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## Europe Day Celebrations in Mostar

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On 5 May 2007, the City of Mostar hosted the first of this year's events to celebrate Europe Day in BiH. A giant EU flag, measuring 18 x 12 metres, was unfurled from the world-famous bridge.

## Europe Day Children's Concert

On 9 May 2007, the BiH Parliament hosted an unusual audience for such a venue and was filled with the sound of about 800 children from some six schools in both Sarajevo and East Sarajevo. They were there to listen to a special concert in honour of Europe Day - Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf", a children's story spoken by a narrator accompanied by an orchestra, in this case the "Youth Symphony Orchestra South Eastern Europe", conducted by Sinisa Markovic.

Before the concert began, Mr. Nikola Spiric, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, told the children that they are the best part of BiH and it is his job to enable them to celebrate Europe Day together as Members some day.

Ambassador Kourkoulas told the children that he has been to many countries and that Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most beautiful - they should be proud of their country and proud to be Europeans. The cheering in response seems to indicate that they already are!



## Europe Day Celebrations in Mostar



On 5 May 2007, the City of Mostar hosted the first of this year's events to celebrate Europe Day in BiH. A giant EU flag, measuring 18 x 12 metres, was unfurled from the world-famous bridge while students of Mostar's Pavarotti Centre played the notes of Beethoven's "Ode to Joy", the European anthem.

Members of the Divers' Association leapt from the bridge into the Neretva river and clowns entertained the children among the gathered crowd.

Mr. Andre Lys, Head of Operations of the European Commission Delegation to BiH, stated that EU membership is not a purely political issue, it is the job of every citizen of the country. The citizens of Mostar have an important role to play in this process: they can show an example. If they work to improve the every day life of their city, make sure the municipality delivers services, if they teach their children peace and tolerance, they will become an example for the whole country and BiH will come closer to the European Union. He thanked the Mostar EU Info Centre and its partner, the NGO Kyodo, for organising the event.

Mr. Ljubo Beslic, Mayor of Mostar, welcomed the fact that Mostar was chosen for the first Europe Day event, adding that this choice was certainly not a coincidence. He also emphasized BiH's desire to join the 27 members of the European Union.

The event ended with promotion of Herzegovinian wine and cheese, on the note that their names and/or regional origin must be registered, so as to help brand them for the European market.



## Europe Day Graffiti Contest

On 9 May 2007, "Oslobodenje" park in Sarajevo was the setting for a display of several dozen graffiti panels on the theme "United in Diversity, United with Europe". This competition also included a competition for an essay and one for a poster design.

The graffiti panels were painted by young artists and students on May 5-6 in seven cities: Banja Luka, Bihac, Bijeljina, Mostar, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica.

At the award ceremony, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas congratulated the artists and said he has seen some very interesting political messages in the graffiti panels.

Mr. Osman Topcagic, Director of the Directorate for European

Integration, explained that the invitation to the competition was extended by the Directorate for European Integration and the European Commission Delegation to BiH, in the framework of the EU Awareness project.

They announced the winners in the different categories and presented them with their awards:

- Essay** - Alma Jeftic, a psychology student from Zenica.
- Poster** - Eldin Abazovic, a student of product design at the Sarajevo Academy of Arts.
- Graffiti** - 1<sup>st</sup> place - Sandin Mededovic; 2<sup>nd</sup> place - Mladen Kovacevic; 3<sup>rd</sup> place - Aljosa Buha.





## Europe Day Gala Concert

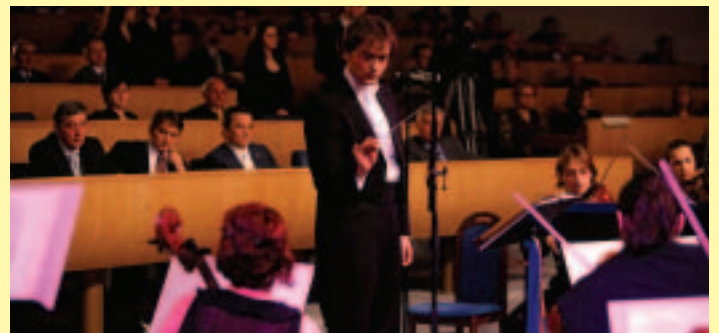
On the evening of 9 May 2007, the BiH Presidency, members of all levels of government and the Diplomatic corps, along with many other honoured guests, gathered in the BiH institutions building for a gala concert performed by the "Youth Symphony Orchestra South Eastern Europe". The event was broadcast live on BHT as part of a 90-minute programme which included interviews with BiH leaders attending the concert and information on the history of the EU.

The concert was hosted by Dr. Nikola Spiric, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, who addressed the assembled guests. He said that *"...The entire Europe celebrates today. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also celebrating and in that way confirming its commitment to the idea of Europe and its dedication to all European values and principles. ...However, Bosnia and Herzegovina must also be fully aware of its flaws, which are currently preventing it from joining the European family. ...Great changes must happen in our heads. The only thing that will lead us to Europe is weakening of nationalism, and the main precondition*

*and task we need to undertake to achieve this is to build democratic spirit and establish general unity of interests. ... Reconciliation and dialogue are two key categories that should never cease to be valid in our country and it is only with common forces and interests, with a lot of mutual respect, that we will move towards a happier, European future."*

Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to BiH, spoke about the meaning of Europe Day and the EU's commitment to further enlargement, stating that it is up to BiH to determine the speed at which it advances toward Europe. His full speech is available below.

The orchestra, conducted by Sinisa Markovic, played Joseph Haydyn's Concert for Flute and Orchestra in D Major, with Ambassador Ney, former Deputy-High Representative, playing as soloist. This was followed by four movements from Beethoven's 5<sup>th</sup> Symphony.



## SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR KOURKOULAS

*Transmitted Live on BHT - 9 May 2007*

9 May, or "Europe Day", is the anniversary of the Schuman Declaration. Speaking in Paris in 1950, just five years after the most brutal war Europeans ever fought against each other, Robert Schuman, then Foreign Minister of France, proposed a new form of political arrangement for Europe, whose aim was to make war between Europe's nations unthinkable. His vision and foresight were confirmed earlier this year when we celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Rome.

The European Union has been a historic success. It has brought the longest period of uninterrupted peace and an unparalleled level of prosperity to its people. What began as a club of six is now home to 27 countries and almost half a billion people.

The success of the European Union has grown out of a particular form of regional cooperation which has developed hand in hand with a deeper commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Integrating new members was part of the vision from the beginning. The EU's success has made it into a powerful magnet for many European countries, including BiH.

From our side, we are constantly reconfirming our commitment to future enlargement, and as a concrete proof of this commitment we are providing substantial technical and financial support towards this goal.

We are working together with the BiH authorities to move ahead. But the pace of the progress towards the EU depends only on BiH and its own efforts; it cannot, should not, and will not be imposed from the outside.

It is clear however that the recent evolutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina are not satisfactory. We are concerned about the deterioration of the political climate and return of the nationalistic rhetoric. This situation has brought all reform processes to a standstill.

We could waste our time in apportioning blame and analysing why there is only limited progress, but this would not help anyone.

The people of the Western Balkans have to move forward from conflicts and destructive nationalisms of the past, opting for democracy, reform and regional cooperation. Reconciliation must be a priority, not least by bringing those indicted of war crimes to justice.

Bosnia and Herzegovina appears to be going in the opposite direction to what we all hoped for when we started the SAA negotiations.

This country has a clear European perspective and all 27 Member States are committed to your European perspective. All 27 member states have already endorsed the text of the SAA agreement which is ready for conclusion as soon as the necessary reforms are agreed by the leaders of BiH.

It is now upon the BiH side to find the practical solutions to the current problems.

The founders of the European Union had to deal with similar challenges 50 years ago and found the solution in European integration. There is no reason why BiH and the Western Balkans cannot follow the same path. My wish for Bosnia is that it embraces the message of hope carried out by the Union that we are celebrating today by commemorating the Schuman declaration.

I would like to conclude on another positive note, on a concrete example of regional cooperation that produces magnificent results.

I am talking about our orchestra.

The Youth Symphony Orchestra of South East Europe joins us again this year with its boundless energy and enthusiasm to create delightful music. They will perform the fifth symphony of Beethoven. By choosing a glorious European and German composer we also wanted to pay tribute to the contribution of Germany and the German Presidency to the European integration. Thank you Ambassador Michael Schmunck and thank you Dr. Schwarz Schilling for all you are doing for this country.

Before giving the floor to them, I want to thank you all for making this evening very special.

## The Berlin Declaration

A "Declaration" is a formal statement emitted by the European Council, which is composed of the Heads of State or Government of all the Member States and the President of the European Commission. It is the highest level policy-making body in the EU, which is why its meetings are often called summits.

European Council meetings are chaired by the Member State holding the rotating presidency of the European Union, and are frequently hosted in their country; hence Declarations are usually named after the city in which they were made.

The Berlin Declaration was signed by leaders gathered in Berlin for the 50th anniversary of the treaty of Rome, as Germany currently holds the presidency. The Declaration is a vision for the EU, reasserting shared values and outlining ambitions for the future.

Commission President Barroso praised what the EU has achieved in the last 50 years: "Peace, liberty and prosperity beyond the dreams of even the most optimistic founding father of Europe."

But there is no room for complacency - the union needs to evolve with the times, with constant renewal of Europe's political shape. "To stand still is to fall back", said German chancellor Angela Merkel.

### Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Signature of the Treaties of Rome

For centuries Europe has been an idea, holding out hope of peace and understanding. That hope has been fulfilled. European unification has made peace and prosperity possible. It has brought about a sense of community and overcome differences. Each Member State has helped to unite Europe and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. Thanks to the yearning for freedom of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe the unnatural division of Europe is now consigned to the past. European integration shows that we have learnt the painful lessons of a history marked by bloody conflict. Today we live together as was never possible before.

We, the citizens of the European Union, have united for the better.

I.

In the European Union, we are turning our common ideals into reality: for us, the individual is paramount. His dignity is inviolable. His rights are inalienable. Women and men enjoy equal rights.

We are striving for peace and freedom, for democracy and the rule of law, for mutual respect and shared responsibility, for prosperity and security, for tolerance and participation, for justice and solidarity.

We have a unique way of living and working together in the European Union. This is expressed through the democratic interaction of the Member States and the European institutions. The European Union is founded on equal rights and mutually supportive cooperation. This enables us to strike a fair balance between Member States' interests.

We preserve in the European Union the identities and diverse traditions of its Member States. We are enriched by open borders and a lively variety of languages, cultures and regions. There are many goals which we cannot achieve on our own, but only in concert. Tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities.



II.

We are facing major challenges which do not stop at national borders. The European Union is our response to these challenges. Only together can we continue to preserve our ideal of European society in future for the good of all European Union citizens. This European model combines economic success and social responsibility. The common market and the euro make us strong. We can thus shape the increasing interdependence of the global economy and ever-growing competition on international markets according to our values. Europe's wealth lies in the knowledge and ability of its people; that is the key to growth, employment and social cohesion.

We will fight terrorism, organised crime and illegal immigration together. We stand up for liberties and civil rights also in the struggle against those who oppose them. Racism and xenophobia must never again be given any rein.

We are committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in the world and to ensuring that people do not become victims of war, terrorism and violence. The European Union wants to promote freedom and development in the world. We want to drive back poverty, hunger and disease. We want to continue to take a leading role in that fight.

We intend jointly to lead the way in energy policy and climate protection and make our contribution to averting the global threat of climate change.

III.

The European Union will continue to thrive both on openness and on the will of its Member States to consolidate the Union's internal development. The European Union will continue to promote democracy, stability and prosperity beyond its borders.

With European unification a dream of earlier generations has become a reality. Our history reminds us that we must protect this for the good of future generations. For that reason we must always renew the political shape of Europe in keeping with the times. That is why today, 50 years after the signing of the Treaties of Rome, we are united in our aim of placing the European Union on a renewed common basis before the European Parliament elections in 2009.

For we know, Europe is our common future.

## Translated EU Publication for Children

The European Commission Delegation to BiH has launched a translation of "Let's Explore Europe", to coincide with Europe Day celebrations. The publication targets children aged 9-12 and was first distributed to the schools of the children at the children's concert on 9 May 2007.

"Let's Explore Europe" was first released in 2005 by the EU Publication's Office.

It tells the story of Europe simply and clearly, with interesting facts and colourful illustrations. It gives a lively overview of Europe and explains briefly what the European Union is and how it works. Each chapter is linked to an online quiz and games on the europa-go website: currently, these are only available in the official languages of the EU.

The translated version will now allow the children of BiH to have a source of information appropriate for their age group. It is accessible in electronic format on the Delegation's website - [www.europa.ba](http://www.europa.ba) - and will soon be available in the EU Info Centres in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Brcko.



## Training for over 500 Financial Civil Servants in VAT

On 23 April 2007, the Indirect Taxation Authority (ITA) marked the finalisation of a part of a training course for over 500 civil servants on the implementation of Value Added Tax (VAT) in accordance with EU standards. The government of Germany provided experts from different regions in Germany so as to train ITA staff on the new VAT law, while the EU provided funding.

Mr. Kemal Causevic, Director of the ITA, thanked the government of Germany and the EU for this important capacity-building effort and expressed his confidence that it has been a worthy investment.

Mr. Dragan Vrankic, BiH Minister of Finance and Treasury, noted that the implementation of VAT has been one of the great successes of recent years. He stated that efforts to reform Public Administration must continue and pledged that BiH will continue to do its part in co-financing and cooperation with the EU.

His Excellency Michael Schmunk, Ambassador of Germany, noted that without financing, no government can do anything. This is why VAT has been of central importance for BiH, collecting funds 40 % greater than expected. He added that the foundation of VAT is qualified experts who know both the law and standards in inspection. The German government organized over 20 three-week courses for inspectors and three study trips for members of the ITA management.

Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to BiH, informed that the EU has invested over 92 million euro in the fields of customs and taxation since 1996, through EU CAFAO. This has enabled the country to collect revenues which are essential for the State and entities to function. He recommended caution on the subject of introducing multiple VAT rates as they could damage the functioning of a successful system.



## Awareness-raising Television

Since April 2007, BHT has been transmitting a weekly programme, broadcast on Thursdays at 18:30 hours, on a wide range of European issues. Upcoming themes of "Euroimpuls" include:

Date	Subject
24 May	Visa regime - movement of people, goods and services
31 May	Regional policy of European integration
7 June	Protection of water
14 June	Employment and Social Policy
21 June	Tourism
28 June	Agriculture

A series of monthly television debates was launched to coincide with commemorations of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Treaties of

Rome, in March. On that occasion, the guests were Dr. Nikola Spiric, Mr. Osman Topcagic, Mr. Bodiroza and Ambassador Kourkoulas. Guest for subsequent transmissions were chosen according to the subject of each. Upcoming debates include the following topics:

Month	Subject
June	Consumer Protection
September	EU Assistance Instruments
October	Market Standards - SMEs

These programmes were produced in the framework of the EU-DEI Awareness Project and also included a special live transmission of Europe Day festivities.





## First ECDL Certificates Awarded Under National License for BiH

On 27 March 2007, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas presented European Computer Driving Licenses (ECDL), following the completion of the EU-funded project "ECDL National License for BiH", which provided some 100,000 Euro to support the Association of Informatics in BiH.

Mr. Slobodan Dragicic, Vice-President of the Association of Informatics, stated that this first presentation of certificates is part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and stressed the importance of IT education in BiH, noting that the ECDL standards are recognized worldwide.

Mrs. Mensura Musurovic, President of the BiH ECDL Association, gave an overview of the ECDL, which today covers 146 countries, out of which 34 are European. Testing is presented in 38 languages and has already trained 6.5 million people. The beginnings in BiH date back to 1998, when the Swedish Association awarded a sub-licence for BiH; today BiH has its own certificate in local language.

Ambassador Kourkoulas expressed his pleasure in presenting certificates to some of the 100 candidates who went through

rigorous training so as to obtain their ECDL certificate. They join 2,400 employees of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH, 700 from the Indirect Taxation Authority and 700 from other Governmental institutions who have also received ECDL training funded through other EU projects.

Mr Hazis Kazic, of the BiH Civil Service Agency, stated that education of BiH citizens, and especially civil servants, is a must and an investment for the future. He believes that the concept of literacy should be redefined, as without knowledge of at least one foreign language and good knowledge of Information Technology, there is no chance of progress.

Mr. Julian Seymour, Executive Director of ECDL, stressed the importance of norms and strict standards that are, nowadays, recognized all over the world.

Mr. Perry Lingman of the Swedish ECDL Association and coordinator of the ECDL sub-licence for BiH bade farewell to BiH, as it has now obtained its own licence.

## Round Table on Coordination Between BiH Veterinary Institutions

On 3-4 April 2007, a round table discussion on the subject "Improved coordination between the BiH veterinary institutions and other related bodies and agencies, for the purpose of *acquis* alignment and enhanced export position towards the EU" was held in Sarajevo.

The participants discussed issues related to improved coordination between the BiH veterinary services and other relevant institutions and bodies, in order to enhance consumer protection in BiH as well as to support the country's efforts to comply with EU legislation in the fields of animal health and welfare, plant health and food safety.

The event aimed to present and assess the main competencies of the three BiH Agencies for Veterinary, Phytosanitary and Food Safety, as well as to compare them to similar institutions in EU Member State. Participants learned about the European Union's import requirements and the standards in the field of animal and public health, as well as food safety, which non-EU Member States must meet to be able to export animals and animal products to the EU. Recommendations on institutional improvement will ensue, in order to enhance BiH's position regarding export to the EU in the future.

The event was held in the framework of the ongoing EU-funded Twinning project "Support to the State Veterinary Office", which began in July 2006 and will last for two years. The BiH State



Veterinary Office and its twinning partner, the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection of Germany, jointly organised the event.

Although the main focus of the twinning assistance is to increase the capacities of the BiH veterinary services, so as to comply with the EU approximation requirements, the overall objective is to prepare the veterinary sector for future export of live animals and animal products to EU Member States.



## Reconstruction of Fifty-six Houses for Returnees in Mostar

On 25 April 2007, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas visited Mostar to hand over the keys to fifty-six houses reconstructed through the SUTRA project, which is a joint undertaking of the European Union, UNDP, the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands and the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, in cooperation with the RS and FBiH ministries, Brcko District and the BiH Return Fund.

The EU allocated 4 million Euro, UNDP contribution 100,000 Euro, the Royal Embassy of the Netherlands provided 2.1 million Euro while local authorities contributed 3 million Euro.

The contract was signed under the CARDS 2003 Return Programme and is an excellent example of working together in order to enable the local authorities to effectively coordinate, strategically plan and successfully manage the return process. It is also a clear sign of The EU's full recognition of the maturity of local governments to take over the responsibility of the return of refugees and displaced persons in BiH.

Overall, 498 families will be able move back into their reconstructed houses through SUTRA, with electrical and water supply connections provided and adequate sustainability measures ensured. The project component in Mostar includes reconstruction of 56 houses and accompanying infrastructure and is worth 940,000 KM. An additional infrastructure project of sewage tanks in Mostar was worth approximately 10,000 KM.

The EU is continuing to provide support for return, and this year will spend a further 4 million Euro, with matching funding from the BiH Government. Once again, the municipalities will be the most important partners. Mostar is also included in the third phase of SUTRA, with 27 housing units envisaged to be reconstructed.

Ambassador Kourkoulas considers cooperation with municipalities to be a success story. The new project is an expression of confidence in their determination to provide better quality services and to encourage the development of democracy from the bottom up.

## Presentation of Vertical Review of the Labour and Employment Sector in BiH

On April 26, 2007, a new Vertical Review of the Labour and Employment Sector in BiH was presented by the European Commission, in cooperation with the BiH Civil Affairs Ministry.

The project is part of the comprehensive support provided by the EC for Public Administration Reform in BiH and aims to present findings, analysis and recommendations, in order to facilitate the development of a more efficient administration of the labour and employment sector in BiH and prepare it for integration into the European Union.

The review was carried out by a team of international and local consultants between November 2005 and May 2006, and its findings show that the current labour and employment sector in BiH is fragmented, with legislative and executive functions spread over thirteen different administrative units, making it difficult to analyse, review and enforce current legislation.

In order to overcome these problems, the review recommends strengthening of the functions at the State level, preparations of existing administrative structures for handling available EU funds related to the area of employment, reform of the employment service system financing, as well as strengthening of monitoring and evaluation

functions and human resources of the employment service system.

Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, Head of Delegation of the European Commission in BiH, said that labour and employment sector reforms are highly important for achieving social and economic stability and have a broad impact on the lives of all BiH citizens. Improvement in the employment services is key to future social and economic growth. He also noted that the success of employment acceleration and unemployment reduction greatly depends on close cooperation among many institutions and different levels of government.

Mr Sredoje Novic, BiH Minister of Civil Affairs, said the Review describes the development of this sector in BiH in a comprehensive manner and also proposes some solutions to its Constitutional and legal framework. He added that once the document has been thoroughly analysed and discussed by all levels of government, it should be implemented through short-, medium- and long-term strategies.

Unemployment in BiH is running at 20 to 35 %, depending on how it is counted, and the youth unemployment rate is 34.8 %. In addition, around 18 % of the population are below the poverty line.



## GRASSROOTS PARTNERS



## HNK Tourist Board's "Wine Route of Herzegovina"

The HNK Tourist Board was established in 2002 by the Cantonal Government; its principal activities are the identification and promotion of relevant international and national markets for the region's tourist attractions. Activities are financed through the allocated budget, membership fees, tourist taxes, donations and donor-funded projects.

In the year 2005, HNK Tourist Board received EU funding to implement a project to signpost tourist attractions in Herzegovina. A newly completed 17-month project - the Wine Route of Herzegovina - builds on this first positive experience of cooperation.

The HNK Tourist Board first approached the Herzegovina Grape Growers and Wine Makers Association with the idea of the Wine Route Project, which has also had the effect of strengthening the Association itself.

The project aims to directly contribute to regional economic development; to increase the number and quality of BiH tourist attractions - the Wine Route is a new tourist product; to increase the tourist turnover in the Herzegovina region; and to involve the local population and service providers in the offer of the Wine Route, thus increasing their own business turnover.

The project has produced a website in English and local languages which presents the Vineyards, Cellars and Products. It also reviews other nearby tourist attractions, whether cultural, natural or religious, as well as restaurants and hotels, so as to integrally link the project to other tourism destinations and services:

[www.vinskacesta.ba](http://www.vinskacesta.ba) and [www.wineroute.ba](http://www.wineroute.ba).

Other promotional materials include a map of the wine route and region, a brochure and a calendar of wine-related and cultural events in the Region.

The Wine Route includes 22 wineries and cellars in Mostar, Citluk, Stolac, Capljina, Ljubuski, and Trebinje, ranging from small family-operated producers of eco-wine to large industrial producers. Wine-growers agree on the need to attain "Registered Region" (AOC - *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*) status, so as to brand Herzegovinian wines and protect the names of its autochthonous varieties: Blatina (red) and Zilavka (white).

The wine-growers also aim to work towards joint marketing and distribution agreements, so as to strengthen their market share in the domestic market. Individual wineries export to specific markets but the winegrowers agree on the need to achieve recognized standards, so as to enhance the overall image of Herzegovinian wines abroad.

On 25 April 2007, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas, Head of Delegation of the European Commission to BiH, cut the ribbon to symbolically launch this new tourist attraction funded by the European Union. He also visited wine cellars and the famous "Stony" vineyards in Citluk, which produce a high quality dry white wine named Kameno (Stony), after the terrain where it grows.

The EU provided a grant of € 200,000 for this project through the EU RED Fund, while the Tourist Board provided co-funding worth € 25,359.



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European Union home page: [www.europa.eu](http://www.europa.eu)

The EU's actions in BiH web page: [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/bosnia\\_herzegovina/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/enlargement/bosnia_herzegovina/index.htm)

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