

**INTEGRATED REHABILITATION PROJECT PLAN /
SURVEY OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE
(IRPP/SAAH)**

**Regional Programme
for Cultural and Natural Heritage
in South East Europe
2003 - 2006**

**PRELIMINARY TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT
OF THE ARCHITECTURAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL
HERITAGE IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE**

Document adopted by the
Commission to Preserve National Monuments, Sarajevo,
on 1st November 2006

**HISTORIC URBAN AREA
Blagaj
Bosnia and Herzegovina**

FOREWORD

In the framework of the European Commission/Council of Europe Joint Programme on the Integrated Rehabilitation Project Plan /Survey of the Architectural and Archaeological Heritage (IRPP/SAAH), the present Preliminary Technical Assessment (PTA) was prepared by the following local experts: Orjana Lenasi, Alisa Marjanović, Amra Šarančić headed by Ms. Mirela Mulalić Handan, Project Co-ordinator, in co-operation with the PTA expert group: Leader Dr. John Bold (United Kingdom); Experts: Ms. Emma Carmichael (United Kingdom), Mr. Giorgio Gianighian (Italy), Mr. Andreas Heymowski (Sweden), Mr. David Johnson (United Kingdom), Mr. Pedro Ponce de Leon (Spain), Mr. Alkis Prepis (Greece).

The Preliminary Technical Assessment (PTA) was adopted on 1st November 2006 by the Commission to Preserve National Monuments by following members: Amra Hadžimuhamedović, architect, historian of architecture; Dubravko Lovrenović, historian; Ljiljana Ševo historian of art; Zeynep Ahunbay, architect and Tina Wik, architect.

1. Introductory page



Site map



The historic urban area of Blagaj

1.1 Country or Territory:	Bosnia and Herzegovina
1.2 Name of organisation compiling the information:	Commission to Preserve National Monuments
1.3 Contact name:	Mirela Mulalic-Handan
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1.5 Name and address of building or site:	The Historic Urban Area of Blagaj
1.6 Inventory reference number(s):	Decision for designation of national monument No.:07.1-02-1029/03-37
1.7 Building/Monument/Site type:	Urban ensemble
1.8 Main dates:	10 th century
1.9 Current use(s):	Partially for the purposes of culture and tourism

2. Executive Summary: the site and its management

Blagaj stands at the edge of Bišće plain, in the south-eastern region of the Mostar basin. The town of Blagaj with the source of the river Buna and the mediaeval Fort known as Stjepan grad constitutes a unique natural and mixed urban and rural ensemble in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

An analysis of Blagaj's architectural heritage and old urban quarters indicates that buildings of major monumental and townscape value occupy a relatively confined area along the river Buna, that constitute the boundaries of Blagaj's historic center.

The basic importance of this historic urban structure lies in its exceptional environmental value and mix of natural (landscape and geomorphologic) and manmade features. The history of the settlement, from prehistoric times till today, is still visible and recognizable. A unique natural landscape is formed by the stone cliff and the Buna river and includes the medieval Fort of Stjepan-grad, an urban settlement developed in the Ottoman period with numerous characteristic historic ensembles and buildings (residential and public buildings: Čaršija – trade and craft center, Careva mosque, Hammam, Mekteb-school, orthodox church of st. Vasilija Ostroškog, catholic church, Derviš's Tekke on Buna river spring, water mills on Buna river, unique residential ensembles etc.). The buildings are in varying states of condition. One of the most important features of Blagaj, as a sacral centre is its Tekke on the Buna, founded for the gathering, residence and ceremonies of the Dervish. The Buna river and its natural cliff give Blagaj a special quality of natural and historic value not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but in the wider region.

However, the site is severely threatened by natural factors, inappropriate interventions, uncontrolled development in its immediate vicinity, lack of maintenance and management, and resources. Taking into consideration its poor condition, and complexity and diversity

from the monumental point of view, the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj urgently needs a Conservation management plan which would more clearly determine its future. Having in mind the cultural and historical significance, the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj has a huge potential for socio-economic development of cultural tourism and sustainable development in the region, offering an interesting cultural and natural complex with a wide range of cultural monuments and possibilities for learning and research.

3. Administrative information

3.1 Responsible Authorities

- Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is responsible for ensuring and providing measures necessary to protect, conserve, display and rehabilitate the National Monument.
- Ministry of Physical Planning and Environment of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall give the approval for the restoration and conservation works, under the expert supervision of the responsible heritage protection authority
- Authorities and institutions at all levels of governance shall collaborate with the Commission on issues of significance for the work of the Commission.

3.2 Building/Site, Name and Address

Historic Urban Area of Blagaj, near Mostar, Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.3 Map reference

43.26° N, 17.89° E

3.4 Type of monument

Unique natural and mixed urban and rural ensemble

3.5 Ownership

Miscellaneous ownership; different users

3.6 Statutory Protection/Constraints

- Pursuant to the provisions of the law, and by ruling of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of SR BiH, no. 05-359-1/66 dated 12 March 1966 in Sarajevo, the site of the Stjepan grad fortress was placed under state protection.
- Pursuant to the provisions of the law, and by ruling of the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities of NR BiH, no. 68/52 dated 31 January 1952 in Sarajevo, the Turbe, Tekke and musafirhana in Blagaj placed under state protection. By ruling of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of NR BiH no. 02-685-3 dated 18 April 1962, the cultural monument of the Turbe, Tekke and musafirhana in Blagaj were entered in the Register of immovable properties.
- Pursuant to the provisions of the law, and by ruling of the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities of NR BiH, no. 761/57 dated 30 April 1957 in Sarajevo, the Careva mosque in Blagaj was placed under state protection. By ruling of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of NR BiH no. 02-828-3 dated 18 April 1962 the cultural monument of the Careva mosque in Blagaj was entered in the Register of immovable cultural monuments.
- By ruling of the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities dated 17 June 1950, the Karađoz-beg bridge was placed under state protection. By ruling of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of NR BiH dated 18 April 1962, the Karađoz-beg bridge was entered in the Register of cultural monuments.
- By ruling of the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and Natural Rarities dated 31 January 1952, the Kolaković house was placed under state protection.

By ruling of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of NR BiH dated 18 April 1962, the Kolaković house was entered in the Register of cultural monuments.

- The source of the Buna is protected by ruling of the Regional institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments in Mostar no. 744/54 dated 17 June 1954.
- The Regional Plan for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to 2002 lists the urban and rural ensemble of Blagaj as a Category I monument (of national importance). The urban and rural ensemble of Blagaj means the area with the mosque, tekke, hammam, residential buildings and bridge.
- The Regional Plan for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to 2002 lists the Blagaj fortress near Mostar as a Category I monument.
- The Regional Plan for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to 2002 lists the Careva mosque, the Tekke on the Buna and the Karađoz-beg bridge as Category I monuments.
- The Regional Plan for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina to 2002 lists the Hammam in Blagaj, the Velagić complex and the Kolaković house as Category II monuments (of regional importance).
- Commission to Preserve National Monuments issued decision to designate Historical Urban Area of Blagaj as National Monuments, Decision no. 07.1-02-1029/03-37, designated at the 20th session held from 3-9 May 2005.

Thus far the Commission to Preserve National Monuments has issued the following decisions designating individual properties as national monuments within Historical Urban Area of Blagaj:

- Historic site of the Old Blagaj Fort in Blagaj near Mostar, no. 06-6-1029/03-5, designated at the 11th session, held from 6-11 December 2003
- Historic building of the Karađoz-beg hammam in Blagaj near Mostar, no. 08/1-5-1029/03-6, designated at the 11th session held from 6-11 December 2003
- Historic building of the Karađoz-beg bridge in Blagaj on the Buna, no.08/1-6-1029/03-7, designated at the 11th session held from 6-11 December 2003
- Natural and architectural ensemble of the Tekke in Blagaj on the Buna, no. 06-6-1029/03-8, designated at the 11th session held from 6-11 December 2003
- Architectural ensemble of the Careva or Sultan Suleyman mosque in Blagaj, no. 06-6-586/03-3, designated at the 12th session held from 20-26 January 2004
- Site and remains of the architectural ensemble of the Kolaković house in Blagaj, no. 09-2-1029/03-10, designated at the 12th session held from 20-26 January 2004
- Natural and architectural ensemble of the residential complex of the Velagić family in Blagaj near Mostar, no. 06/2-02-716/03-7, designated at the 15th session held from 6-10 July 2004.

The provisions relating to protection and rehabilitation measures set forth by the Law on the Implementation of the Decisions of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments, established pursuant to Annex 8 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Official Gazette of the Federation of B&H nos. 2/02 and 27/02*) shall apply to the National Monument

4. Summary of condition

4.1 Summary of Physical Condition

Poor

4.2 Condition Risk Assessment

B

4.3 Priority for intervention

High

5. Existing information

5.1 Documentary sources:

The main documentary sources for the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj are libraries, the register of the Institute for protection of monuments Federation of BiH and the register of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments.

The Register of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments is placed in the Office of the Commission and is available to all interested parties.

Register contains the following:

- Decision on designation of the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj as national monument, with description of location, historical information and detail description of the historic area and individual monuments, information on legal status to date, research, conservation and restoration works and information on current state of the property;
- Documentation on the location and current owner and user of the property (copy of cadastral plan);
- Data on the previous condition and use of the property, description and photographs etc.
- Photographs on the current condition of the historic area and individual monuments.

5.2 Bibliography:

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- 1940 Dinić J. M., *Zemlje Hercega Sv. Save* (Land of Herceg St Sava), Jnl of the Serbian Academy of Science no. LXXXII, Belgrade, 1940
- 1940 Mehmed Mujezinović, *Mjesto života* (Place of Life), Jnl of the Serbian Royal Academy, Belgrade, 1940
- 1953 Bejtić, Alija, *Spomenici osmanlijske arhitekture u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Monuments of Ottoman architecture in BiH), Contributions to oriental philology and the history of the Yugoslav peoples under Turkish rule, III-IV, 1952-53, Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1953
- 1954 Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Stari hercegovački gradovi* (Old Herzegovina towns) Naše starine II, Annual of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of SR BiH, Sarajevo, 1954
- 1957 Vego, Marko, *Naselja srednjevjekovne bosanske države* (Settlements of the mediaeval Bosnia state) Sarajevo, 1957
- 1969 Čelić, Džemal and Mujezinović, Mehmed, *Stari mostovi u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Old Bridges in BiH) Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1969.
- 1971 Hamdija Kreševljaković, *Esnafi i obrti u Bosni i Hercegovini 1463-1871* (Guilds and Trades in BiH 1463-1878), Selected Works II, Sarajevo, 1971
- 1972 *Četvrt stoljeća službe zaštite spomenika kulture i prirode u Bosni i Hercegovini* (A Quarter Century of Protection of Cultural and Natural Monuments in BiH), Naše starine XIII, Annual of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of SR BiH, Sarajevo, 1972
- 1976 Hivzija Hasandedić, *Glasnik vrhovnog islamskog starješinstva u SFRJ* (Herald of the Supreme Islamic Council in SFRY), Sarajevo, 1976
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- 1980 Institute for Architecture, Urban Planning and Regional Planning of the Faculty of Architecture in Sarajevo, *Regional Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Stage B – valorization of natural and cultural and historical monuments*, Sarajevo, 1980
- 1984 Ivanka Ribarević Nikolić, *Ikone pravoslavne crkve u Blagaju kod Mostara*, (Icons of the Orthodox Church in Blagaj nr. Mostar), Hercegovina no. 4, Mostar, 1984

- 1989 Pašić, Amir, *Prilog proučavanja islamskog stambenog graditeljstva u Jugoslaviji na primjeru Mostara, Koliko je stara stambena arhitektura Mostara autohtona pojava*, (Contribution to a study of Islamic residential architecture in Yugoslavia, the example of Mostar, How far is the old residential architecture of Mostar an indigenous phenomenon) doctoral dissertation, Zagreb, 1989
- 1991 Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Izabrana djela II – Esnafi i obrti u Bosni i Hercegovini (1463-1878)*, (Selected Works II – guilds and trades in BiH 1463-1878) Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1991.
- 1991 Kreševljaković, Hamdija, *Izabrana djela III – banje, vodovodi, hanovi i karavansaraji* (Selected Works III – baths, water mains, hans and caravanserais) Veselin Masleša, Sarajevo, 1991
- 1996 Čelebi, Evlija, *Putopis – odlomci o jugoslovenskim zemljama*, (Travelogue – extracts on Yugoslav lands) Sarajevo Publishing, Sarajevo, 1996.
- 1998 Mujezinović, Mehmed, *Islamska epigrafika Bosne i Hercegovine*, (Islamic epigraphics of BiH) vol III, Sarajevo-Publishing, Sarajevo, 1998.
- 1998 Ilijas Hadžibegović, *Traganje za modernom naronom* (In search of the modern Naron) Hercegovina no. 10, Mostar, 1998
- 1999 Kasumović, Ismet, *Školstvo i obrazovanje u bosanskom ejaletu za vrijeme osmanske uprave*, (Education in the Bosnian eyalet during the Ottoman period) Islamic cultural centre, Mostar, 1999.
- 2000 Ayverdi Dr. Ekrem Hakki, *Avrupa'da Osmanli Mimari Eserlera Yugoslavya II*, 3. kitab, Istanbul, 2000
- 2000 Mujezinović, Nermina, *Blagaj kod Mostara* (Blagaj nr. Mostar) Hercegovina no. 11-12, Mostar, 2000
- 2000 Hasandedić, Hivzija, *Mostarski vakifi i njihovi vakufi*, (Mostar's vakifs and their vakufs) Majlis of the Islamic Community Mostar, Mostar, 2000.
- 2000 Institute for the Protection of the Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Nomination for the list of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the townscape ensemble of Blagaj*, Sarajevo, 2000

5.3 Fieldwork already conducted:

- 1851 - Omer-paša Latas commissioned the first renovation of the architectural ensemble of the Tekke, turbe and musafirhana
- 1952 – the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of NR BiH undertook the restoration of the turbe and musafirhana of the Blagaj tekke
- 1950 - Džemal Čelić surveyed the Kolaković house
- 1954 – the roof structure of the Kolaković house was repaired, the roof surveyed, and some beams replaced
- 1984/1985 – Gordana Vilušić studied and surveyed the Kolaković house and the Velagićevina residential complex
- 1989 – architect Amir Pašić studied the Velagić and Kolaković houses for his doctoral dissertation
- post 1995 – following the ravages of war, works to reconstruct and repair buildings within the historic centre were carried out on several occasions.

5.4 Projects in progress:

None

5.5 Projects already planned:

None

5.6 Financial estimates already made:

None

Due to the complexity of the site, and different type of interventions which were carried out in the past, it is very hard to give some overall financial estimate for the entire site.

6. Scope of the PTA

6.1 Extent/Nature of the assessment:

Architect – expert, Orjana Lenasi, associate for ensembles, historical, urban and cultural landscapes of the Secretariat to the Commission, needed thirty days to collect all necessary data and prepare the draft decision on the designation of the property as a National Monument (a report).

Members of the Commission, Zeynep Ahunbay – architect, Amra Hadzimuhamedović – architect, Dubravko Lovrenović – historian, Ljiljana Sevo – art historian and Tina Wik – architect, adopted a decision on designation of the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj, as a National Monument. Members of the Commission, Amra Hadzimuhamedović, Dubravko Lovrenović and Ljiljana Sevo are local experts while Zeynep Ahunbay and Tina Wik are international experts.

It took 10 days for Orjana Lenasi, associate for ensembles, historical, urban and cultural landscapes, Alisa Marjanović, associate for historical monuments and Amra Šarančić, associate for historical monuments to complete the PTA form.

All associates on the collection of data, drafting the decision and completing the form are local experts.

6.2 Limitations of the study:

There were no difficulties during the procedure of drafting the decision and completing the PTA form regarding the collection of the necessary documentation nor during the visit to the site.

7. The PTA

7.1 Background: Form, Function and Evolution

7.1.1 Summary description of the building/site

Blagaj stands at the edge of Bišće plain, in the south-eastern region of the Mostar basin and is one of the most valuable mixed urban and rural structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina, distinguished from other similar structures in its urban layout, the Čaršija as the central functional element; and the presence of the fortress of Stjepan grad, to which two minor and one major road formerly led.

Blagaj's urban structure, spatial physiognomy and organization can be traced from the mediaeval outskirts of the fort, which were transformed in the Ottoman period into a kasaba (town), and then into an administrative center.

It was during the Ottoman period that building activity began to develop in the outskirts of the fortress, with the erection of houses and public buildings, with the most important located along the three watercourses: Suhi potok (brook) in Harman, Suhi potok in Galičići, and the river Buna. The center was occupied by the Čaršija, the trade and crafts center of the settlement, the Careva mosque complex with its harem and mekteb, and the han. The residential area took shape typologically as urban quarters or mahalas, with buildings facing inwards onto their courtyards, and rural areas with the buildings facing outwards.

Both oriental and Mediterranean features are to be seen in Blagaj's urban layout, while the settlement itself was the outcome of the influence of a number of different factors: the natural configuration of the terrain, and socio-economic relations. The expansiveness and openness of the Čaršija streets was dictated by the need to build free-standing and at times entirely isolated buildings, so that the courtyard became the most important area of the house. These residential complexes consisted of several different buildings serving different purposes, standing on a plot that was entirely open to the natural surroundings and forming a single unit with the

architecture of the buildings. This is at its most striking in the case of the Velagić and Kolaković complexes.

The main characteristics of the most important buildings and ensembles within the Historic urban area of Blagaj which have the highest environmental and monumental value are:

- the historic site of the Old Blagaj Fort (Stjepan grad) - Unlike other fortifications serving as residences in B&H, the Blagaj fortress is located on a natural level area above steep cliffs to the south, west and north. In layout, the fort is an irregular polygon, adapted to the configuration of the terrain, with seven square towers, a projecting angle, and the entrance to the east. Access is by way of a narrow horse track winding its way up in sharp serpentine bends to the entrance in the most strongly fortified east wall of the forecourt. The walls have survived for much of their length to a height of 12 or 14 m. The interior defended area is relatively small, similar to that of the fortress in Jajce.
- the architectural ensemble of the Imperial or Sultan Suleyman mosque – was one of the first buildings to be erected in Blagaj township, in 1520/21. It is very close to the right bank of the river Buna in the centre of Blagaj, and is one of the oldest domed mosques in this region. The mosque was built in line with the rules governing the construction of monumental edifices. The choice of site ensured that it would have a wide “catchment area” and be of prime importance in the čaršija as an organic entity. The mosque stands on the edge of the Carska mahala, facing the square and čaršija. The desire to ensure that the building is in direct contact with its environs and to form an integral part of the daily life of the town is evident, and gave rise to the monumentalism of the mosque, not by accentuating the decorative features of its individual components but by means of the relationship between solid and open surfaces. There is a walled courtyard or harem outside the building. A mekteb or Muslim religious school was built by the Sultan Suleyman (Careva) prior to 1664.
- the natural and architectural ensemble of the Tekke in Blagaj – stands by the source of the river Buna, not far from the centre of Blagaj. The musafirhana and turbe are tucked into the natural surroundings, constituting a single entity with the cliffs, source of the Buna and mills. The musafirhana of the Blagaj tekke and the turbe are preserved. The musafirhana was built before 1664, and rebuilt in 1851; its original appearance is not known. The building was subsequently repaired on several occasions. The ensemble of the Blagaj Tekke was presumably built very soon after Ottoman rule was established in Herzegovina, around 1520 at the latest. It was originally in the hands of the Bektashi order, and later, in the 18th century, after renovation by the Mufti of Mostar, Zijadin Ahmed-ibn-Mustafa, it became a gathering-place for members of the Khalwatiyyah order (Mujezinović, 2000, pp. 55-66). The earliest reference to the tekke on the source of the Buna in Blagaj near Mostar is in the Travelogue by Evliya Çelebi, who travelled through the town in 1664. The musafirhana of the Blagaj Tekke is a highly original residential building, with very marked features deriving from the influence of the baroque on Ottoman architecture. The baroque influence is reflected in the gable of the main facade, where the roof is slightly curved, a design that is not appropriate either to the style and stone slab roof cladding in Herzegovina or to the material of which it is made. A turbe was built by the Blagaj Tekke, an elongated structure attached to the residential part, with two tombs.
- the historic building of the Karađoz-beg hammam - is on the right bank of the river Buna, very close to the Careva mosque and Karađoz-beg bridge. It was endowed by Mehmed-beg Karađoz, and built between 1570 and 1664. It is of small size, and in layout is a single hammam, built of stone and brick and consisting of a šadrvan, kapaluk, halvat, hazna and ćulhan (apodyterium, tepidarium, caldarium, boiler room and hypocaustum). This is one of the few hammams built by a river, from which the water was drawn by means of a special channel. It is said that it was used as an abattoir for a long time, and was probably abandoned in 1814 after the plague that ravaged the country at that time. Most of the hammam is now in ruins and all that can be discerned is part of the ground floor walls and part of the dome over the šadrvan. The river Buna,

time and the elements, and human neglect, have resulted in only parts of the Šadrvan, kapaluk and halvat of the Karađoz-beg hamam surviving.

- the historic building of the Karađoz-beg bridge - was endowed by Zaim hajji Mehmed-beg, known as Karađoz, and was built before 1570. The road to Stolac led over the bridge, which has five arches, of increasing span towards the centre. It has twice been repaired, following World War II bombing and following a major flood in 1960. The Karađoz-beg bridge is in use, and is in good structural condition.
- the site and remains of the architectural ensemble of the Kolaković house - is one of the most striking examples of residential architecture in Herzegovina, and illustrates the evolution of the "Ottoman Bosnian" house. The original simple house with interior hall, dating from the 17th century, was considerably extended later to become a central-type house with central hajat. The residential complex of the Kolaković house consists of a selamluk (men's and "public" quarters) and haremluk (women's or private and family quarters), and is a genuine example of a "gentleman farmer's" house. The distinction between a town house and a gentleman farmer's house lies in the saračhana or courtyard with outbuildings (required for livestock) which, in the case of the Kolaković house, are right by the access road. The saračhana contained a musafirhana or overnight hostel, the mutvak of the musafirhana (hostel kitchen), ahara (stabling) and hayloft, and a house with a veranda. The exact date when the Kolaković house was built varies depending on the source being consulted, but it was probably built in the 17th century and enlarged and renovated in the 19th. It was destroyed during the war in 1993. The remaining walls are overgrown with vegetation
- the natural and architectural ensemble of the residential complex of the Velagić family – was built before 1776. "The Velagićeva residential complex is a unique complex of the residential architecture of that time, with a large number of the functional components required for life. It is so sited as to be separated from the outside world, while its exuberant facades seem to disperse as they open to the natural environment and the river Buna. All the courtyards are interconnected and paved with river pebbles. The complex of the Velagić house is the most complete example of a family house complex with outbuildings, where the full scope of the residential lifestyle of Herzegovina in the past is revealed".
- the Kosić tower, as an offshoot of mediaeval residential architecture, is a typical fortified house. It is stone-built and stands at the edge of the town, so it probably served some defence purpose, given that the Blagaj fort was on the other side.
- the Church of St Basil of Ostrog - was built during the Austro-Hungarian period. Work began in 1892 and was completed in 1893; the church was dedicated to the Assumption. The church was built in the neo-Romanesque style.
- Memorial buildings - Burial grounds or harems form part of the mahala complexes. The memorial monuments of Blagaj are located on five sites, four of which are still in use: the Šehitluci or shahids' necropolis in Bunska mahala in Blagaj, the large harem in Blagaj, the harem by the Sultan Suleyman (Careva) mosque, the harem by the masjid in Galičići and the harem in Podgrađe.
- Water mills – Mills by the Tekke (Very close to the source of the river Buna, channels branch off leading water to power the mills. Several mills, stamping mills and two felling mills were built. There was one mill on each bank of the river. Part of the mill on the right bank of the river has been converted into a souvenir shop; all that remains of the rest of the mill is the stone walls. As a rule mill buildings are simple stone-built structures with gabled roofs clad with stone slabs, and with one or more mills); mills in the Velagić residential complex (Part of the mill is on the bank and the greater part on the branch of the river Buna that flows beneath the Velagić residential complex. The mill is to the west of the houses, not far from them but right by the stables and stamping mill, which is slightly upstream from the mill. Stamping mills were used for washing wool and fulling cloth. The mill building consists of two parts, one built on dry land with a ground and an upper storey, and the other a single-storey structure built over the river spanning the two banks by means of a system of arches. The first part was the miller's living quarters, and the other contained seven mills arranged at regular interval).

It is impossible to discuss the cultural and historical heritage of Blagaj without also considering its natural values, since its distinctive quality lies in the coexistence of the natural and the man-made, in the integration of the physical structure into the landscape.

Blagaj is a rich natural area, with varied contours, morphologically fascinating, with a pleasant Mediterranean climate of mild winters. In a relatively small area there are both pronounced *karst* forms with steep slopes (Blagaj hill, Stjepan grad) but also level or gently sloping vales and river banks. The river Buna, though short, with its outstandingly clear water of high quality, is the habitat of a great many rare and endemic species of world importance (the soft-lipped trout, the nose carp, and marble trout). Eagles once flew above the ramparts of the Blagaj fort, emerging from the cliffs above the source.

This region is specific for the diversity of its above-ground and underground hydrography. The source of the Buna is the finest example of an underground *karst* river (producing approx. 30 m³/sec), one of the largest and most beautiful in Europe. The region is also known for the diversity of its flora and a number of endemic species. At lower altitudes there are many evergreen plant and deciduous thicket species, while at higher altitudes in the hills there is sparse forest. Fertile cultivable land is suitable for the agriculture typical of the Mediterranean climate. Several natural monuments and values can be identify in the area of the historic urban area of Blagaj. These are as follows:

- The source of the Buna with its cliffs constitutes a geomorphological natural monument, and the source of the Buna a hydrological natural monument. The following reserves may be defined in Blagaj:
 - a geomorphologic nature reserve – the Bunica gorge in Malo polje;
 - a hydrological nature reserve – the course of the Buna and the Bunica;
 - a zoological nature reserve – the ornithological area around Stjepan grad, the source of the Buna, the source of the Bunica and the Bunica gorge in Malo polje.
- In Blagaj the following natural monuments may be identified:
 - geomorphologic natural monuments – the source of the Buna with cliffs, the source of the Bunica with cliffs, Zelena cave, Linčiji kuk cave, Šavrlićacave;
 - hydrological natural monuments – the source of the Buna, the source of the Bunica, and the Buna falls (cascades in Blagaj);
 - dendrological natural monuments – the planting in the courtyard of the Tekke on the source of the Buna, the poplar plantation in the fish farm, the pine and cypress forest on the hill around Stjepan grad, the cypress plantations by the mosque in Blagaj, the cypress plantations by the Orthodox Church in Blagaj, the plantations of Mediterranean hackberry in Orah, and the wooded eyot.
- In Blagaj the following natural viewpoints may be defined: Stjepan grad, Kosorska glavica and Gorica in Malo polje
- In Blagaj the following sites of natural and historical interest may be defined:
 - The vegetative complex with Stjepan grad
 - The protected complex of Glavica.

7.1.2 Summary historic development and evolution of the building or site

The favorable geomorphic and climatic conditions of this region encouraged human settlement even in the remote past, so that the evolution of the area of present-day Blagaj can be traced to prehistoric times. The earliest indirect written sources on Blagaj are to be found in the list of people drawn up by the Byzantine Emperor and author Constantine Porphyrogenitus between 948 and 952 where two towns or forts are referred to – Bona and Hum. The proximity of major routes linking the Adriatic coast with the Bosnian hinterland (“via Narenti”) influenced its development and importance, after the 10th century.

There is considerably more extensive evidence of life in late mediaeval times (12th - 16th century). By the reign of King Tvrtko the Bosnian rulers in Blagaj were issuing charters, and in May 1404 Blagaj became one of the residences of Duke Sandalj Hranić, and then of Herceg Stjepan Vukčić Kosača, after whom the fort became known among the local people as Stjepan-grad. The first written source referring to the fort is a peace treaty dated 1 November 1423, issued “in our fort in Blagaj”.

Historical written sources rarely refer to the mediaeval settlement outside the fortress, Podblagaj, despite the important role of the fortified town of Blagaj in mediaeval times, as a prominent administrative center. The earliest reference to Podblagaj dates from 1447.

The Ottoman army occupied Blagaj after 3 June 1466. The development of the town of Blagaj near Mostar continued uninterrupted in the Ottoman period, when it once again acquired administrative and political importance.

The urbanization of the settlement of Blagaj as we now know it was defined in the Ottoman period, during the second half of the 15th century, and its structure took shape during the 16th century. The mediaeval fortress of Blagaj (Stjepan grad) is constantly referred to in the sources as a distinct territorial entity. The decline of Blagaj's importance is associated both with the development of Mostar and the formation of the Počitelj kadiluk in early 18th century, and it continued during the Austro-Hungarian period (19th and 20th century).

The stagnation of urban development marked the period between the two World Wars and the period after the Second World War, all until 1961, when the number of population suddenly grew and unplanned construction of settlements began.

The stagnation of urban development had also a positive effect in terms that the design basis of main parts of settlements was preserved until the 1990s. The new construction, however, was not conducted to irreversibly disrupt the scale and spatial proportions of the historical core of the settlement of Blagaj.

The period after the 1992 –1995 operations, when a large number of refugees from the neighbouring municipalities settled in, resulted in the escalation of unplanned construction and significant disruption of the appearance of the historical core of Blagaj. In addition, Blagaj was at that time the place where many people began to build leisure homes. Consequently, a large number of residential ensembles emerged, which were used in a certain period of the year - periodically, which significantly changed the picture of Blagaj.

7.2 Significance

Applying the Criteria for the adoption of a decision on proclaiming an item of property a national monument, adopted at the fourth session of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments (3 to 9 September 2002), the Commission has enacted the Decision.

7.2.1 Summary statement of significance/historical and heritage importance.

The site has a good potential for socio-economic development of cultural tourism in the region presented and valued as a specific town which embraces a whole spectrum of cultural monuments.

7.2.2. Historical

3 (high)

7.2.3. Artistic/Aesthetic

3 (high)

7.2.4. Technological

2 (medium)

7.2.5. Religious/Spiritual

3 (high)

7.2.6. Symbolic/Identity

3 (high)

7.2.7. Scientific/Research

2 (medium)

7.2.8. Social/Civic

2 (medium)

7.2.9. Natural

3 (high)

7.2.10. Economic

3 (high)

7.2.11. Category of significance

Of outstanding international and national importance.

7.3 Vulnerability/Risk assessment.

The historic urban area of Blagaj is either directly or indirectly endangered by the following:

- Inappropriate interventions in the historic area – as a result of recent development and demographic growth the adjacent settlement is being developed in an unplanned and uncontrolled way. New buildings are in some cases being constructed against the monumental buildings and areas, and the settlement is being extended in all directions. At the same time there are numerous abandoned buildings and residential ensembles of monumental value and importance in the settlement center which badly affect the ambience and setting of the historic area.
- Lack of detailed documentation regarding the historic urban area of Blagaj – there are no detailed plans for individual monuments or for the general historic area.
- Lack of management and maintenance - the site is large and diverse and needs a proper management structure for both day-to-day management and development of a master plan which does not exist now. Maintenance appears to be reactive and sporadic with no overall plan.
- Resources - the site is very extensive and the scale of the problem so large that consolidation of the buildings and structures will inevitably take a long time and require a major commitment of financial and management resources.

7.4 Technical condition and 7.5 Outline summaries of required repairs

The historic center of Blagaj is on the list of endangered monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The current condition of architectural heritage buildings within the historic center is such as to require active protection and conservation along with the introduction of a specific function.

The current condition of individual buildings of monumental value within the historic site is as follows:

- the Velagićevina residential complex, although surviving in its original form, is in relatively poor condition as a result of lack of maintenance and the illicit erection of a new residential building and catering facility with fish farm in the immediate vicinity. These structures are detrimental to the townscape value of the monument, and the Nordfish fish farm is a potential polluter of the natural environment, and in particular of the river Buna;
- all that survives of the Kolaković residential ensemble are parts of the exterior stone walls of the building, which are overgrown with weeds. Earth and garbage have been piled up inside the building, impeding access to the building;
- the Careva mosque is in good structural condition. The mekteb building was in a ruinous state, and works have been carried out to rehabilitate it. The nišan tombstones in the mosque harem are in poor condition;
- all that survives of the Karađoz-beg hammam are part of the walls of some of the rooms and part of the dome over the šadrvan. All the walls are overgrown with weeds. Access to the building is impossible because of the mounds of earth mixed with weeds and fallen pieces of the structure;
- the Karađoz-beg bridge is in use and is in good structural condition. The original outline, structure and materials of the bridge have been spoiled by damage and reconstruction. The bridge was reconstructed in a manner that does not comply with modern standards of architectural heritage protection; The research works are to be carried out and a design project drawn up for the restoration of the bridge, to include

the removal or replacement of additions and of materials built into the bridge in the course of inappropriate reconstruction works, and the original structure of the bridge is to be conserved in a proper manner;

- the Stjepan grad is in poor condition. In some places it can be seen that the revetment of the walls has fallen away and that interior walls have been displaced. The east wall has been broken through in places. The mosque has been altered using dry stone walling. The remaining nišans in the burial ground below the fort are damaged, broken and, for the most part, displaced from the graves to which they belong. Clearing the walls of vegetation that is a danger to the structure of the monument; clearing the interior of the mosque of deposits of earth and the removal of partition walls and fallen sections of dry walling from the interior of the mosque; structural repairs and consolidation of damaged walls, including the east wall, the part of the wall above the main entrance, parts of the east wall on the inside, the west wall of the palace, the steps to the doksat (oriel) tower, and the walls of the mosque; conservation of the existing condition of the ramparts and towers of the old fort; the shehids' necropolis shall be made good and damaged nišan tombstones repaired.
- the architectural ensemble of the turbe and musafirhana of the Blagaj Tekke is in good structural condition. In addition to its religious use, the musafirhana is now also being used for catering purposes and the sale of souvenirs. The mill on the right bank of the river is in good condition, and is currently being used as a souvenir shop, but all that is left of the mill on the left bank of the river is the remains of the stone walls. The ensemble is at risk from the construction of a footbridge over the Buna and a restaurant on the left bank very close to the source of the Buna, which is detrimental to the unity and authenticity of the architectural ensemble, and should be removed or modified to be less damaging to the whole structure of the historic urban core.
- The church of St Basil of Ostrog was damaged during the war. Many of the residential and public buildings in the areas around the čaršija, the hammam and the Karađoz-beg bridge have lost features of townscape value as a result of uncontrolled and unplanned construction and other inappropriate interventions of recent date.

In the contact area of the historic centre, the process of migration by the rural population (Behmeneovina, Batlaci, Pašinovci, Šehovina and part of Harmana) is having a negative impact, accompanied by unplanned construction, as a result of buildings that do not conform to the traditional features of Blagaj as a whole.

Finally an arboriculture and tree survey should be carried out to survey the degree of work that is required across the site to prevent further deterioration of the buildings and structures.

7.6 Conservation policy and proposals

7.6.1 Vision.

The town of Blagaj with the source of the river Buna and the mediaeval Fort known as Stjepan grad constitutes a unique natural and mixed urban and rural ensemble in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The natural environment (influence of the Mediterranean climate, good position of the vicinity of river Neretva and nearby roads, geomorphic conditions - varied contours, morphologically fascinating, pronounced *karst* forms with steep slopes and level or gently sloping vales and river banks; diversity of its above-ground and underground hydrography) and man-made features; verity of functions (public (complex functions ranging from the purely utilitarian to the psychological-cum-ideological) - religious, secular, memorial and residential) and their exceptional interaction and coexistence in the integration of the physical structure into the landscape, preserved till present day represents one of the most important cultural ensembles in the region. All of these present potential for the development of the Blagaj as a strong tourist, cultural and educational center of the region.

It is already an important cultural, religious and tourist attraction. The Blagaj Tekke once a year, during the summer time, is a place of a pilgrimage gathering for annual prayer of Derviš.

A number of the buildings after their restoration and reconstruction will be able to offer space for a number of possible uses.

A comprehensive management plan is needed to determine how the site should evolve over the next phase of its history and before any more permanent changes are made to its structure. This study should include the settlement around the old town. The settlement has a regular market, a bar and small shopping facility. This could be improved and the settlement could become an attractive part of the visitors' experience of the site.

7.6.2 Conservation philosophy

The philosophy for conservation of the site needs to be built upon the results of the recording of the present condition, the future executive plans, and upon the documentation that exists for individual monuments and for the whole historic urban area. Within these plans, in addition to rehabilitation, conservation, restoration and presentation works, buildings may be adapted to suit modern uses; by way of exception, the interpolation of new buildings may be permitted on condition that they are not detrimental in form, size, materials used and exterior treatment to the structure of the protected area. In this area, the layout shall be retained and restored and existing open areas shall be landscaped. Equally, the buildings which have already been restored offer the potential for extensive audio and visual presentation.

Again, an appropriate philosophy can only be determined when the plan for the entire site is clear, which supports the concept for the development of a conservation management plan. The immediate repair works required should be completed using materials and methods which are complementary and compatible with the existing fabric.

7.6.3 Level of intervention

The priority is to start up as soon as possible with the work on Conservation Management Plan which will review the present situation and the type and scale of interventions for the whole historic urban area of Blagaj.

7.6.5 Preliminary proposals for appropriate uses.

The buildings which have been restored and which are in the use now can continue with the present functions. Until the management plan for the site has been adopted however, these uses should be regarded as temporary and should avoid any further impact on the site, its buildings, fabric or infrastructure.

7.6.6 Opportunities for social uses and sustainable development

The rehabilitation of the Historic urban area of Blagaj will lead to the promotion of its significance as a monument of outstanding value, and encourage the development of cultural tourism, which will have as a consequence: the creation of work places, engagement in social services, promotion in association with other activities such as tourism, commerce, information, museum activities etc.

7.6.7 Broad assessment of priorities for consolidation/covering, repair, conservation, restoration, rehabilitation

Conservation Management Plan - the principle of the plan should establish balance between the development of tourism and conservation of historical resources for their mutual benefits.

7.6.8 Public access

The plan is to make the entire site open to the public through tourism and educational programmes.

7.6.9 Other benefits

The preservation of one of the most outstanding monuments and landmarks of the region, as a symbol of the multicultural identity of Herzegovina area which should be a focal point of cultural and religious tourism.

This historic urban area, once restored, would be suitably presented (engagement of a wider audience; features capable of particular exploitation) and would acquire the educational role that properly belongs to it which will contribute to a better

understanding of the identity and history of the B&H heritage. The monument will be used for educational purposes (from school outings to professional and academic workshops and seminars on restoration for students and experts in the field of heritage).

7.7 Finance

7.7.1 Broad assessment of budgetary needs and phasing

Work on the Conservation Management Plan for the Historic Urban Area of Blagaj will be conducted in five phases:

1. Defining the state of the historical area of Blagaj: record and assessment of the current state, defining goals of sustainable development;
2. Basic development concept – defining conditions for sustainable management of cultural and natural heritage, variants included; public consultations with experts, local authorities, NGOs and the inhabitants of Blagaj will be held in this phase;
3. Projections about the sustainable development of Blagaj – the integration of natural and cultural heritage into the development of tourism in Blagaj;
4. Phasing the implementation of the Management Plan;
5. Preparing individual projects for restoration and sustainable management of individual structures and ensembles.

1. Defining the state of the historical area of Blagaj: record and assessment of the current state and defining goals of sustainable development comprise the following activities:

- Building an expert team;
- Integration of the existing documentation, inspection, analysis and preparation;
- Record of the current state of the natural and architectural heritage in the historic centre of Blagaj;
- Producing complete technical, architectural, video and other kinds of documentation;
- Evaluating and defining current relations.

2. Basic development concept – defining conditions for sustainable management of cultural and natural heritage, variants included.

A general programme of revitalisation of the historical heart of Blagaj needs to be drawn up based on site assessment and the evaluation of individual pieces of property and ensembles. The programme of revitalisation includes defining the levels of protection and permitted interventions on individual structures and ensembles.

3. The sustainable development of Blagaj – integration of natural and cultural heritage into the development of tourism in Blagaj.

Based on the evaluation conducted in the first and second phases of the project, a team, including an expert in the protection of cultural and natural heritage, town planner, economist, tourism and representative of the local authorities, should prepare a Management Plan for the historic centre of Blagaj. Its goals should be self-sustainable protection and development of Blagaj. This plan shall be the basis for the integration of all forms of heritage into self-sustainable development programme and strategic plans at all levels of authority – the municipal, regional and state level. It will also serve as a basis for promoting natural, cultural and historical heritage, and for the nomination of the historic centre of Blagaj to the World Heritage List.

4 and 5 would include the implementation of the Management Plan for Blagaj and preparing individual projects for restoration and sustainable management .

7.7.2 Assessment of possibilities for attracting investments

The Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is legally responsible to provide financial measures for protection and rehabilitation of the National Monuments. Other possible Investors might be the private sector, local

authority and investment organizations. The method of attracting the possible Investors and the procedure of conservation of the building have not been defined.

7.7.3 Assessment of possibilities for recovering investments.

Collective cost-benefit approach through tourism revenues will provide resource for the maintenance; through entry fees and selling of cultural souvenirs and guidebooks.

An assessment of possibilities for recovering investments has not been done.

7.7.4 Have you already tried to raise funds for this site or monument? 7.7.5 Have you already received funds for this site or monument?

The Commission to Preserve National Monuments launched in 2003 the Campaign for Heritage at Risk, with an aim to raise funds for the monuments listed at heritage at risk list. The Historic Urban Area of Blagaj is one of the monuments listed in the Commission's List for endangered monuments.

7.8 Management

The Historic Urban Area of Blagaj is a monument that should be preserved as a monument of a place, history and nature.

Management layout:

- The Commission to Preserve National Monuments is responsible for drafting the protection measures of the National Monument.
- The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the relevant Ministry are responsible for issuing approval for rehabilitation.
- A team of experts for protection is responsible for implementation of the restoration and conservation works.

A Management Plan should be prepared in order to determine the conditions for preserving the values of the Urban area of Blagaj, not only to preserve the structures' physical state from ruin and changes, but also to improve the visual characteristics, to prevent the impact of negative environmental factors, to promote ways of presenting the significance of Blagaj to residents and visitors, to determine a strategy for sustainable tourist development and to outline a sustainable approach to social and economic regeneration. The Management Plan should determine in detail competence and responsibilities for implementation of the Plan in regard to the existing institutional framework.

Following the inclusion of the Mostar Historic Centre on the World Heritage List, Blagaj is in an area that has become a world tourist destination; the profit generated by tourism with help to secure further protection and maintenance of the Blagaj.

8. Documentation

PTA is supported by photographs, Plan of the Blagaj Historic area and Map of the entire town of Blagaj.

9. Feasibility Studies

A feasibility study for Blagaj should include the following:

- the need to survey and analyses of structures that might collapse if urgent protection measures are not undertaken;
- the need to implement urgent protection measures to the structures in need;
- the need for a conservation plan for the site;
- the need for a management plan, including conservation plan, for the site.

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sign and date: Sarajevo, 21st of April 2006.

APPENDIX





A joint initiative of the European Commission
and the Council of Europe

Une initiative conjointe de la Commission européenne
et du Conseil de l'Europe



European Commission
Commission Européenne
Directorate General for Education and Culture
Direction Générale de l'Éducation
et de la Culture



Education and Culture

Culture 2000



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Programme de Coopération et d'Innovation Europeennes



Technological Cooperation and Consultancy Programme