNSCR 2757, adopted on 1 November 2024.



The medal, adorned with a blue EU ribbon and twelve five-pointed stars, carries the Latin inscription “Pro Pace Unum”—“United for Peace”—a powerful symbol of our shared mission.

Congratulations to all medal recipients!



The day also marked a handover of responsibilities between the Austrian and Hungarian companies, and a heartfelt farewell to the Italian and Romanian contingents as they concluded their rotational tours.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to peace and unity.



Celebrations within EUFOR Contingents



North Macedonia celebrated National Day



Chile celebrated their National Day



German contingent celebrated National Day



Spanish contingent celebrated National Day

During the months of September and October, many members of the EUFOR's BiH multinational contingent celebrated their National Day. This was a particularly busy time of year in Camp Butmir. More than 6 nations, out of the 25 troop contributing nations to the EUFOR Operation Althea, celebrated their respective prestigious National Days. The occasions were marked with an official ceremony in the presence of COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu, DCOM EUFOR Brigadier General Uberto Incisa di Camerana and COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó. EUFOR members embraced these occasions with their international colleagues and experienced the many different cultures, foods, and traditions on offer throughout the two months.

In the month of September, Chile and North Macedonia celebrated their respective National Days. On 08th of September 2025, North Macedonia proudly celebrated their Independence day. COM EUFOR highlighted that North Macedonia gained its independence through the unity and will of its people. "It stands as a powerful reminder that progress can be achieved through peaceful means and democratic values."

Later that month, Chile celebrated their National Day on the 18th of September 2025. Earlier that week, a delegation of parliamentary representatives from Chile, led by Mr. José Castro Bascuñán, President of the Chamber of Deputies of Chile were welcomed to Camp Butmir. The Chilean contingent celebrated and shared their unique culture and incredible spirit of their country with their EUFOR colleagues.

During October, the National Days of Germany, Spain,

Austria and Türkiye took place. Germany launched the first of these by celebrating the Day of German Unity on the 03rd of October. On this special occasion, the German contingent honored the rich culture and resilient spirit of their nation.

On the 12th of October, the Spanish contingent of EUFOR ALTHEA proudly marked their National Day by showcasing their vibrant culture and rich traditions.

Shortly after, Austria celebrated their National Day on October 24th, 2025 and hosted enjoyable celebrations for their EUFOR colleagues. This celebration involved traditional musical displays, Austrian delicacies and much more, reflecting on their vibrant culture. Ending the month, the Turkish Contingent in EUFOR BiH celebrated the 102nd anniversary of the foundation of the Republic of Türkiye. This occasion was marked with an official ceremony and was attended by many members of the EUFOR's BiH multinational contingent.

Other key National events that took place during September and October were the Danish Flag Day and the Romanian Armed Forces Day.

The National Flag Day for the Danish Armed Forces was held on the 05th of September 2025. The occasion was held to reflect and honor Denmark's deployed personnel for their service and sacrifice, and remember those whom have fallen. During this ceremony, Major General Barbu expressed his sincere respect and immense appreciation for the dedication and contribution of Danish personnel to peace and stability in BiH.

On the 25th of October, Romania proudly celebrated the Romanian Armed Forces Day by holding an official ceremony in Camp Butmir. Later, members of the Romanian Military Contingent of EUFOR ALTHEA completed a series of competitions, demonstrating exceptional skill, teamwork, and camaraderie. Both occasions expressed the Romanians dedication and solidarity to one another and to EUFOR Operation Althea.

Last month, on 15 August, the Polish contingent under EUFOR Operation Althea marked Armed Forces and Victory Day at Camp Butmir, celebrating their heritage through ceremony and cultural exchange. COM EUFOR Major General Florin Marian Barbu, DCOM EUFOR Brigadier General Uberto Incisa di Camerana and COS EUFOR Brigadier General Tibor Szabó, joined the occasion alongside the Ambassador of the Republic of Poland, the Defence Attaché of Poland, and the Defence Attaché of the United Kingdom.

Following the ceremony, guests were welcomed to a reception featuring traditional Polish regional products, symbolizing and sharing their cultural heritage and tradition.

Each of the symbolic events that took place during September and October reflected the commonality amongst nations, their unwavering dedication to their nation, to EUFOR Operation Althea and their commitment to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



National Flag Day for the Danish Armed Forces



National Day of the Romanian Armed Forces



Austrian National Day



Polish Armed Forces and Victory Day

Through the Lens of the Mission:

OR-6 Marian Bălăşescu, EUFOR ALTHEA Photographer

In this issue, we continue sharing the stories of those who, although often working behind the scenes, play an indispensable role in EUFOR's mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Behind every image we see – whether capturing the solemnity of a military ceremony or the quiet beauty of a natural landscape – lies the subtle signature of OR-6 Marian Bălăşescu, the official photographer of EUFOR ALTHEA.

With an 18-year military career in Romania, it is this very fusion of military discipline and a meticulous eye that enables OR-6 Marian Bălăşescu to capture such extraordinary images. While not on mission, OR-6 Bălăşescu, serves at the NATO Multinational Division Southeast Headquarters in Bucharest.

As a member of the Military Police branch, he previously served in the prestigious 30th Guard Brigade "Mihai Viteazul," where he gained experience not only in training and field operations, but also in military protocol and ceremonial drill, essential elements in missions of representation and honor.

His passion for photography began ten years ago and has grown into more than a hobby. He is certified in the use of Adobe software, essential for professional image



editing. Some of his photos are captured spontaneously, when the moment calls for a quick reaction, while others are the result of patience and a trained eye, waiting for that perfect frame. The powerful combination of his military training and meticulous eye allows him to capture such incredible images. His work is shared on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Threads, and Flickr, where it is appreciated not only by fellow service members, but also by the general public.

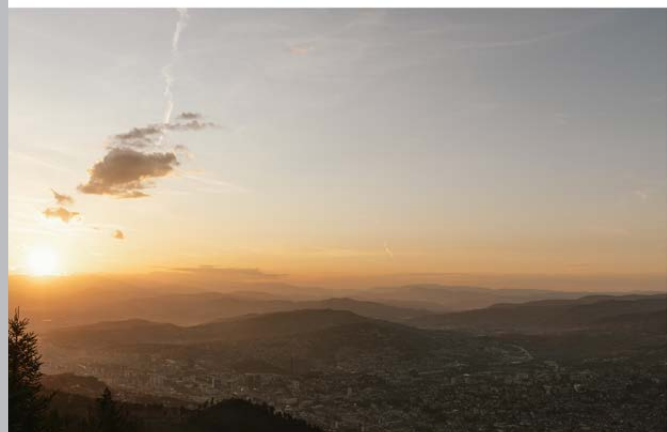
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, OR-6



Marian Bălăşescu has managed to capture more than just military activity - he has revealed the spirit of a country rich in history and blessed with natural beauty.

But rather than describe it further, we invite you to see for yourselves some of the

photographs he has taken here, in the heart of a peacekeeping mission, in a country as beautiful and generous as nature itself. Words may fall short—his images speak for themselves.



Romanian Armed Forces Day Celebrated in Camp Butmir



On the occasion of Romanian Armed Forces Day, EUFOR soldiers proudly took part in a sports day to celebrate team spirit, camaraderie and the values of sports amongst each other.

A rich variety of events were organized to suit all personnel. The activities encouraged the members of the Romanian Armed Forces Day, to come together, demonstrate sportsmanship, exceptional skill and teamwork.

The series of fun and challenging competitions encouraged soldiers to come together, embrace sportsmanship while celebrating their shared values of wellness, health and friendship.

Although a friendly competition, adrenaline was pumping throughout the day with troops giving their maximum effort in all activities, supporting each of their team members. Every participant emerged as a winner through this dedication and sportsmanship, each deserving our deepest respect for their dedication and effort.



Winter Landscape with EUFOR Helicopters

In recent days, the EUFOR Aviation Detachment conducted a MEDEVAC exercise in cooperation with medical teams from Camp Butmir.

All these exercises are designed to ensure that EUFOR pilots are fully prepared to assist the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina during emergencies, even in the most extreme and challenging weather conditions.

