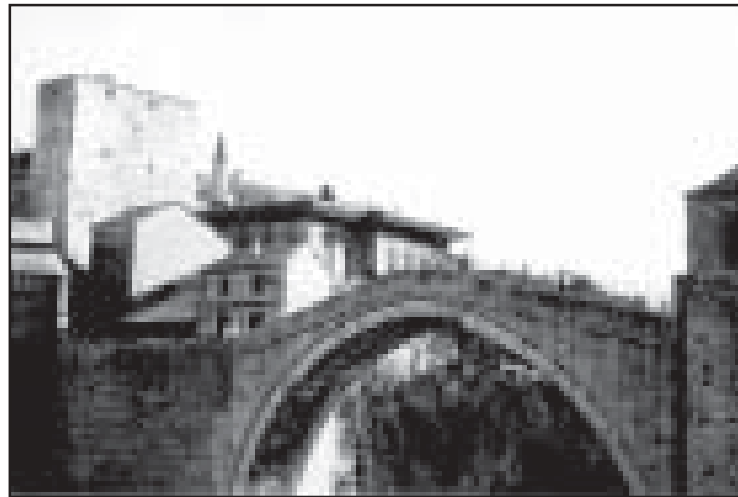
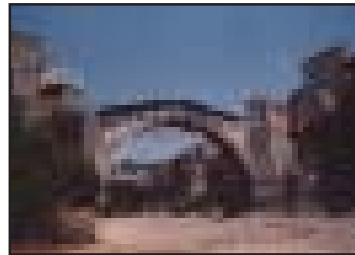
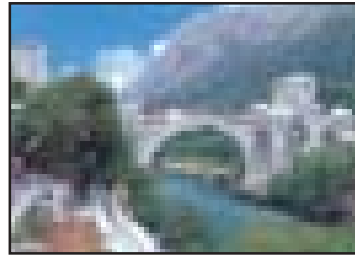
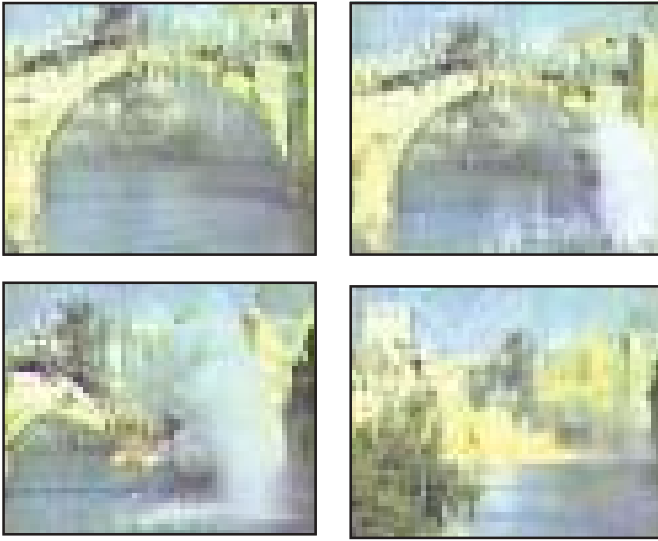


Hagia Sophia

Istanbul, April 2004.





## Important data about Old bridge

Year of construction: 1566

Beginning of the destruction : 8th May 1993

**The day of destruction of Old Bridge: 9th Novembre 1993**

The number of shelled grenades against the Old Bridge arch during 8th May 1993 and 9th May 1993: 68 tank grenades

### TECHNICAL DATA:

Span upstream: 28.71 m

Span downstream: 28.62 m

Width of the bridge: 3.95 – 4.05 m

The shape of the vault: elliptical shape similar to circle

The number of stone blocks in the vault: 459 pieces of stone blocks

Constant weight of the vault: 90 cm

The stone type out of which the Old Bridge was made: Tenelija (\*limestone) The biggest treated blocks built in the bridge – size 206 x 50 x 90 cm

The manner of linking of the stone blocks in the bridge – in every

radial coupler as a link between the two adjacent layers have been mounted the metal -thorns- of wrought iron sizing 30 x 30 x 40 mm

and having length 160 – 220 mm. The iron thorns have been mounted upwards

to the coupler level and they have been cast with lead.

Specific weight: 190 t/m<sup>3</sup>

The road paved with cobblestones and the fill – 230 t/m<sup>3</sup>

### WEIGHT OF THE BRIDGE

Weight of the bridge/Valut: 101.30 t

Weight of the bridge/ Fill: 237.50 t

Weight of the bridge/Lateral walls: 40.52 t

Weight of the bridge/Fence, \*: 10.46 t

Weight of the bridge/Road surface construction, the road paved with cobblestones: 25.76 t

Weight of the bridge/Iron fence: 1.29 t

Weight of the bridge/Verticals: 0.15 t

Weight of the bridge/Truss bracing, slanted bars: 0.18 t

Overall weight of the Old Bridge: 417.16 t

### RESTORATION WORKS BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD BRIDGE:

1956: Restoration of the foundations – the works have been ended in 1957. Contractors:

-Geotehna- from Zagreb, Ph. D. L. Maric, Ph. D. D. Krsmanovic.

Investor: Municipality Mostar 1963: Works in the vault injection

– Realization: Ph. D. D. Krsmanovic,

Ph. D. Hamidovic, Ph. D. Langof, professor Gojkovic, professor Celic, professor Maric.

Investor: Municipality Mostar

1970: Restoration of the vault, the change of the damaged blocks upstream and in the vault,

Realization: professor L. Maric architect D. Pasic, professor S.

Rajkovic, professor H. Dizdarevic Contractor: Lulic M. Investor:

Institute for Urban Planning – Mostar

1981-1983: Investigation of foundations and the restoration works: Realization: professor

L. Maric, architect D. Pasic, geodesist A. Markotic: Investor: Working Organization

-Stari grad- from Mostar, Working Organization – Hidroelektrane- Contractors:

-Geotehna- from Zagreb

1987: Restoration works at the road surface construction – the road paved with cobblestones





## SAFET ORUČEVIĆ: OLD BRIDGE - MONUMENT OF PEACE

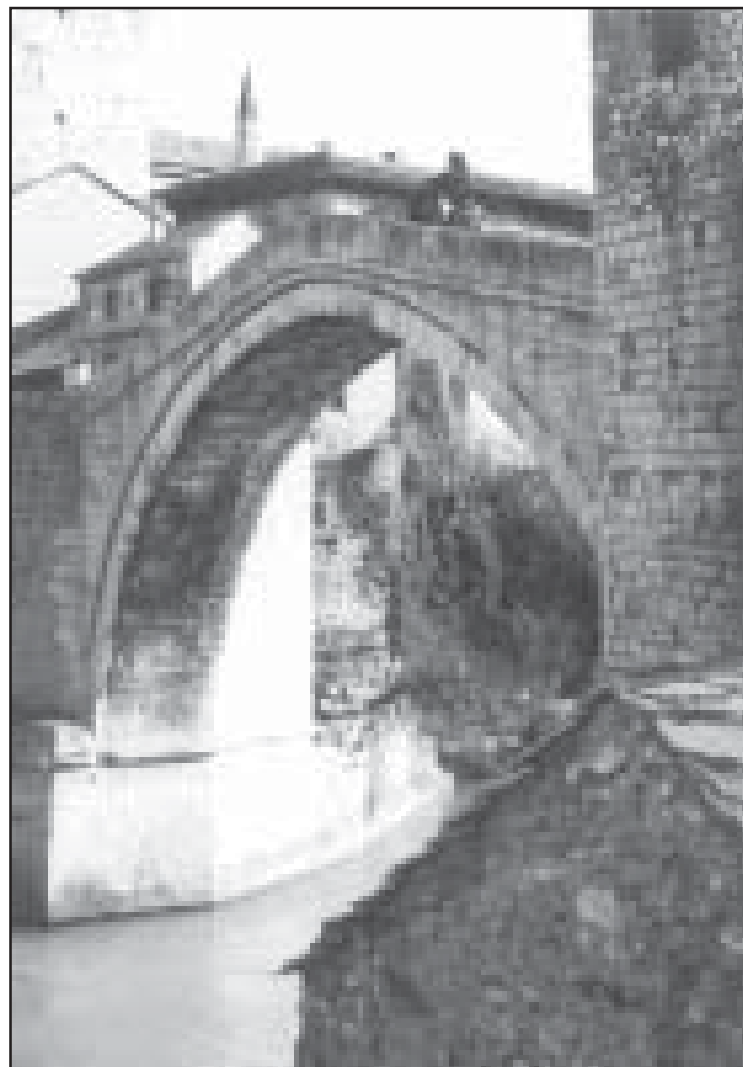
Center for Multiethnic Co-Operation in Mostar started an initiative for organizing an exhibition “Old Bridge - Monument of Peace”. As the mayor of Mostar from 1994 until 2001 I was permanently seeking for all possible ideas to re-establish life, to bring back trust and to re-unite the city by understanding and forgiving one another. Old Bridge became a symbol of destruction, hatred and crime in the previous war.

We had an opportunity to reconstruct this famous bridge immediately after the war, but as the authorities of the eastern part of Mostar. Such kind of reconstruction would have taken away all beauties of that bridge. Those beauties belonged to citizens of all confessions and nations in Mostar. Therefore, I made a decision that the Bridge would not be built without a common participation of Croats and Serbs. I refused a concrete proposal of the President Demirel for Turkey to reconstruct Old Bridge by itself. That way I hindered that Old Bridge became a symbol of one single nation and of one part of the divided town. I offered this program to be a symbol that would gather all nations of BiH and many other friendly countries.

That idea was supported by UNESCO and World Bank as well as by many other countries and leaders that wanted to get involved in this project.

I was convinced that all citizens from former Yugoslavia were strongly connected to the image of Old Bridge because it represented ancient values of BiH. Even in the most difficult times all political structures of BiH supported the idea of the reconstruction of Old Bridge.

This exhibition as mission of peace in cities of Southeast Europe and farther develops exactly an idea of connecting broken communications.



By reconstructing Old Bridge and its surroundings we are re-establishing human values and norms that overcome religious and ethnic barriers. We hope that this noble effort will succeed and that the Bridge will be a true symbol of peace. This brochure shows the chronology of highlights from 1995 until 2003 and the contribution of numerous individuals in the reconstruction of Old Bridge as a planetary monument of peace.

Predrag Matvejevic

## BRIDGE THAT CONNECTS EAST AND WEST

Old Bridge was the pride of our town – until we could call Mostar a town. We have been without both of them for a long time. Was Old Bridge really destructed and did that have to happen? Those questions have tortured me as a nightmare since the day it was finished off and knocked down with shells in November 1993. That day I started writing this essay and I finished it ten years after.

In the meantime, I watched the Bridge and its ruins with my eyes shut. I felt their presence even when I could not see them any more. “It is there and it will stay there”, my friends whispered, opposing the reality. We kept convincing ourselves that its absence was only illusory and temporary, in fact unreal.

I used to remember the beauty of our bridge for many times during the last years. The boldness of its construction, the whiteness of the stone it was cut from, the image of its arch by day and by night, in the sunlight that is stronger in this rocky region and in the moonlight that lights brighter in my homeland. It was erected under the Ottoman Empire, in 1566 after the Christian Calendar, and in 944 after the Islamic Hegira. On the old table stood once: “It was built by a builder named Hajrudin, during the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent”. The word *most* (“bridge”), the stem of the name Mostar, is common to all Slavic languages.

We used to call it “Old Man” as we would call our father or our friend. We met at “Old Man”, we bathed under “Old Man”, we discussed about “Old Man”, and the boldest of us jumped from “Old Man” into the Neretva, “the clearest river on Earth”. As a little boy I was convinced that the Neretva was greener than any other river. At its riverbanks there are high and sharp rocks called caves. Each one of them has its name, some even their nicknames: “*Zelenika*” where wild figs and bitter pomegranates grow, “*Suplja*” where there is a very dangerous maelstrom (or “*kapak*” in Mostar dialect), “*Veliki i Mali Sokol*” near the mouth of the Radobolja river and farther on “*Glavak*”

that looks like a pier in some small Adriatic port. On the opposite side there is “*Duradzik*” – boys used to prepare themselves for the jumps from the Bridge there. The boldest dared to jump on their head – that was called “the swallow jump”. Sea gulls landed on the surrounding cliffs and on the Bridge. They were different from river gulls.

There is the Adriatic Sea in the neighbourhood.

People of Mostar were proud of people coming from far away to see and to admire their bridge. Students used to jump “for free” sometimes, just to show to some foreigner what they were capable of. I remember peasants crossing the bridge with huge bags on their shoulders, sheep leaving white locks behind them, goats and their droppings, tireless and stubborn mules, thin and overtired donkeys, horseshoes that echoed and wooden slippers of women rattling on stony plates. All that surrounded with barren and here and there blue mountains. Down, by the river, everything heats, by the riverbed there are springs with melons cooling in them. In the summer the sun burns, in the winter storms arouse: “Wind, blow a little bit from the Neretva!” – that was a song that people used to sing in the summer, in the winter, when the sun burns and when a storm arouses.

Wars, conquests, furies, even earthquakes, so frequent at the Balkans, spared the Bridge for more than four centuries. “Serbs” destroyed surrounding bridges, “Croats” knocked down Old Bridge. I am putting these names into quotation marks – in order not to identify those Christian Taliban, who fired at a symbol of the Islamic civilization, with those Croats and Serbs who shed tears for Old Bridge and who were ashamed of it.

When you destroy some big monument, all that remains are stumps – as if they were stumps of a deformed child. At first it seemed to me as if the whole bridge had fallen, leaving nothing behind and pulling into the abyss even those caves and stony towers, “Tara” and “Halebija”, that had watched over it, and lumps of Herzegovinian soil that had stood right to it. On both sides scars left, the scars and nothing else.

Our “Old Man” was not only a plain bridge or just a monument. It served to all of us, it connected all of us, and we all belonged to it. We put memories of our ancestors in it and the new generations braced it. It did not connect just two

riverbanks, but the cardinal points of the world. The East and the West shook hands on it. It was possible to destroy it, but it was impossible to cancel it. It left with those ones who grew up, lived and died by it, or with those ones who just saw it and were admired for good. We hid from one another how much we mourned. And now, when it stands there again, leaned on both sides of the river, and when it looks just as it has looked like from the beginning, we are occupied with both grief and joy. I do not know which one of them prevails.

The reconstruction of Old Bridge is the fruit of will and sense that are opposed to hatred and evil. There is Old Bridge standing over our Neretva again.





Novembre, 1993.

## IVAN LOVRENOVIĆ REGARDING THE DESTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE



**Ivan Lovrenovic, Bosnian Writer** – (Text regarding the destruction of Old Bridge, published in the Magazine “BH Dani” under the title “SVIJET BEZ MOSTA”/“WORLD WITHOUT THE BRIDGE”)

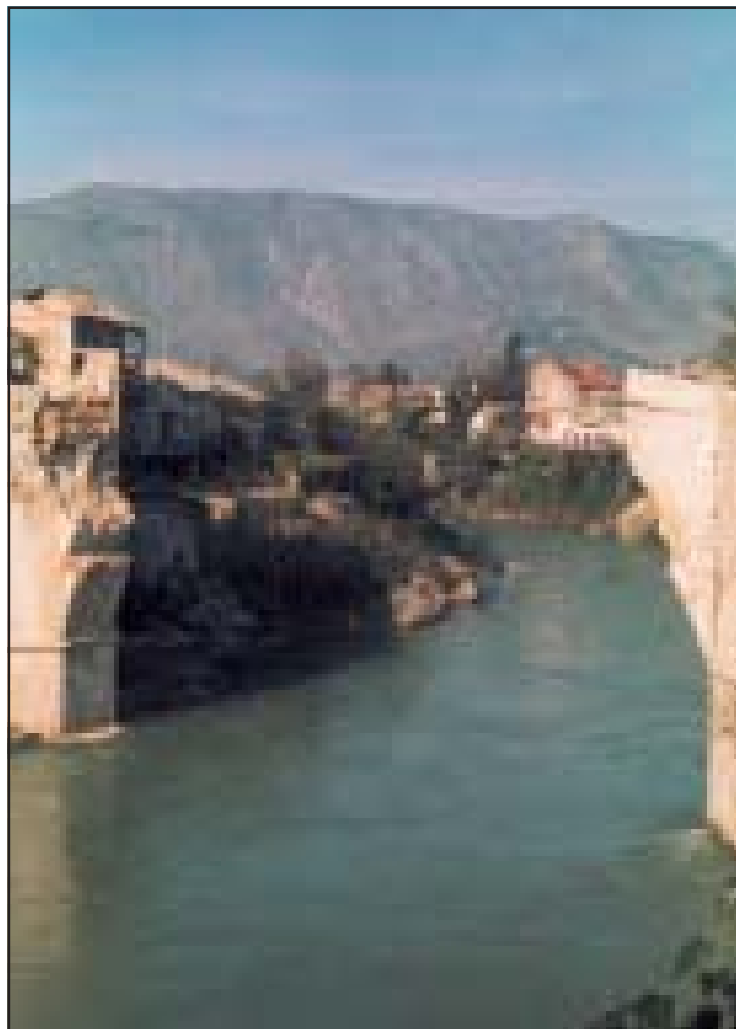
“Every crossing of Old Bridge in Mostar was each time wonderful; while the supple green mass of the Neretva flows deep under your legs, you feel that it is not the stone that holds you reliably in that bright space void. It is the pure thought that the stone turned into, becoming hard in the hands of the builder Hajrudin and his masters and turning into that slim white arch. You stand at the top, in the crown of the Bridge, the green flow of water under you, the blue endlessness of the Mediterranean sky above you; every part of your body is filled with a sweet anxiety from the touch with eternity... Yes, this bridge was a sacred place; a temple of unknown, universal energy with some simple ritual without words and gestures. A direct experience of light. In its fantastic appearance, in the incredibility of its hovering existence, it seemed for 427 years that it would disappear at this moment as if it had been a dream! After its perfect bond of incredibility and its firm achievement this bridge was one of the greatest architectural wonders of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. /.../ Sense and spirit of Bosnia are compressed in the image and sense of Old Bridge. The essence of a bridge is meeting and connecting, opposite to differing and dividing... If the Croatian name still means something, if the Croatian pride really has its spiritual and historical substance, then they can only be rescued with decisive and efficient denial from these barbarians whose acts are even worse, if they are done in the name of the Croats and their national interests. /.../ Only the biggest and the rarest human accomplishments touched by a pure spirit of creation become achievements of the planetary treasury. Old Bridge in Mostar was such an achievement. It was one of the rare places of universal beauty and universal sanctity. Whoever destroyed it, excluded himself from the world of sense and culture, he perpetrated a crime of planetary sacrilege: the world without Old Bridge is not complete.

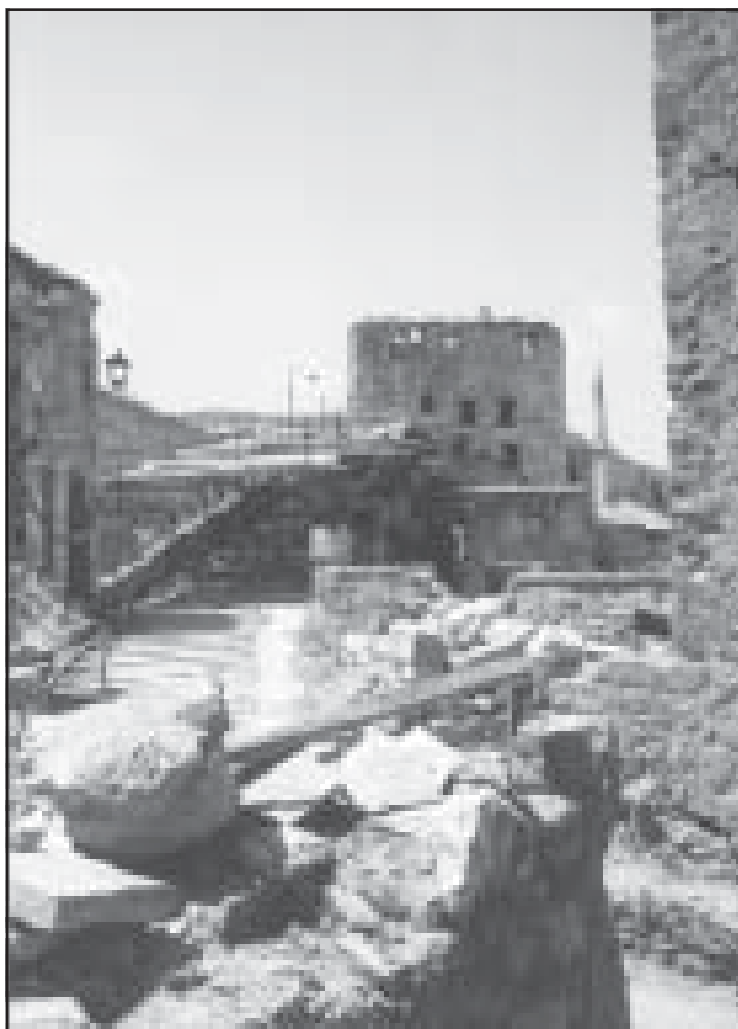
November, 11. 1993.

## GOJKO BERIĆ: RIPPED OUT HEART

One Tuesday afternoon, a young man wearing a uniform brought me a letter from Mostar. It was Indir Kurtović, an exile from Gacko, who until recently fought in Mostar war-zone, together with his brother. He didn't know that a few hours ago, the Old Bridge toppled down into Neretva. Could have they destroyed it? – he asked in surprise, sat down and reached out for a cigarette. He witnessed the event when the stone half-moon was hit by a tank shell for the first time. Citizens of Mostar who lived just near by, in the cellars of destroyed houses, came running to the Bridge. «Let everything happen, just don't let them destroy our Old Bridge» - they were saying on the edge of despair. They were ready to die together with it. Kurtović told me that a young man of Croatian nationality, a soldier of the Republican Army, was the first one killed on the Bridge. He was shot by a sniper from the west side. It happened on 9 May, when the troupes of Croatian Defense Army attacked the center of the city. One young man from Mostar was killed maybe by another young man from Mostar. Perhaps they have once stood together and talked about this unavoidable, miraculous bridge. This war is incredibly cruel. And it is incredibly cruel because it is led between the people who until yesterday have not even been divided by their homes' door-steps and not to mention some other boundaries.

Citizens of Mostar, on the left side of Neretva, where the sun rises, today live in hell, described as the end of civilization by foreign reporters. They are getting killed and die every day, but they have proclaimed only Tuesday as the day of grief. That is because their heart was ripped out with the death of the Old Bridge. Lučki, Tito's and Carinski bridges were also used to get from one bank of Neretva to the other. But crossing over the Old Bridge was something special, almost ritual, like entering into imperial yard. For them, it was the same as the Notre Dame for citizens of Paris or the St.Vlaho's Church, the fortress «Minčeta» and «Knežev Dvor» altogether for the citizens of





Dubrovnik. Even more than that – the Old Bridge was their joint identification, regardless of their religion or nationality, or the fact that they were either poor or rich, half-literate or educated, happy or unhappy.

Every citizen of Mostar, wherever they were, cried after finding out that the Old Bridge has gone into legend. And every Muslim cried because the work of the constructor Hajrudin was a symbol of a centuries old Muslim history, culture and civilization.

The Government of BiH gave an announcement saying that the Old Bridge did not fall in vain «if the international community gets to understand the difference between the aggression and the fight for freedom». What a senseless statement of some clerk, deprived of every human emotion. Because, the Old Bridge is, in the first place, the matter of emotions. Whoever did not feel that structure as a living man, as an immortal historical person, is not up to dealing with it.

Gentlemen, the Old Bridge, did fall in vain!

April, 1996.

## VESNA PUSIC: THE DESTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

**Vesna Pusic** (April 1996, “Erasmus”): The destruction of Old Bridge is a very good example because it is a crime of big symbolical importance. Croatian soldiers who fired at Old Bridge and their commanders who issued that order perpetrated the crime. Their crime against the Bosniak people is immense: by destroying Old Bridge, they destroyed an element of historical identity of that nation, a magnificent proof of their skill and continuity of civilization. Their crime was aimed against the humanity too: by destroying Old Bridge, they destroyed a wonderful monument of human creativity and fancifulness. It overcomes nations, states and historical epochs.

But, above all, their crime was brutally directed against the Croatian people: by destroying Old Bridge, they destroyed a symbol of Mostar for Croats of Mostar and for all Croats. Mostar

was always a Croatian town too; not only because of its architectural and natural beauties was it a privileged place of living and homeland of Croats too, but also because of a possibility of a civilization step towards other kind of civil existence of different nations, a vision which is so remote to other many other places of this region. But beside this common loss for all of us, they besmirched the name of Croats. They wanted to put the blemish of uricide and culturocide on the Croat people. Therefore, it is up to Croats to condemn this crime first and to save its dignity which was so brutally assaulted by the destructors of Old Bridge in Mostar.

I am sure that there are a lot of individuals among other nations in this war who want to deny crimes perpetrated in their name. It is up to them to do that by themselves. It is up to us to deny our criminals and their crimes which they want to cover with the Croat name.”

November, 26. 1993.

## **PROTEST OF THE CROATIAN SOCIETY OF HISTORIANS OF ART REGARDING THE DESTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE**

Having human tragedy always on our mind and not forgetting human casualties, the dead, invalids and the wounded, sympathizing deeply with all who are suffering poverty and famine, siege and refuge – in the name of the life decent to a human, historians of art of Croatia express their deepest disgust and their merciless condemnation of the barbaric destruction of Old Bridge in Mostar.

We condemned with same bitterness the shelling of the Renaissance Dome of the Cathedral in Sibenik 1991 and now we are reacting to the destruction of Old Bridge. We did not protest then because the Cathedral of Sibenik was a Croatian monument of culture, but because it was primarily a unique monument of the European culture.





The destruction of Old Bridge, a magnificent monument of culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina, after almost a half of a millennium of its existing, is a tragic event for all civilized world. The Old Bridge being a unique example of the European architecture of the 16<sup>th</sup> century after boldness and beauty of its construction and being a monument of human invention, knowledge and creativity, was a real proof that a civilized person can bridge incredible gaps. It practically served as a connection of two riverbanks, but symbolically it was a monument of the Islamic civilization in Christian surroundings, as Hajrudin's project carried out by masters from the island of Korcula – it connected two cultural circles and proved the possibility of co-existence of different faiths and nations of this region. It was a monument of understanding, ending as a victim of intolerance and hatred. The proud and triumphal arch of reason fell in front of the brutality of madness.

We do not know if we can ever find out the name of the deranged person who fired the first shell towards the Bridge and the person who fired the last one, but we know that they belong to dark forces which have written a destructive history of mankind, just in opposite to a constructive and humanistic history.

We are truly sympathizing with peoples of BiH in their misfortune of losing Old Bridge. It was their common symbol and a sign of identity. We hope and we believe that all freedom-loving and humanistic forces in BiH will use this moment as a motive and stimulus for re-establishing of interpersonal relations, reconciliation and life decent to every human.

**Prof. Dr. Radovan Ivancevic, President of the Society of Art Historians of Croatia**

July, 23. 1994.

## ORUČEVIĆ: NO RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE WITHOUT SERBS AND CROATS

The EU has founded the administration for Mostar in order to reconstruct the city and to provide political conditions for its reunion.

Hans Koschnick was the first European Administrator for Mostar. For the first time after the destruction of Old Bridge, German Minister of Foreign Affairs Klaus Kinkel and the presidents of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, Franjo Tudjman and Alija Izetbegovic and the mayors of the western and eastern part of the city, Mijo Brajkovic and Safet Orucevic crossed the chain bridge in the vicinity of destroyed Old Bridge.

The European Administrator Hans Koschnick made an offer to the mayor of East Mostar Safet Orucevic that the EU reconstructs destroyed Old Bridge. The Croatian side did not accept its participation in that project so that the mayor Orucevic finally denied Koschnick's offer pointing out that Old Bridge of Mostar represents a symbol that belongs to all nationalities in BiH and that it has to be reconstructed by a joint project only.

December, 1. 1995.

## DECISION TO RECONSTRUCT OLD BRIDGE

When the war in BiH was over and the Dayton Peace Accord in BiH was undersigned, on November 1, 1995 President of the City Council of Mostar and Mayor of East Mostar Safet Orucevic signed a decision about the beginning of the reconstruction of Old Bridge that was destroyed during the war, on November 9, 1993.

In a letter that was addressed to all citizens of Mostar on December 1, 1995 the mayor Orucevic announced the beginning

of preparations for the Old Bridge reconstruction «*The Bridge will be built in a same way as 427 years ago. Parts of Old Bridge will be taken out of the Neretva river and built into the new arch of the Bridge. Stone cutter, who will be carving "tenelija"*<sup>1</sup>, will observe from the scaffolds of Old Bridge the birth of the new Mostar, a city that has always represented harmony of civilizations.

<sup>1</sup> Special kind of stone used for the erection of the Old Bridge





December, 1995.

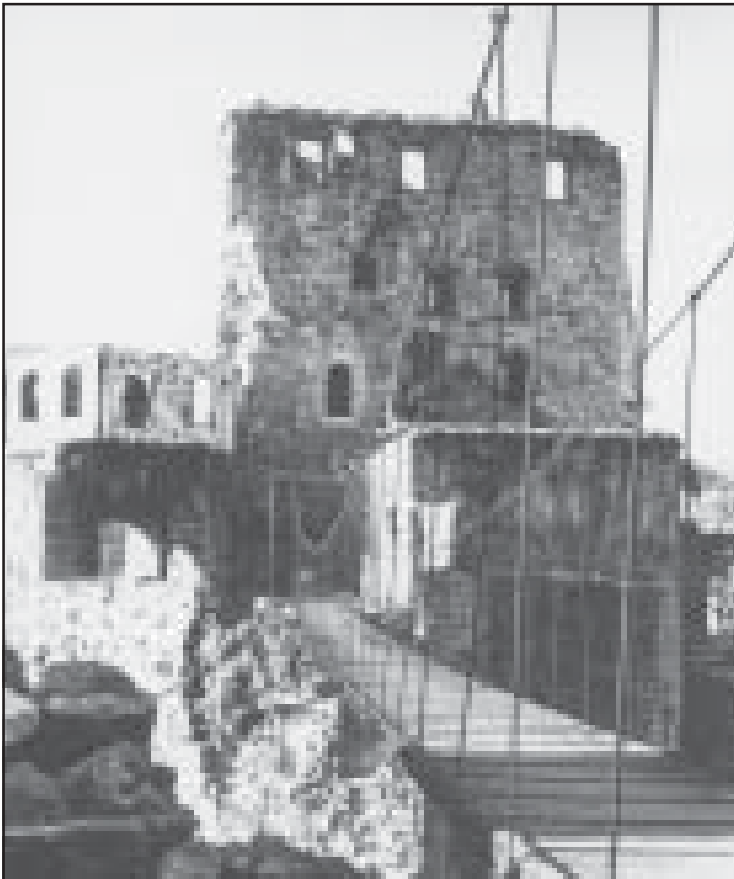
## VACLAV HAVEL VISITED THE DESTROYED OLD BRIDGE

Czech President Vaclav Havel visited destroyed Old Bridge in December 1995. Together with the mayors of East and West Mostar, Safet Orucevic and Mijo Brajkovic, President Havel crossed the chain bridge that was erected in the place of the destroyed arch of Old Bridge.

January, 1996.

## PHILLIPE MORILLON VISITED THE RUINS OF OLD BRIDGE

Chief-Commander of the UN troops in BiH, French General Phillipe Morillon, visited during January 1996 the ruins of Old Bridge in Mostar.



June, 18. 1996.

## FIRST DONATION TO RECONSTRUCT OLD BRIDGE

His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Turkey Suleyman Demirel, and the President of Presidency of BiH Alija Izetbegović signed on June 18, 1996 a Protocol containing the 1 million US dollars financial support of Turkey for starting activities on the reconstruction of Old Bridge.

This protocol was undersigned in Mostar during President Demirel's visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

During the visit the President Demirel offered that Turkey reconstructs destroyed Old Bridge as a part of their cultural heritage. The mayor of East Mostar Safet Orucevic refused that offer referring that the reconstruction of Old Bridge had to be a joint activity of all peoples living in Mostar. That is a focal



point for all nationalities in Mostar to reconcile and to cross Old Bridge towards peace and prosperity.

President Demirel informed in a letter from November 17, 1997 addressed to president Izetbegovic that Turkey had paid in the grant of one million US dollars as a starting financial support for the preparation of the reconstruction.

Safet Oručević, at that time Deputy Mayor of Mostar, awarded Suleyman Demirel in June 1997 the First Builder of Old Bridge.

April, 21. 2001.

## DEMIREL SAID THAT TURKEY INTENDED TO RECONSTRUCT OLD BRIDGE ON THEIR OWN

Suleyman Demirel, at that time president Republic of Turkey and man who carry title of the First constructor announced first time in public that his and decision of Turkey was to construct the whole Old Bridge, but “later was decided that in realization of this project whole world may take a part in financing”. He said so in his interview for “Oslobodjenje” newspapers from Sarajevo on 21. April 2001.

**Suleyman Demirel:** “From the start we wanted to rebuilt the whole bridge, but later on it was decided that the whole world could participate in the financial realization of this project, said Suleyman Demirel at the end of our talk, with a promise that he would come to the opening ceremony of Old Bridge because it is his strong desire.”

November, 1. 1996.

## AMERICAN VICE PRESIDENT'S FOUNDATION JOINS THE OLD BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

Representatives of the American Foundation **COUNCIL FOR AMERICA'S FIRST FREEDOM**, whose President in





Honor is the American Vice-President Al Gore, had a meeting about joint activities on the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar. A prominent member of this Foundation is also Richard Holbrooke, the author of the Dayton Peace Accord. Carol O’Negus led the representatives of the Foundation.



December, 17. 1996.

## **RICHARD HOLBROOKE OFFERS HIS SUPPORT TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE**

The author of the Dayton Peace Accord Richard Holbrooke offered his support to COUNCIL FOR AMERICA’S FIRST FREEDOM in their efforts on reconstruction of Old Bridge. Holbrooke sent a letter to the Executive Director of the Council Carol O’Negus after the return of the delegation from Mostar. Richard Holbrooke states the following:

»Dear Carol, COUNCIL FOR AMERICA’S FIRST FREEDOM has made a great progress in its search for religious freedom and especially concerning the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar. Old Bridge is a symbolic bond for all peoples of Bosnia and former Yugoslavia. Its reconstruction could provide a new connection among all citizens of that country and truly, it would be a practical and a symbolical act as well. Since I was a witness to religious intolerance and hatred in Bosnia, I can understand that any symbol of recuperation could help the process of reconciliation and reconstruction in this country. The reconstruction of Old Bridge is such a symbol: it is a tangible effort for improving the reconstruction and reconciliation. As the Council Treasurer I am offering my support and trust to your efforts to continue this project. It is an international vote for religious freedom and its benefits.«

February, 4. 1997.

## STATE DEPARTMENT EXPRESSES ITS FULLY COMMITMENT TO OLD BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Carol O'Negus, Executive Director of the COUNCIL FOR AMERICA'S FIRST FREEDOM, sent a letter to the Mayor of Mostar Safet Oručević stating the support of the US State Department to the reconstruction of Old Bridge. O'Negus points out the following:

»After our visit we have been very active in the spreading of the plan we had made a draft of during our visit. The US State Department expresses its fully support to our efforts, and the Ambassador Holbrooke has joined the Council in order to help us in our efforts.«

American President Bill Clinton considers destroyed Old Bridge "a symbol of tragedy in the war in former Yugoslavia"



July, 2. 1997.

## INAUGURATION OF THE FOUNDATION *STARI MOSTAR* FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

The foundation for the reconstruction of Old Bridge was founded on July 2, 1997 in Mostar. At the inaugural ceremony of the Foundation *Stari Mostar* for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge the President of Presidency of BiH Alija Izetbegovic was appointed its president. The Deputy President is Haris Silajdzic, Co-Chairman of the Council of Ministers of BiH, and the President of the Administrative Board is the Mayor of



Mostar **Safet Orucevic**. Members of the Foundation Board are also the former Secretary of State **Cyrus Vance** who made a speech at the inaugural ceremony of the Foundation, Ms. **Bonnie Burnham**, President of the World Monuments Fund New York and **Ekhmelledin Ihsanoglu**, General Director of IRCICA.

**Extracts from the speeches made at the inaugural ceremony of the Foundation Stari Mostar for the Reconstruction of the Old Bridge:**



**»THIS IS MY FAVORITE FUNCTION IN LIFE«**

Speech of **Alija Izetbegovic**, President of Presidency of BiH

“It is a great honor to me that you gave me the satisfaction of being the president of such a important and noble foundation.

That will be my favorite function in life.

You watched together with me the scenes of the destruction of Old Bridge. They reminded me of cold and gloomy November days 1993: At the moment it seemed as if civilization had been defeated and the Middle Ages had triumphed. Our meeting together here shows that it is not the fact. The wheel of history that was turned back for a while goes forward again. Old Bridge and Old Town in Mostar will be reconstructed.

Looking those destruction scenes with you a moment ago I asked myself why they had done that. When I say “they” I do not mean Croats. Those are individuals among Croats who did not just embarrassed the Croat people but the whole human kind; therefore I just want to point out that I see here a great number of honest Croats; and when I say “us”, I do not mean only Bosniaks. I mean all people, Bosniaks also, all people who put themselves at the rampart of civilization. Fortunately, there are a lot of people from all over the world who are together with us now.

Therefore, we do not stand for divisions. Divisions are not good. But there is one division that makes sense and that will survive. That is the division between the people building and the people destroying bridges. That division is justified. We should be happy that we belong to the group that builds bridges.

At this moment I am announcing that the Foundation for the reconstruction of Old Bridge has been founded.”

### **“OLD BRIDGE SYMBOLIZES INTEGRATIONS”**

Speech of the Co-Chairman of the Council of Ministers  
**Haris Silajdzic**

“It has always seemed to me that Old Bridge has symbolized the integration of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It has always been connecting people, not only two riverbanks. I have always felt that that bridge had soul.

It was very hard being on the side that defended civilization, sense for beauty and tolerance. Those ones whose suffered the most tragic days of Mostar will know what I am saying, but I am also convinced that they would never take the place of people who were on the other side at that time and that they would not like to take the place of people who created hatred instead of peace, who rather destroyed bridges instead of building them. On that side where there is a paranoia that history has not started yet and that it will only start with them standing on that side. Bridges are built because of people who cross them. On both sides there are people who are going to cross the bridge - good will of those people will build bridges. Those ones who destroyed this bridge gave an image about themselves. There is a gap in their souls and you can see that in their eyes. They want the world to adjust to their gap. It is up to us to show and to prove that they lost the battle. It is up to us to help and to assist the reconstruction of this bridge. You were convinced how the Neretva river is beautiful. It still flows and our duty is to bring the Neretva its stone necklace for good.”

### **“BY RECONSTRUCTING OLD BRIDGE WE ARE DESTROYING ETHNIC BARRIERS”**

Speech of Dr. **Ekmelledin Ihsanoglou**, General Director of the Research Institute for the Islamic History, Arts and Culture

In this country people of different religions, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism have lived together in the atmosphere of mutual tolerance. The horrible war that was perpetrated



against Bosnia by opponents of peace and harmony destroyed that inheritance, physical infrastructure and architectural monuments. However, it could not destroy positive spirit and understanding that had been inherited from the historical experience.

Since the beginning of the war the Research Center for Islamic History, Arts and Culture (IRCICA) was given research projects, collected documentation and information programs in order to create an international co-operation supporting Bosnia and preserving its cultural and architectural heritage. One of those studies was focused on Old Bridge in Mostar being a rich example of the Bosnian heritage. A famous Turkish architect Hajrudin built it in 1566. That bridge has a special importance among the buildings of Old Town, most of them dating from the Turkish times. Besides, we also held a number of exhibitions of documents and illustrations all over the world and on various occasions. In the meantime according to resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic countries, the Research Center for Islamic History, Arts and Culture was entrusted studies in order to estimate the damage caused to the cultural heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

By reconstructing Old Bridge and its surroundings we are building again human values and norms that exceed religious and ethnic barriers. We hope that this noble effort will successfully reach its goals.”



## “OUR COLLECTIVE BELIEF IN THE SYMBOLICAL VALUE OF OLD BRIDGE”

Speech of the former US Secretary of State and Representative of World Monuments Fund **Cyrus Vance**

“Our collective belief in the symbolical value of Old Bridge cannot be so easily erased. That bridge has to be reconstructed because it is truly a part of the world’s most precious heritage. At this historical crossroads we are facing an unpredictable task of the city reconstruction - by memory, by memory of places, purposes and relations of pre-war Mostar.

The reconstructed city of Mostar can serve as a vital bond between war and peace, between communities that were divided and between new and old generations of Bosnians who share a joint future. For a long time Bosnia has been caught in a circle of destruction that is reaching its end. With efforts like this, the international community can express its concern for the future and it can serve as a catalysator in order to begin the process of reconstruction using this moment and approaching it carefully and fully aware of its challenges and awards. Your work will help you draw a course towards recovery and permanent partnerships for Mostar abroad.

When Bosnia succeeds in this task, that will be a signal for the recovery of this land. For people being somewhere else, that will also be a signal on the way to a global goal of respecting each other’s cultural differences and working together productively.”

## “BRIDGE FOR 21st CENTURY”

Speech of the Mayor of Mostar **Safet Orucevic**

“Old Bridge is a symbol of the absurdity of war, aggression and destruction that Bosnia faced. Its destruction was a brutal message about an attempt to demolish all bridges between nations that have lived together for centuries in this country.

By reconstructing Old Bridge, we are sending a message that BiH has survived and that the strong will to live together has not been ruined. The Bridge will be reconstructed by all

nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina together and it will be their joint way to the future.

By its reconstruction, the Foundation *Stari Mostar* becomes a builder of bridges between peoples of this country. Friends from all over the world who join us, are going to become creators of peace, reconciliation and future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. They will build a bridge for 21<sup>st</sup> century.”

July, 2. 1997.

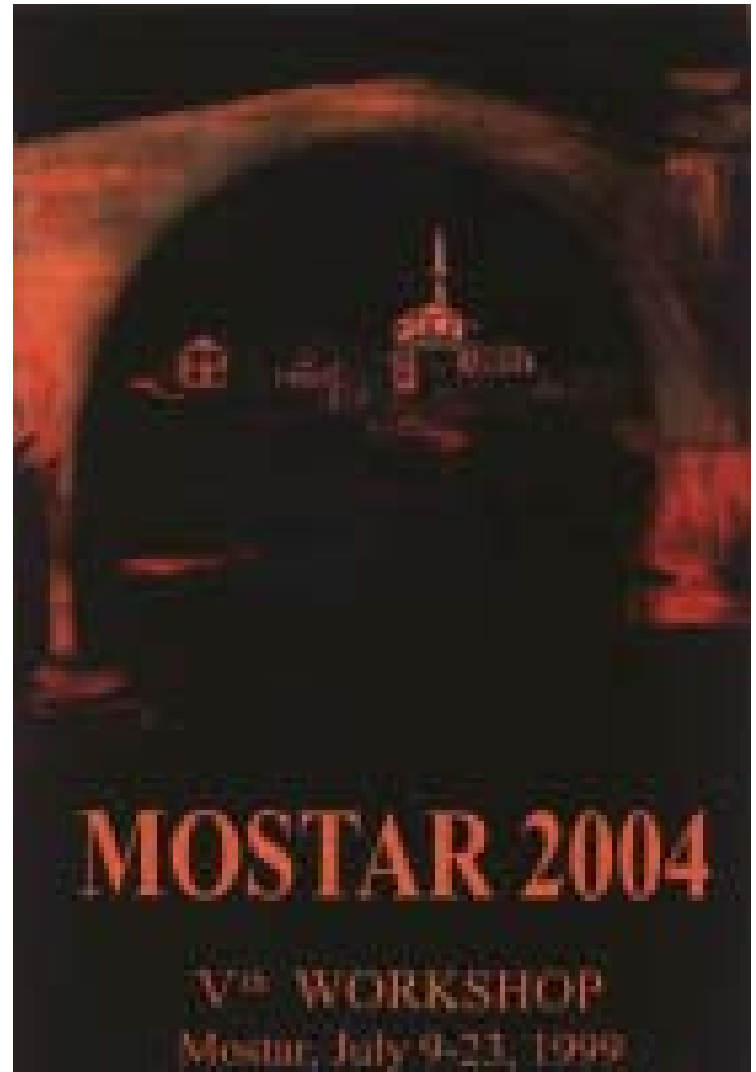
## WORKSHOP “MOSTAR 2004”: Architect AMIR PAŠIĆ AND A VISION OF THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MOSTAR BY 2004

From 2<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July 1997 a workshop “Mostar 2004” was held for the first time. The topic of the workshop was the reconstruction of Old Town in Mostar. The workshop “Mostar 2004” was created and initiated by Prof. Amir Pasic, an architect from Mostar, who had started some activities in the IRCICA during the war in order to attract the focus of that organization on Old Bridge and Old Town in Mostar.

The organizers of the workshop are the City of Mostar, IRCICA together with UNESCO, United Nations Development Program - New York, Aga Khan Trust for Culture - Geneva, World Monuments Fund - New York.

The former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, President of World Monument Fund, Bonnie Burnham, General Director of the IRCICA, Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, and representatives of faculties from 19 countries took part in workshop activities.

Pasic was awarded with the Aga Khan Award for his participation in documenting and preservation of the Old Town zone in Mostar. He is one of the most responsible persons for attracting the Aga Khan Trust and many other organizations to help reconstruct the zone of Old Town and Old Bridge in Mostar during the period 1996 - 2003.





August, 1997 – November, 1997.

## **FIRST RECONSTRUCTION PHASE: OPERATION OF TAKING OUT FRAGMENTS OF DESTROYED OLD BRIDGE FROM THE NERETVA**

### **August 1, 1997. : NATO AND SFOR JOINING THE FIRST RECONSTRUCTION PHASE**

The Mayor of Mostar Safet Orucevic invited the American General Eric Shinseki, Chief-Commander of the International Stabilization Forces in BiH (SFOR) that SFOR and NATO in BiH to join the reconstruction of Old Bridge. In his letter Orucevic pointed out that the participation of SFOR troops would be of a symbolical value regarding the role of SFOR in building bridges between nations of BiH. General Shinseki offered help of SFOR troops and a meeting with Hungarian engineer corps was held after a short time.

August, 21. 1997.

## **HUNGARIANS JOIN THE FIRST RECONSTRUCTION PHASE TOO**

Hungarian Minister of Defense announced the joining of Hungarian engineer corps to the operation of taking out the fragments (stones) of the destroyed arch of Old Bridge from the Neretva river.

September, 15. 1997.

## INSTALLING OF THE PLATFORM TO PUT FRAGMENTS OF THE ARCH OF OLD BRIDGE



Laying of the foundation for the platform that will serve to put aside the fragments of Old Bridge started on September 15, 1997. 30 cubic meters of sand for the platform foundation were delivered. 50 cubic meters of concrete will be spent to build the platform pillars that will have a cascade form, two of them in three lines each.

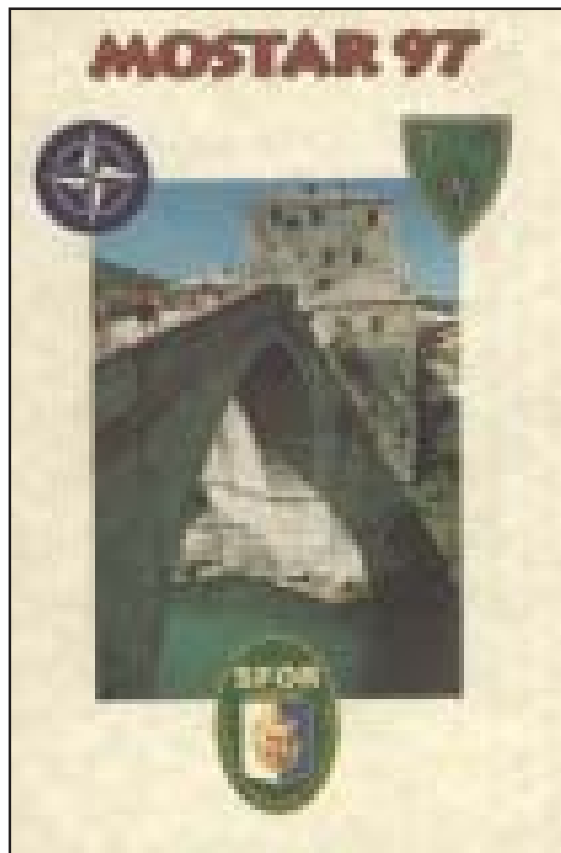
Platform dimensions are 12 x 24 meters. The platform was constructed for a capacity of 1,000 tons. This is the approximate weight of stones from the Old Bridge arch.

September, 26. 1997.

## SFOR CATALOGUE PUBLISHED / CEREMONY REHEARSAL

President Izetbegovic together with Cyrus Vance, President of World Monuments Fund, and other important persons supports the reconstruction idea. The reconstruction is an international effort to establish a multiethnic BiH. The role of SFOR signals the support of international community. Engineers from the SFOR headquarters will take the leading role to support the Foundation *Stari Mostar*... ..

*(Extracts of the published SFOR catalogue, September 26, 1997)*





September, 29. 1997.

## CEREMONY OF TAKING OUT THE FIRST STONE OF OLD BRIDGE



More than 150 media and TV networks witnessed the ceremony of taking out the first stone. The ceremony started at 1500 hrs. One group of TV crews containing around 50 media crews came already at 1200 hrs by SFOR plane to the Airport of Mostar and after the SFOR press conference they reached Old Bridge. At 1300 hrs the second press conference of SFOR and the City of Mostar was organized. High representatives of the international community, President of Presidency of BiH Alija Izetbegovic, Croatian member of Presidency Kresimir Zubak, numerous ambassadors and representatives of diplomatic corps, SFOR, General Shinseki, Chief-Commander of SFOR, and others witnessed the ceremony. The ceremonial act of taking out the stone of Old Bridge symbolizes the beginning of reconstruction. That was announced in the speeches of the Chief-Commander of the Multinational Division Southeast, French General De Lange, and the President of Presidency of BiH, Alija Izetbegovic.

The first stone that was taken out weighed 5 tones and it was put on the special platform near Old Bridge.



## SPEECHES MADE AT THE CEREMONY OF TAKING OUT THE FIRST STONE OF OLD BRIDGE:

SYMBOL OF PEACE IN BIH - Address of the French General De Lange, Chief-Commander of the Multinational Division Southeast

“Monday, September 29, 1997 marks a very important stage in the reconstruction process of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Taking out the first stone of Old Bridge represents for myself and for the whole Multinational Division Southeast an evident, tangible sign of our participation in the reconstruction of this land, devastated by a war.

Besides the symbol of the real construction of the bridge that begins today, I would like to emphasize that our participation is a result of efforts and sacrificing of soldiers of all nations

who changed here in Mostar and BiH in order to give a contribution to establish and to maintain peace.

We could not stay inactive when we faced this project. I would like to thank the Hungarian contingent for the work they have done.

Now, I am inviting you to witness the operation of taking out the first stone of Old Bridge. I express my wish that after this first stage, woven of patience and experience, comes the phase of building so that we all can come here on day again and cross this river over reconstructed Old Bridge, symbol of bonds which should connect two banks of the Neretva, symbol of Bosnia-Herzegovina in peace.

#### **BEGIN OF RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE - SPEECH OF PRESIDENT ALIJA IZETBEGOVIĆ**

“I am going to be short because I am, just like you, very excited. This is not only a big day for Mostar, but for whole Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is a big day for all those ones, who stand for civilization. I will remind you of that cold November morning almost four years ago when impossible, incredible news about killing Old Bridge reached me. I am saying “killing” because this incomparable monument has soul. We began dreaming this day. We believed that it would come because we have believed in Bosnia. But, being honest to you, I can tell that I even could not dream that so many people will gather here, by this noble bridge, today.

Besides, we all understood well, and those ones who destroyed the Bridge and we who are reconstructing it now that it represents a symbol of connections; not only between peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but between East and West.

Therefore, I would like to thank you all who have come to this holiday of civilization to share the more noble tomorrow at this joint prayer, if I can name it so. A special gratitude to our Hungarian friends from the International Division Southeast who contributed this noble process to begin.

This way we are denying the inhuman doctrine about the clash of civilizations. That theory uses everything to justify barbarities, in the past and in the future. On the contrary it is obvious that human solidarity is stronger than us and that it will soon triumph. This is the dimension of this day. I congratulate you on our today’s joint holiday.”



November, 21. 1997.

## THE LAST STONE IN THE ARCH OF OLD BRIDGE TAKEN OUT

In the night of November 21, at 0130 hrs the last stone of the arch of Old Bridge was taken out of the Neretva. That was the end of the operation of taking out the fragments of Old Bridge out of the Neretva river that started on September 29.

In this period all stones of Old Bridge that was on the bottom of the Neretva riverbed were taken out - 158 pieces that were put on a platform, especially constructed for this purpose. The last fragment that was taken out weighs 60 tons.



October, 10. 1997.

## JAVIER SOLANA GAVE HIS SUPPORT TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

General Secretary of NATO Javier Solana gave his support to the reconstruction of Old Bridge. The NATO troops help this bridge be reconstructed. The reconstruction of the bridge is a peak of the unity of the city and trust between nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina.



October, 1997.

## BUILDING OF TRUST

*(Extracts from the text of Safet Orucevic about the Old Bridge reconstruction published in the magazine for culture, science and social issues »MOST«, double issue for October and November 1997)*

“Both Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks and Jews are connected to Old Bridge. In the radius of around 100 meters from Old Bridge there are old Orthodox Church, New Orthodox Church,

Synagogue and Episcopal Palace. Around 100 meters westwards there are Franciscan Monastery and a catholic church. In the same radius there are some of the oldest mosques and Moslem schools. The act of reconstruction of this zone is a practical and symbolical act of establishing a historical connection between East and West, between different religions and cultures which were connected with Old Bridge for centuries. This reconstruction will symbolically unify the peoples of Bosnia-Herzegovina - that will be their message of peace and joint future..."

November, 1997.

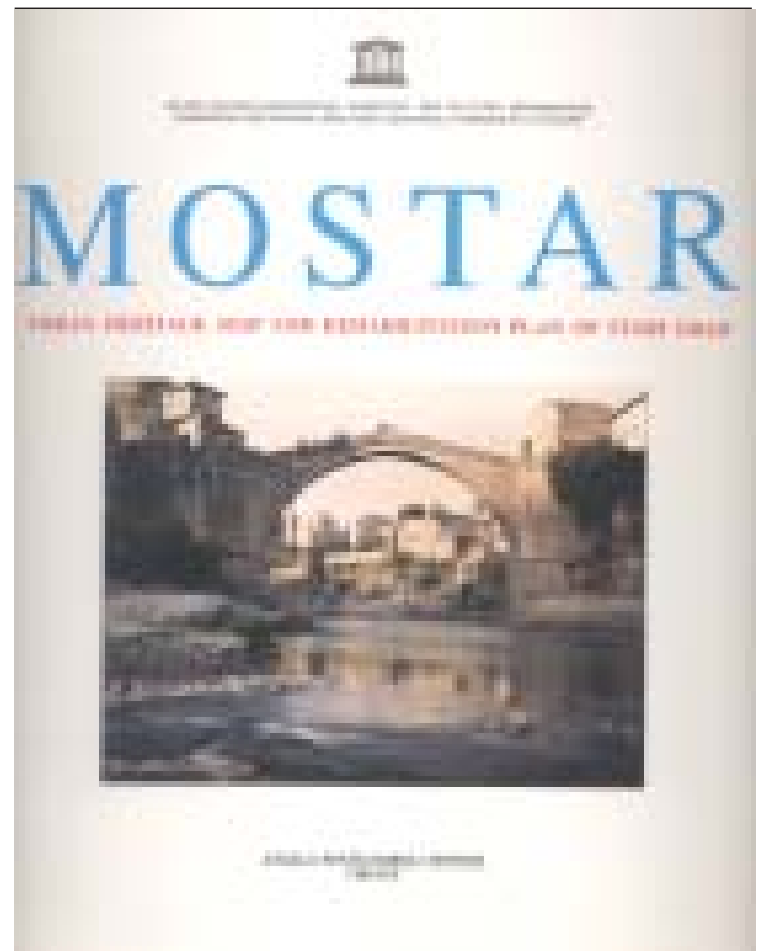
## A UNESCO BOOK ON REHABILITATION OF OLD BRIDGE AND OLD TOWN OF MOSTAR PUBLISHED

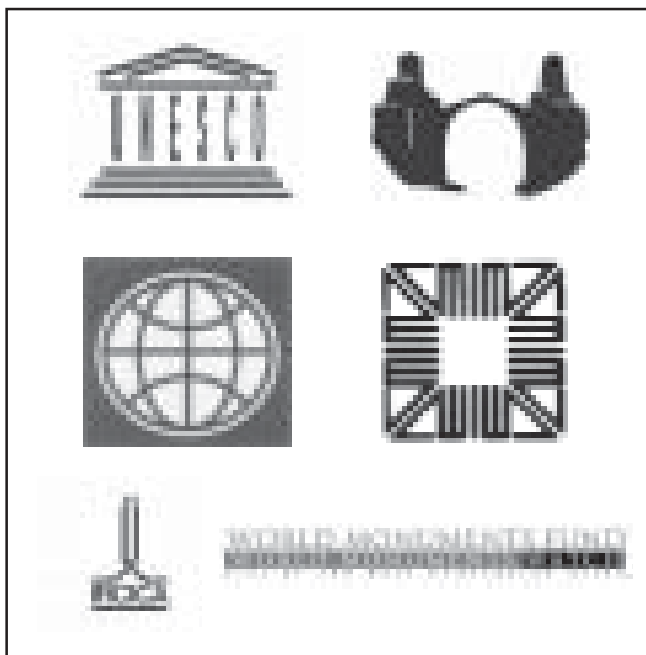
### "BIG HELP OF ITALY"

Foreword of **Federico Mayor**,  
General Director of UNESCO

"Mostar, the biggest town of Herzegovina and the second biggest town in the whole country has many outrageous buildings and monuments which are grouped together in a very harmonious town entity which has been shaped for centuries by geographical surroundings and economic activities. Up to the modern times that town has preserved its genuine character as an important handicraft and trade center. Old Town preserved its medieval profile.

Thanks to an abundant financial support of the Italian Government (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and a close co-operation of Italian experts and the City Council and experts of Mostar, UNESCO has developed a plan for preserving and improving Old Town of Mostar. It is our firm hope and belief that this plan will provide a basis for the revitalization of Mostar for the benefit of its citizens and those ones who stand for the joint cultural heritage."





## “MOSTAR IS A SYMBOLICAL TOWN”

Foreword of **Lamberto Dini**,  
Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs

...Therefore, I am very satisfied that co-operation and united efforts of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the City Council of Mostar, University of Florence and all other institutions involved in this initiative enabled this project to work in a very short time. This project is of a vital importance for preservation and reconstruction of the cultural heritage of Mostar.

Taking into consideration that Mostar has always been a symbolical town that embodied a peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups, I have to point out a political value and a social importance of this project. That is the subject of this meeting. The project is a result of a joint co-operation of representatives of communities of Mostar and it is important for next phases of development - a very important period of reconciliation which will enable the citizens of Mostar to get over their mistrust in order to create a priceless joint blessing that symbolizes Mostar.”



## CREATION OF THE FIRST GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ON RECONSTRUCTION OF ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

For the first time in history a partnership for the reconstruction of buildings of architectural heritage was initiated by the Mayor of Mostar Safet Orucevic in March 1998. Main pillars of the Global Partnership for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge were UNESCO, City of Mostar and World Bank. Numerous states are involved in the project: Italy, Netherlands, Turkey, France, Luxembourg, Croatia and many organizations such as: IRCICA, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, World Monument's Fund – New York etc.

This was the beginning of the realization of an idea that Old Bridge becomes a focal point for co-operation programs among the countries of former Yugoslavia.

**March, 5. 1998.**

### **UNESCO AND WORLD BANK TOGETHER: APPEAL FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE**

General Director of UNESCO Federico Mayor and the Mayor of Mostar Safet Oručević met in Paris, the headquarters of UNESCO, and agreed principles of a joint APPEAL FOR THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE. Mayor and Oručević agreed the fundamental issues of the Global Partnership Project and establishing of an international UNESCO team of experts. The Mayor Orucevic suggested that the UNESCO Commission of Experts includes experts from Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade too in order to reestablish connections between the countries founded after the war in Southeast Europe.



**March, 30. 1998.**

### **PRINCESS MARIA THERESA OF LUXEMBOURG SUPPORTS THE RECONSTRUCTION OF MOSTAR**

The Princess of Luxembourg and Ambassador of Good Will of UNESCO in Mostar had conversations on reconstruction of Old Bridge and Old Town in Mostar. This visit of Princess Maria Theresa resulted in the participation of Luxembourg in the reconstruction of Old Bridge zone and a UN donation for the reconstruction of »*Kriva ćuprija*«, a small bridge in the vicinity of Old Bridge.



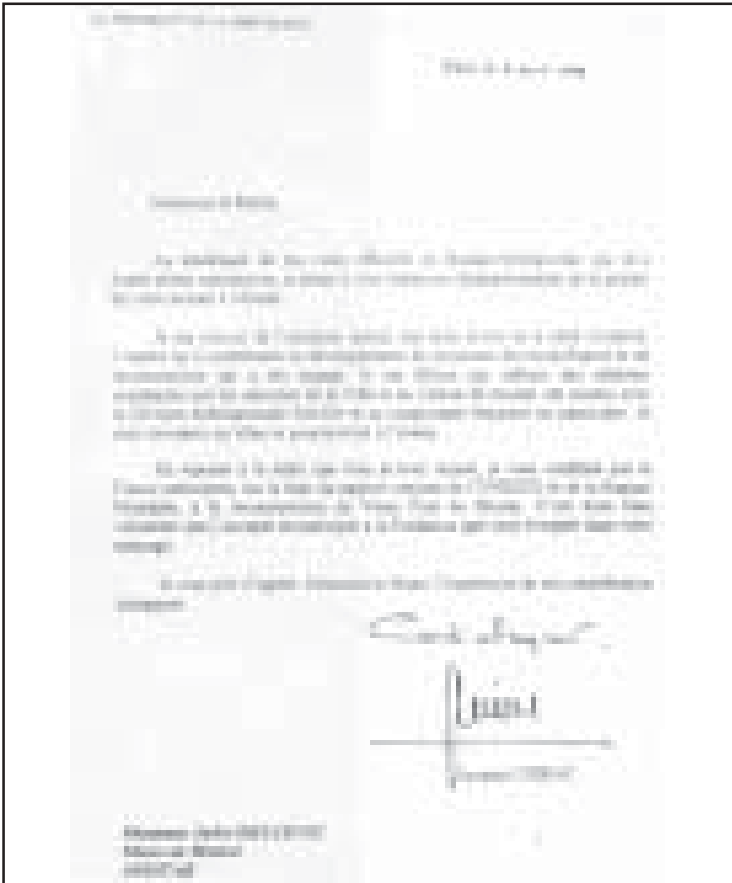


**April, 7 and 8. 1998.**  
**PRESIDENT CHIRAC A MEMBER**  
**OF THE FOUNDATION STARI**  
**MOSTAR FOR THE**  
**RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE**

During his visit to BiH, the President of the Republic of France Jacques Chirac was personally interested for the reconstruction of Old Bridge during his stay in Mostar. He also announced a participation of France in the project of its reconstruction. President Chirac named the Bridge “a symbol of peace and multiethnic society in Bosnia-Herzegovina”.

After his return to France, President Chirac sent a letter which contains his information that he was very glad to be a member of the Foundation *Stari Mostar* and a confirmation of the French participation in the reconstruction of Old Bridge.

“As an answer to your letter I confirm you that France will participate in the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar based on the co-operation of UNESCO and World Bank. I accept my membership in the Foundation you spoke about very gladly.”



**January, 10. 1998.**  
**THE NETHERLANDS BECOMES A**  
**BUILDER OF OLD BRIDGE**

Safet Orucevic sent a letter to the Minister of Development and Reconstruction of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Jan Pronk and started an initiative that the Netherlands becomes a builder of Old Bridge.

“I hope you will have trust in my initiative of the Netherlands becoming a Builder of Old Bridge. That would be a great stimulus to the international character of this project symbolizing peace and building of bridges between the nations of this country. I hope that Her Majesty Queen Beatrix and the Government of the Netherlands will approve their participation in the biggest project of establishing peace and multiethnic life in BiH.

Finally, I would like to point out that I am enthusiastic about young understanding of problems of Mostar – a city that represents the crystallization point of the Bosnian Federation.

April, 27. 1998.

## KING OF SPAIN PARTICIPATES IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

During the visit of **King Juan Carlos I.** to BiH in January 1998, the Mayor Safet Orucevic delivered the Spanish King a summons for Spain to participate the reconstruction of Old Bridge.

His Majesty, the King of Spain Juan Carlos confirmed a willingness of the Spanish Government to participate in the international project of the reconstruction of Old Bridge. His majesty feels a great deal of affinity to this project.

*»The reconstruction of Old Bridge, one of the most beautiful architectural achievements in BiH that had a fundamental historical importance, should naturally symbolize the spirit of peace and reconciliation. The Spanish Agency for International Co-Operation has begun a detailed research of this case. The Spanish Embassy will keep you informed about this issue.«*

May, 7 and 8. 1998.

## SUPPORT OF THE CONFERENCE OF DONORS IN BRUSSELS TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

**Extract from the speech of the Special Envoy of the President of the USA, Robert Gelbard:**

»Tolerance for symbols important to others is of a vital importance because Bosnia is seeking for its identity and balance. Therefore, I would stop objecting to come over to some more metaphoric reflections. Today we have a unique possibility to reconstruct Old Bridge, a very important monument for the heritage of all peoples of this region. Let that bridge serve us as a metaphor and let it overcome the differences between various ethnic groups and provide joint purposes through their cultures.





May, 8. 1998.

## RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE - FIRST JOINT PROJECT TO PRESERVE THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF BiH

### The joint letter of the delegation of BiH to the Director of World Bank in BiH Christian Portman:

Representatives of Bosniak, Serbian and Croatian nation i.e. the representatives of both entities of the Federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska as well as the representatives of Bosnia-Herzegovina sent a letter to the Director of World Bank in BiH Christian Portman:

»Dear Mr. Portman,

*During the Fourth Conference of Donors you heard our delegation pointing out our common interest in seeing Old Bridge reconstructed. It is a symbol of recognition for Bosnia-Herzegovina. You also heard a certain number of delegations indicating their wish to support such initiative. We believe that the participation of UNESCO would ensure the cultural integrity and the financial justification of a well thought-out project of preserving the cultural heritage of this country.*

*Therefore we are using the opportunity of delegations of the State of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its both entities being present in Brussels to ask the World Bank to assign this operation to the Loan Program for former Yugoslavia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and to ask for co-financing from other donors.*

*We are looking forward to your co-operation on this project."*

*The undresigned:*

On behalf of the Federation of BiH:

Edhem Bičakčić, Prime Minister

Drago Bilandžija, Deputy Prime Minister

On behalf of the Republika Srpska:

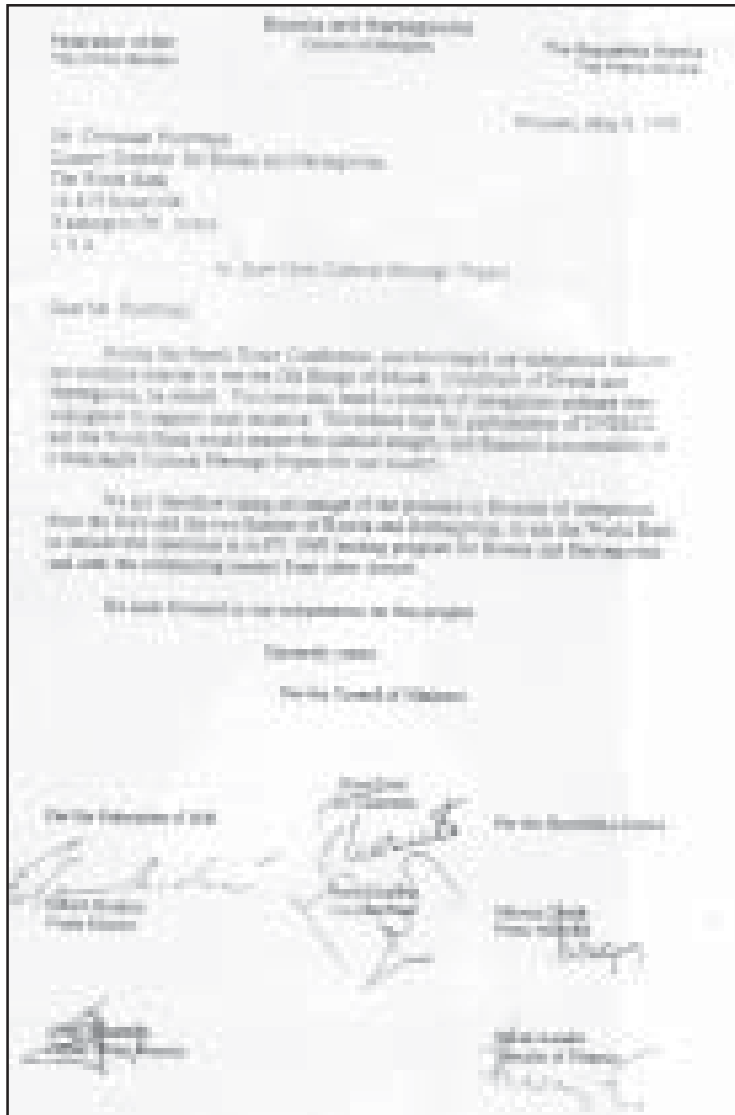
Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister

Novak Kondić, Minister of Finance

On behalf of the Council of Ministers of BiH

Boro Čosić, Co-Chairman

Haris Silajdžić, Co-Chairman



May, 14. 1998.

## ORUČEVIĆ INVITED CROATIA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

**Croatian Radio: “Oručević is certain that the Bridge has to built and reconstructed by the Croats too”**

Oručević: “We are inviting the Croatian side, and we will put that on the agenda of the City Council and City Government, to create a joint board in which the representatives of all nationalities will take part and this board will be a part of the UNESCO and World Bank Board which is in charge of observing the reconstruction and building of Old Bridge. This way we confirm a joint character of the Bridge. Therefore, this project is not led by just one side or it is just formally multiethnic, but essentially Bosniak. We will ask that representatives of the Croatian people name their members of the UNESCO and World Bank boards as well as the City Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar.



June, 3. 1998.

## OPENING OF THE TOURIST BRIDGE BY THE BUILDING SITE OF OLD BRIDGE

In the second stage of the first reconstruction phase a temporary pedestrian (“tourist”) bridge was built with help of the Hungarian engineer corps of SFOR and the enterprise Hidepito from Budapest. That bridge was built to enable the tourists to watch the attraction of the reconstruction from close up and to replace the previous chain bridge (“*pasarela*”). That will also enable stating activities on the arch reconstruction. The building of this temporary bridge started on April 15, 1998. The total length of the bridge is 62 meters.



June, 25 and 26. 1998.

## APPLICATION FOR RECORDING IN THE WORLD BUILDING HERITAGE OF UNESCO

Under the title: “Old Bridge – a bridge of the worlds in danger” the application for recording Old Bridge and the historical zone of Mostar in the World Building Heritage of UNESCO was nominated in Sarajevo.



June, 29. 1998.

## LEON PRESSOUYRE AT THE HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEAM OF EXPERTS

At the head of the team of internationally recognized experts from architecture, preservation and restoration will be Leon Pressouyre.

July, 30. 1998.

## PARIS UNESCO AND WORLD BANK SENT AN APPEAL FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

**Joint press statement: UNESCO AND WORLD BANK  
WILL HELP THE CITY OF MOSTAR TO RECONSTRUCT  
OLD BRIDGE**

Paris, July 30 – UNESCO, World Bank and the City of Mostar released today a joint press statement concerning the global partnership on the reconstruction of Old Bridge on the Neretva river, in the city of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina that is a symbol of the multicultural past of the city and that was destroyed during the war.



The complete text of the statement:

“Almost five years ago, at wartime, Old Bridge in Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, was bombed. The arch of 29 meters that raised itself high upon emerald green water of the Neretva and that was built in 1566 by an Ottoman builder Hajrudin, was connecting the eastern and the western river bank for 427 years until it was destroyed on November 9, 1993.

It was considered a joint trait of Bosnia-Herzegovina, not only because of its perfect construction, but also because of its symbolical value of a bridge connecting cultures. Old Bridge has to be reconstructed to be a symbol of peace and reconciliation between the nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina just as the heads of our religious communities recently declared.

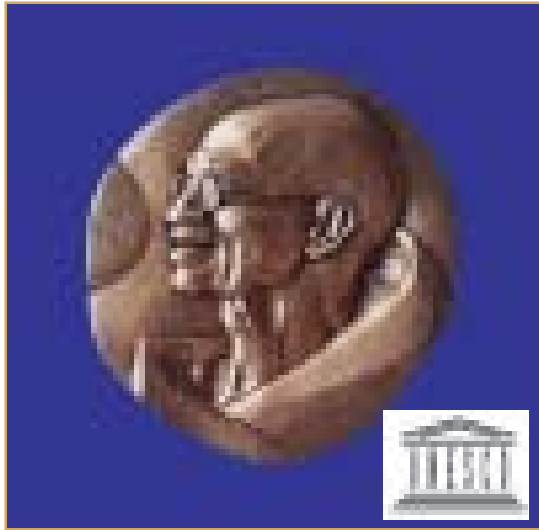
Many countries and institutions expressed their interest in giving a contribution to the reconstruction of Old Bridge and the cultural heritage of Mostar. The city of Mostar invited UNESCO and World Bank to accomplish this complex task. The City of Mostar contributes to this initiative by decisiveness of its citizens to live and work together. UNESCO will contribute to the initiative by its skills in preserving cultural heritage and the World Bank by its acknowledged skills in managing finances and projects in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Research Committee, Project Agency and Multi-Donor-Trust Foundation will be formed within the International Foundation *Stari Mostar* established for that purpose.

We are inviting individuals and organizations from Bosnia-Herzegovina and abroad to co-operate in the global partnership in order to revitalize the multicultural heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose important part is Old Bridge of Mostar.

Within this joint project, Mr. Leon Pressouyre (France), who actually heads the Commission for Preserving the National Monuments of Bosnia-Herzegovina established according to the Annex 8 of the Dayton Peace Accord, was appointed the Chairman of the Research Committee for the Old Bridge project.

A cultural ceremony concerning the reconstruction of Old Bridge will be held later in Paris, at the headquarters of UNESCO.”





Oktober, 5. 1998.

## **FEDERICO MAYOR, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF UNESCO NAMED A COMMISSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TEAM OF EXPERTS FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE**

October 5, 1998: **FEDERICO MAYOR, GENERAL DIRECTOR OF UNESCO**, awarded the Mayor Mostar Safet Oruicevic the Mahatma Gandhi Medallion of UNESCO during his visit to Mostar

### **International Commission of Experts for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar**

According to the permission of the UNESCO General Director an International Commission of Experts is established for the period of four years beginning its activities on October 10, 1998. Its goals are the reconstruction of Old Bridge and Old Town in Mostar. The head of the Commission is Mr. Leon Pressouyre, archeologist, university professor in Paris.



### **I. Members of the Commission**

The members of the Commission are:

- Mr. Cevat Erder  
Architect, former director of ICCROM, Professor Emeritus and Honorary Professor at the Middle East Technical University
- Mr. Milan Gojković  
Engineer, Professor at the Faculty of Civil Engineering, Belgrade, FR Yugoslavia
- Mr. Radovan Ivancevic  
Professor of History of Art, Association of Historians of Art in Croatia, Zagreb, Croatia
- Mr. Machiel Kiel  
Professor of History of Art, University of Utrecht, Holland

- Mr. Zlatko Langof  
Engineer, Professor, Institute for Geotechnique and Basing,  
Faculty of Civil Engineering, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Mr. Ferhat Mulabegović  
Historian of Architecture, Holding Company “DOM”, Sarajevo,  
Bosnia-Herzegovina
- Ms. Gulru Necipoglu  
Professor of History of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge,  
Mass., USA

- a) Two representatives of UNESCO:
- Director, Department of Cultural Heritage or his/her representative
  - Mr. Azedine Beschouch, Commissioner of the Assistant of the General Director for Culture

November, 12. 1998.

## EUROPEAN UNION IS JOINING THE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT

At the press conference of international organizations in Mostar, Thomas Paker, the representative of the European Commission announced that **Gilles Pequeux** was appointed the leader of the Group for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge financed by the EU. Pequeux will be observing the reconstruction activities. The preparations begin in December 1998 and end in October 1999.

November, 17. 1998.

## INAUGURATION AND FIRST MEETING OF UNESCO TEAM OF EXPERTS





November, 19. 1998.

## UNESCO PRESS – INAUGURATION SESSION OF THE COMMISSION OF EXPERTS

Mostar(BiH),19.11.'98 – The UNESCO International Commission of Experts held its inaugural session this week to determine scientific standards in reconstructing Old Bridge in Mostar.

This was the first time for a Croatian representative to give his fully support to the reconstruction of Old Bridge of Mostar. »This will not be Ivan's or Safet's bridge", said the Mayor of Mostar Ivan Prskalo in his speech, " that will be the bridge of all citizens of Mostar".

The inaugural ceremony ended with a visit to Old Bridge. Mayor Prskalo and Deputy Mayor Orucevic met in the middle of the temporary pedestrian bridge near Old Bridge and shook hands as a gesture of co-operation.

The Representative of UNESCO in BiH **Dr. Colin Kaiser** reminded of the efforts that the organization he represents has invested in the reconstruction of Old Bridge. There were some mistakes in that project that came from a desperate wish for the reconstruction, he said. Kaiser added that the Bridge would be finally reconstructed, with efforts of the local authorities, World Bank and UNESCO.

**Munir Bouchnaki**, Director of UNESCO for the reconstruction of cultural heritage, pointed out that UNESCO dedicates special attention to the reconstruction of the cultural heritage in BiH. That mission results from the Dayton Peace Accord which regulated the reconstruction of Mostar.

January, 26. 1999.

## RORY O'SULLIVAN, DIRECTOR OF WORLD BANK IN BIH ABOUT RECONSTRUCTION OF THE OLD BRIDGE

**Rory O'Sullivan**, Director of World Bank in BiH (January 26, 1999, Newspaper “*Dnevni avaz*”): “Old Bridge will be the most attractive part of the Balkans. This project is very important for citizens of Mostar. At the moment there is no comprehension of the reconstruction of the most important heritage of this town – Old Bridge. All people from the world know of that bridge and they will follow its reconstruction with big interest. You can be sure that every new brick or stone built into Old Bridge will be followed by millions of people. A great number of tourists will come to Mostar to see the course of the reconstruction. I think that the reconstructed Old Bridge will be one of the most attractive places for all people from the Balkans.”

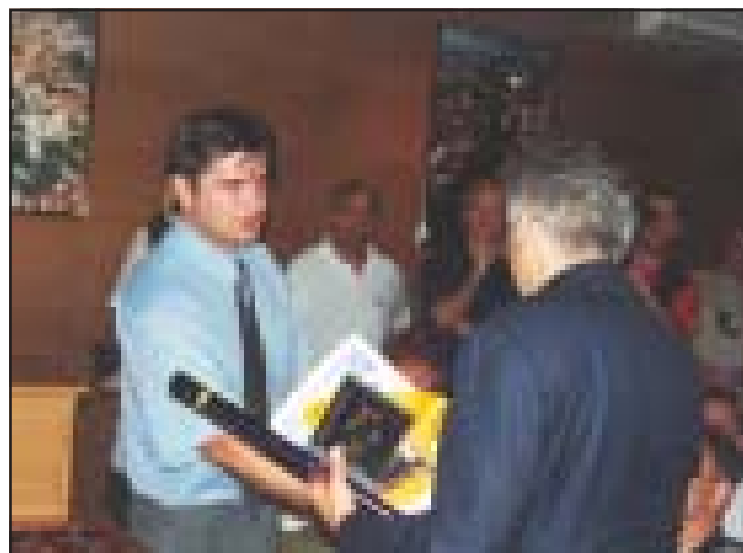
November, 4. 1999.

## SUSANNE MUBARAK, THE SPOUSE OF EGIPTIAN PRESIDENT, VISITED MOSTAR

December, 1. 1998.

## DIRECTORS OF THE AGENCY FOR THE BUILDING OF OLD BRIDGE APPOINTED

The city authorities appointed architects Esad Humo and Tihomir Rozic the directors of the Agency for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar (PCU) on behalf of the City of Mostar.





December, 6. 1999.

## **QUEEN RANIA VISITED THE BUILDING SITE OF OLD BRIDGE**

On Sunday, November 6, Queen Rania of Jordan visited Mostar. Queen Rania visited the building site of Old Bridge and took photos of the ruins of the Old Bridge arch.



February, 1. 2000.

## **MAYOR SAFET ORUCEVIC INITIATED THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE RESIDENCES OF RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN MOSTAR WITHIN THE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT FOR OLD BRIDGE**

Orucevic informed World Bank, UNESCO, Agan Khan Trust for Culture, IRCICA, Interreligious Council of BiH and representatives of religious groups in Herzegovina about his intention to include the reconstruction of all residences of religious groups in Mostar into the reconstruction project of Old Bridge. Those residences represent the architectural heritage of Mostar too. That initiative was accepted and the residences are being reconstructed as a part of the Old Bridge reconstruction.



March, 2000.

## **STIPE MESIC, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

TV Station Hayat Sarajevo, First Visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina): “Well, I have to say that this is also a kind of symbolism, to build the Bridge because the Bridge itself was a symbol. That is why it was destroyed. It was a symbol of harmony, people, civilizations; those are the things that the Bridge stood for. It did

not represent anything in a military sense. And those ones who destroyed it destroyed a symbol. Now you have turned back that symbol. I hope that the Bridge will be back too. I would be glad to witness the beginning of the reconstruction.”

March, 25. 2000.

**LETTER OF THE *CROATIAN SOCIETY  
FOR FRIENDSHIP OF CROATIA AND  
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA* WITH A  
REQUEST FOR CROATIA TO JOIN  
THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD  
BRIDGE**

Croatian Society for Friendship of Croatia and Bosnia-  
Herzegovina

and

Zagreb Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge

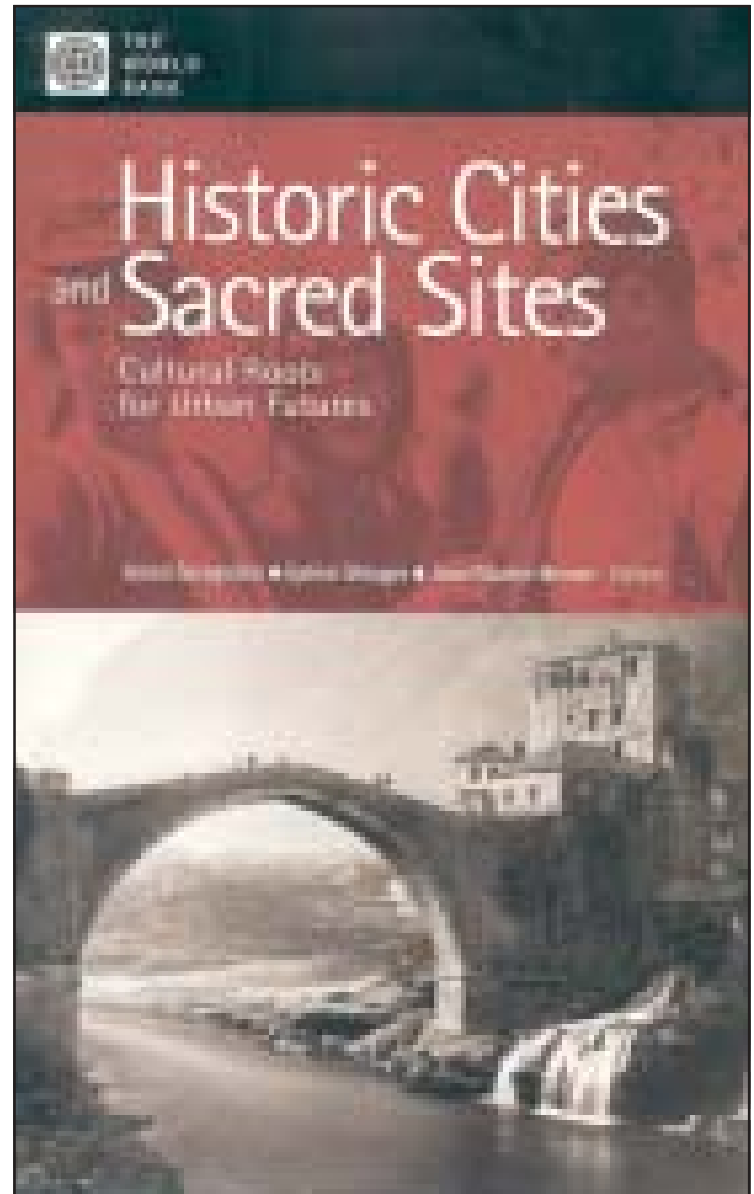
Zagreb, March 25, 2000

The Zagreb Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar and the Croatian Society for Friendship of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina address you with a suggestion that the Republic of Croatia joins the financing of the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar.

As you know, the Bridge was destroyed at the peak of the Croatian-Bosniak war on November 9, 1993. It was not important as a military goal so that its destruction only aggravated the relations between two belligerent nations.

The Croatian side committed the destruction of the Bridge and in that way a great damage was caused to the Republic of Croatia and Croatian people both culturally and politically. That caused also suspicion of many friendly countries and denial of their support.

This historical building represents an exceptional symbol of the co-existence of Croats and Bosniaks of Mostar and the whole region. The act of its destruction led to a further aggravation of the relations between two nations and that was the goal of the





perpetrators and commanders of its destruction. As you know, the Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge was founded in Zagreb immediately after its destruction. Numerous and very important representatives of technical and humanistic intelligentsia have been members of the Board. The Board made a program for the reconstruction of Old Bridge among other activities. For us it was very important to obtain all available documentation that can serve for the reconstruction of this monument. That program was very important for the reputation of Zagreb and the Republic of Croatia in the world. It has attracted a lot of publicity in the country and abroad. The program was published in the official newspaper of UNESCO and that was a certain acknowledgement to its technical and professional quality.

Technical documentation obtained by the Zagreb Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge was placed at the disposal of an authorized organ of the international community in 1998. That organ was established in Mostar under the auspices of UNESCO.

The participation of the Republic of Croatia in the financing of the reconstruction of Old Bridge would be a right move to eliminate all consequences of its destruction and one more step forward in the mutual coming together of Croats and Bosniaks.

We are aware of a vital connection of the Croatian and Bosniak nation, of deep historical, political and economical bonds that connect the destinies of those two nations. But we are also aware of dangers caused due to a slow improvement of the relations of two nations. Regarding new circumstances in Croatia, we plead for examining our suggestion that Croatia participates in the financing of the Bridge reconstruction.



April, 3. 2000.

## MINISTER PICULA ANNOUNCES THE CROATIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

Letter of the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Tonino Picula:

Zagreb, April 3, 2000

Croatian Society for Friendship of Croatia and BiH

Zagreb Board for the Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar  
Mr. Martin Spegelj, President  
Mr. Josip Silic, Vice-President

Dear Gentlemen!

I am grateful to your letter from March 25 regarding the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar.

I share your opinion that the Republic of Croatia should join common efforts of the international community and local institutions in BiH to reconstruct a destroyed symbol of the monumental heritage in BiH – Old Bridge in Mostar. We appreciate your previous activities that got the international acknowledge by the verification of the Old Bridge program. That represents the initial contribution of the Croatian side in the reconstruction process. The Croatian Government is ready to get involved in the reconstruction activities, both by providing technical and financial support according to our immediate financial possibilities.

In all activities that contribute to the strengthening of cultural and friendly relations with BiH you will have my fully support.

Sincerely,  
Tonino Picula



July, 27. 2001.

**CRAOTIAN PRIME MINISTER  
RACAN: WE CONDEMN THE  
DESTRUCTION - CROATIA WILL  
PARTICIPATE IN THE  
RECONSTRUCTION**

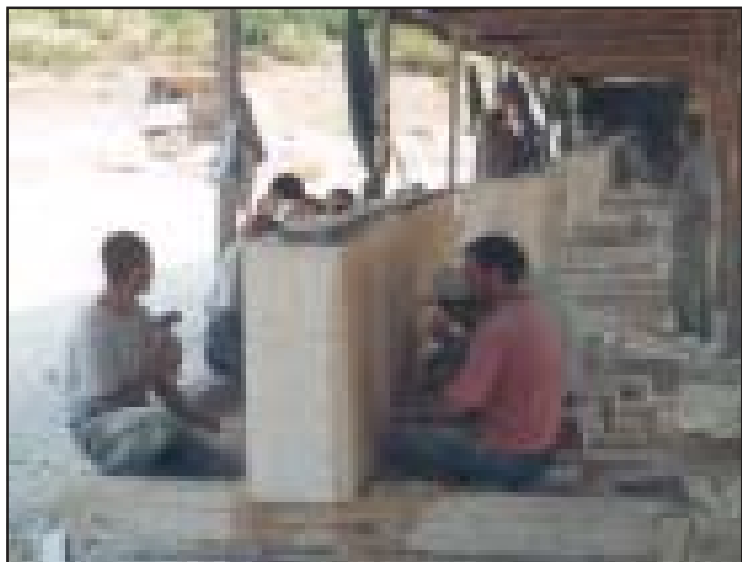
«We want to participate in the reconstruction of Old Bridge and we have already spoken not only with the citizens of Mostar, but also with the authorities and architects of Mostar.»

A journalist asked Prime Minister if Croatia would prosecute the perpetrators of the destruction of Old Bridge. Racan answered that the guilt was complex: “There is a political, moral and cultural guilt, but also a penal responsibility. Just the fact



that we have condemned the destruction of Old Bridge all together in the spirit of tolerance means a lot. I would leave the authorities and the judiciary to decide upon a penal responsibility.

Prime Minister Racan with his wife together with Safet Orucevic and Neven Tomic visited the ruins of Old Bridge.



December, 11. 2000.

## CUTTING THE FIRST STONE FOR OLD BRIDGE

Speeches at the Ceremony of Cutting the first stone for the new Old Bridge:

Extract from the speech of Tihomir Rozić, Deputy Director of the PCU.

I would like to welcome all of you on this important day, or on the “D” day for this project as our director Rusmir Ciscic said. I also would announce following activities that await us after stone cutting. But first of all I would like to thank to the Turkish Consul and to the Turkish Government which donated financial support of 1 million US dollars for cutting this stone that we see here.

Extracts from the speech of Neven Tomic, Deputy Mayor of Mostar

I think it is important to mention our efforts in the City Administration and in the Department for the project implementation led by Ciscic and Rozić. It has already been mentioned that the World Bank with its credit and not only the credit, but also other aspects of technical support and UNESCO are contributing to this project. But, I would like to say that the role of the donor countries is so important that the whole project could not be implemented without them. There is the Republic of Turkey that reacted as first, then Governments Of Italy, and Netherlands that contributed a lot, then the French Government, The Croatian Government announced its participation in the project during the visit of the Prime Minister Racan so that we expect to complete the financial construction in three months



because we need support from some other countries, which announced their donations. In this case this project would be finished as an extraordinary project important for the future of this city and the whole region.

December, 21. 2000.

### **GEORGE ROBERTSON IN MOSTAR – OLD BRIDGE IS A SYMBOL OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TASKS IN BIH**



April, 24. 2001.

### **CORNERSTONE FOR THE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER AND THE SYNAGOGUE**

As an idea for the reconstruction of the religious sites within the project of the Old Bridge reconstruction the cornerstone for the building of the Jewish Cultural Center and the Synagogue was laid.

June, 7. 2001.

### **REBUILDING OF THE OLD BRIDGE FOUNDATIONS BY A TURKISH COMPANY *YAPA MERKEZI***

Deputy Mayor of Mostar Hamdija Jahic and Director of the PCU Rusmir Ciscic opened a ceremony on the beginning of the rebuilding of the Old Bridge foundations. By custom, packages of daily newspapers and money were laid in the bridge foundations.





January, 9. 2002.

## FRANCE OPENED A STONECUTTING SCHOOL “*JURAJ DALMATINAC*” IN MOSTAR AS A SUPPORT TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF OLD BRIDGE

The French Ambassador Bernard Bajolet opened on January 9, 2002 a Stonecutting School “*Juraj Dalmatinac*” in Mostar. The French Government financed the opening of the school with 200,000 euros. At the opening ceremony the Ambassador Bajolet said: “Our idea is to employ graduated masters in the reconstruction of not only Old Bridge, but of other numerous cultural and historical monuments and artistic achievements in BiH. They will join the stonecutters of the company which will be elected by World Bank at the international tender for the reconstruction of the Old Bridge.”



April, 17. 2002.

## TURKISH COMPANY ER BU SIGNED A CONTRACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE OLD BRIDGE ARCH

June, 27. 2002.

## ITALIAN PRESIDENT CARLO CIAMPI CUT THE FIRST STONE FOR THE OLD BRIDGE ARCH

Carlo Azeglia Ciampi, the President of Italy, started the cutting of the first stone for the arch of Old Bridge. Italian president opened this ceremony in the presence of the President of Presidency of BiH Beriz Belikc, High Representative to BiH Paddy Ashdown and Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Mostar Hamdija Jahic and Neven Tomic.

Italian president pointed out the following: «**Destruction of such a magnificent monument was a barbaric act and an insult for multicultural sense in Europe.**»

Italy was one of the first donors to the reconstruction of Old Bridge. This country financed already during the war a UNESCO study on the reconstruction of the Old Bridge zone in Mostar.

February, 2003.  
**GILLES PEQUEUX'S BOOK  
PRESENTED IN PARIS**

A book by engineer Gilles Pequeux and aquarellist Yvon Le Corre was presented in the Gallery Le Lys in Paris. During the book presentation Pequeux talked to the Writer Predrag Matvejevic.

April, 14, 2003.  
**FIRST STONE PUT INTO THE ARCH  
OF OLD BRIDGE**

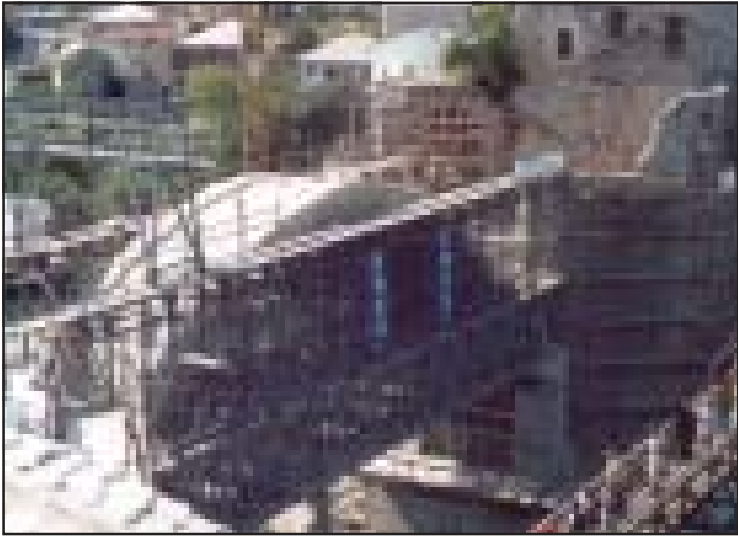
The first stone was put into the new arch of Old Bridge on April 14, 2003.

April, 14. 2003.  
**ROZIC: I HOPE NOBODY WOULD  
TOUCH IT AGAIN**

At the ceremony on putting the first stone in the new arch of Old Bridge, Deputy Director of the PCU Tihomir Rozic stated the following: "I hope that nobody will touch this bridge and its stone arch ever again and that nobody will have to do things we do now."







August, 22. 2003.

## LAST STONE PUT IN THE ARCH OF OLD BRIDGE

The last stone was put into the arch of Old Bridge in Mostar on August 22, 2003. The stone was laid by the Mayor of Mostar Hamdija Jahic, Deputy Mayor Ljubo Beslic, Director of the Unit for the Project Co-Ordination “Reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar” (PCU) Rusmir Cisic and his deputy Tihomir Rozic. On that occasion Tihomir Rozic addressed the gathering and said that the most complex phase of the reconstruction of Old Bridge was over.

**Rusmir Ćišić**, Manager of the Coordination Unit of the Old Bridge Reconstruction

I can hardly believe that we have come to this moment after ten years. Mr. Oručević’s idea

that the reconstruction of the Old Bridge should become a world project is realized.

Today, constructors from several countries work on this construction site, while The World Bank together with donor countries: France, Netherlands, Turkey, Croatia and Italy are financing the project. We are all excited and happy because of this magnificent moment.

The arch of the Old Bridge represents the carrying part of the construction and it’s most important part. All other phases are simpler. I am happy that I can share this joy not only with the builders and the guests, but with the citizens of Mostar as well. We still have a lot of work to do, and we are doing it with pleasure.

**Zeljko Pekovic**, Director of the Enterprise Omega inzinjering from Dubrovnik, Supervisor of the reconstruction project: “Activities on the bridge arch were accomplished with high quality. The Arch of Old Bridge can endure much bigger load that citizens think. All nails and staples are leaded in one single unit that is a magnificent piece of work.”



August, 30. 2003.

## LEADERS OF SOUTHEAST EUROPE AT THE OPENING OF OLD BRIDGE

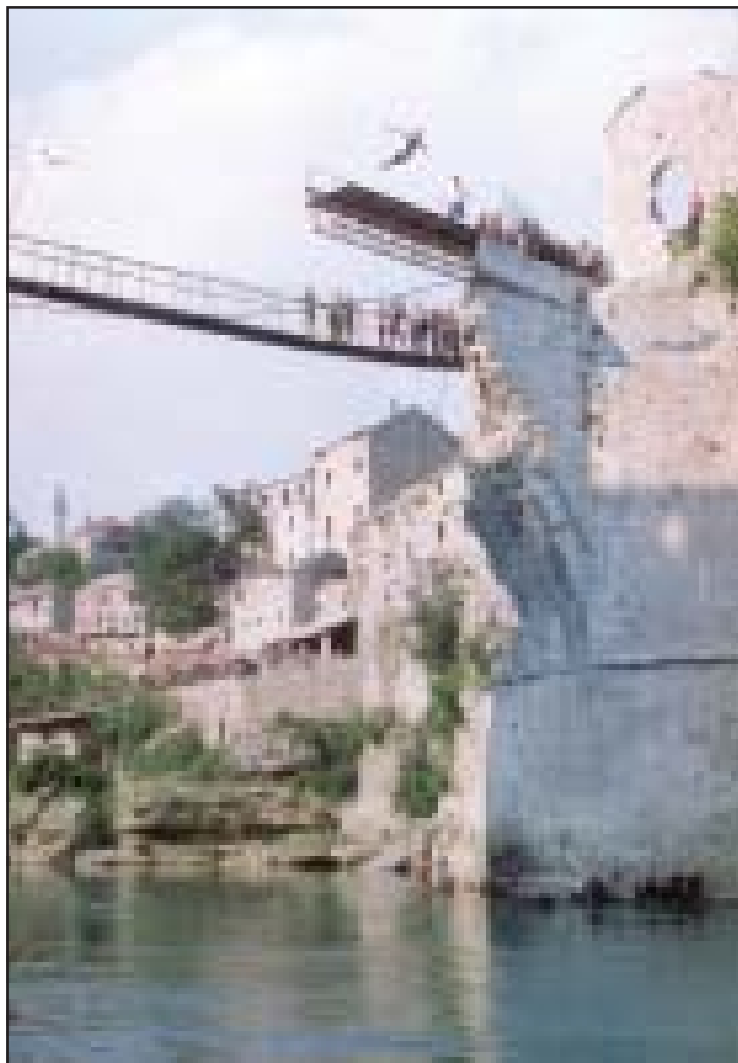
(MESSAGE OF THE FINAL DOCUMENT OF THE  
REGIONAL FORUM “DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZA-  
TIONS”)

The Regional Forum “Dialogue Among Civilizations” was held in Ohrid on 29. and 30. 08. 2003. The forum passed a Declaration that expects the opening of Old Bridge in Mostar in 2004 in the presence of the leaders of Southeast Europe. That was the suggestion of the President of Presidency of BiH Dragan Covic. It was accepted in the final document of the Declaration.



August, 24. 2003.

## JUMPS



Traditional high jumps are inevitably connected to the symbol of Mostar – Old Bridge. The jumps have been unbreakably connected to Old Bridge since it was built by knowledge and lucidness of the Builder Hajrudin in the mid-sixteenth century. Old chroniclers and travellers from that time left priceless memoirs about the city and young men jumping in various styles.

Citizens of Mostar left consistent in the defence of this tradition even in the most difficult times of the recent war. During the war twenty jumpers of all nations got killed in the defence of their Old Bridge.

It is a curiosity that the continuity of jumping ceremonies was not broken during the war, even at the time of the Old Bridge destruction. Because of a great danger in 1993, the jumping competition was held overnight. “Swallows of Mostar” – that is the nickname of the jumpers – have been spreading the fame of Mostar for centuries being its symbol and recognition.

After a decade “Swallows of Mostar” jumped for the first time from the new arch of Old Bridge. That was the biggest prize for their persistence and consistency in the defence of Mostar and symbols of multiethnic Mostar.

The most successful jumper in the history of the High Jumps from Old Bridge is **Emir Balic**. He won first place in the discipline of jumps on the head for thirteen times, second place for four times and third place for three times. He was awarded the Golden Olympic Circles for his merits in popularising sports and spreading and developing Olympic ideas in 1987 by the President of the Olympic Committee, Juan Antonio Samaranch. In Mostar this award was delivered to Emir Balic by Artur Takac, President of the International Olympic Committee.

Balic was awarded the Honorary Golden Medal of the European championship in swimming in Split, the Honorary Golden Medal of the University Olympics in Zagreb, the Charter of the European Swimming Federation, the Golden Medallion of SOFKJ, Medallion of the City of Mostar “14<sup>th</sup> February” and the Golden Medallion of the Newspaper “Sport” from Belgrade.

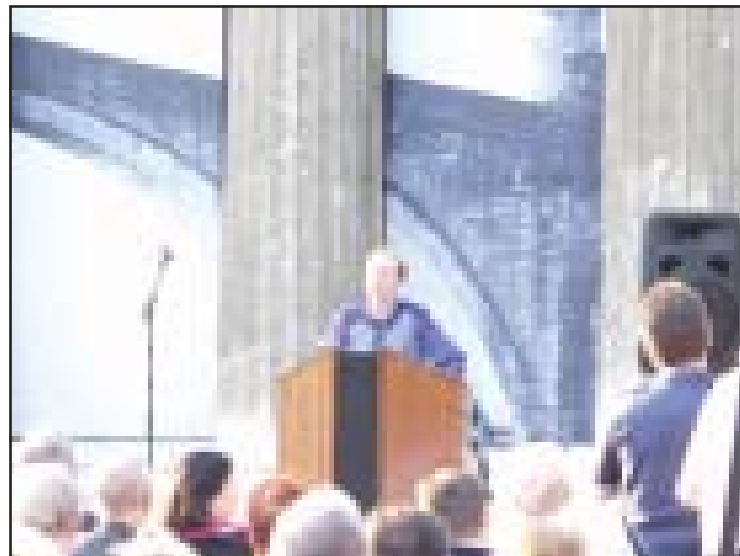
July, 16. 2003. Vienna  
**OPENING OF THE FIRST MUSEUM  
 EXHIBITON “OLD BRIDGE IN  
 MOSTAR”**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria Mrs. Benita Ferrero-Waldner opened on July 16, 2003 in the Volksgarten in Vienna the Museum Exhibition “Old Bridge in Mostar”. The exhibition will be opened until August 31. This first museum exhibition on Old Bridge in Mostar in the world was organized by the OSCE Mission of the Netherlands to Vienna, Bosnian Embassy to Vienna and Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna in the co-operation with historians and museum custodians from Mostar and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The non-governmental organizations *Most mostovi most* from Vienna and Center for Peace and Multiethnic Co-Operation from Mostar as well as the Unit for the Bridge Reconstruction of PCU were included in the organizing of this exhibition. Jan Pronk, former Minister of the Kingdom of Holland, addressed the gathering on behalf of Kofi Annan as well as Wilfried Seipel, Director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, and Amira Kapetanovic, BH Ambassador to Vienna.

**Extracts from the speech of Jan Pronk, on behalf of Kofi Annan:** If Bosnians with help of other Europeans will put a permanent basis for their society that will be open, pluriform, free, equal, united and based on rights, than the reconstruction of Old Bridge in Mostar can mean all of that, both in reality and in dreams of all of us. Bridge – as a symbol of identity can resist to new efforts of division. Those efforts have been already manifested in the first three years of the new millennium. That is what Mostar, Bosnia and Europe need.

**Extracts from the speech of Benita Ferrero-Waldner,** Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs:

“Old Bridge in Mostar is a symbol of connection, transition, but at the same time it is a symbol of peace. That is why Austria together with other countries supports the reconstruction of this marvelous bridge which represents a bond between nations, ethnic groups and religions.”





October, 14. 2003. Zagreb

## MUSEUM «MIMARA» ZAGREB THE OLD BRIDGE – THE BRIDGE OF LOVE

On 14 October 2003, in the museum «Mimara» in Zagreb, the exhibition called «The Old Bridge – the symbol of piece» was held in presence of many public and culture life representatives from the Republic Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The president of the Republic Croatia, Stjepan Mesić and the head of the BiH chairmanship, Dragan Čović used this opportunity to address to the guests and visitors. The text about the Old Bridge, written by Predrag Matvejević was also read to the visitors.

Among other things, the president of RH, Stjepan Mesić said:

«The Old Bridge in Mostar has become a strong symbol joining esthetic and ethnic values in the city which shared the fate of the area where different nations, religions and civilization changes have left their traces. Personally, I was sad and angry when I heard that the symbol of Mostar was destroyed. But still, I believe that we will jointly share the satisfaction for its final reconstruction. Destruction of the Old Bridge did not only disable communication between the two banks, but, for a short while, it was an attempt of an unnatural division of one unity. As one bank naturally aims towards the other, one man aims towards the other, in their unique need to overcome evil, violence, religious and national blindness, in the same way as they over-bridged the river by stone.

The head of the BiH chairmanship, Dragan Čović pointed out in his speech the importance of the reconstruction of the Old Bridge, as the world cultural project, saying that it will again be the bridge which joins – the bridge of love.

In his letter, Predrag Matvejević, who was not present at the exhibition due to his traveling obligations, among other things says:

“Our Old Bridge has not been an ordinary bridge or the plain monument. It served everyone, it joined us all, we all





belonged to it. The memories of our ancestors were built in it and the generations supported it. It did not only join the banks but also the sides of the world: the East and West were reaching for each other's hand on it... Despite everything, reconstruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar is the result of willingness and common sense opposed to hatred and evil. Our old bridge is again above Neretva..."

Musical ensemble «Mostarske kiše» from Mostar, the composer-singer Ibrica Jusić and the reciter Goran Matović gave performance in the artistic part of the programme.

**The exhibition was organized by the following:**

Center for piece and multiethnic cooperation Mostar

Cooperation "Most-Mostovi-Most" from Vienna

Ministry for culture and sport FBiH

Natural-historic Museum in Sarajevo,

Museum of Mostar city

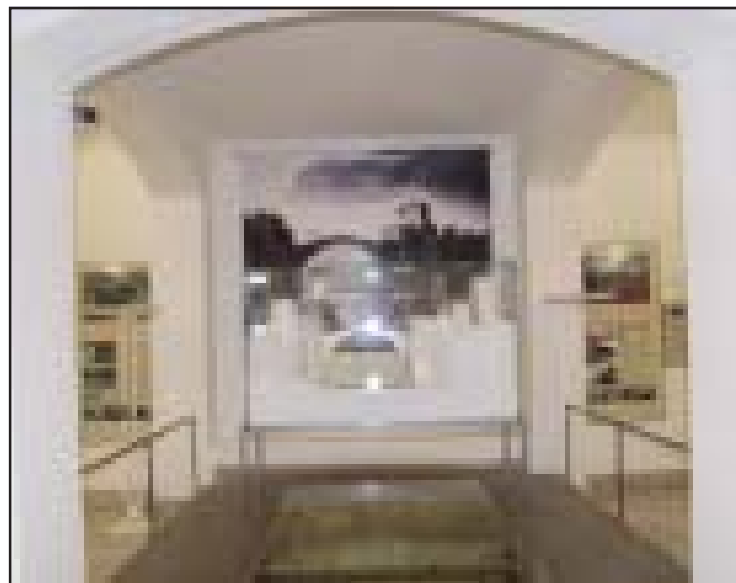
Government of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC)

Aga Khan – Geneva and the World Monumental Foundation

New York

Tourist community FBiH and HNC

Institute for protection of monuments in Mostar







December, 12. 2003. Sarajevo

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BiH SARAJEVO THE OLD BRIDGE - MONUMENT OF PEACE

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE OLD BRIDGE IS THE  
JOINING OF PAST, PRESENCE AND FUTURE

After in Vienna and Zagreb, the museum exhibition, The Old Bridge – The Monument of Piece was organized in Sarajevo. At the same time, at the assembly of the BiH Presidency, the organization board for preparation of the Old Bridge opening ceremony was established, what has verified the importance of not only the reconstruction of the symbol of Mostar and its further role in social and political processes in Mostar, but also the renewal of the joint life and a dialogue between the nationalities of the wider area.

Space in the Archeological department in the BiH National museum, which carries an epithet of the oldest cultural and scientific institution of the modern time in our country and which was declared the state institute in 1888, with numerous exhibits of materialistic culture from all periods, has never looked more magnificent then in the occasion of the exhibition The Old Bridge – The Monument of Piece. The Bridge and this exhibition gathered representatives of international organizations, accredited ambassadors, representatives of the highest state political circles, religious organizations and many public representatives from different areas of social life. With their presence they all wanted to confirm the importance of the exhibition in promoting the idea of peace and cosmopolitanism.

Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative for BiH accepted the offer from the organizer, the Center for peace and multiethnic cooperation to open the exhibition. –When the Old Bridge was demolished, its symbolism was not deranged, but the artery of life was. It represents the new beginning for BiH. The Old Bridge does not belong only to Mostar and BiH, it belongs to whole mankind, said the High Representative for BiH in his speech, pointing out the importance of the Bridge restoration and this





exhibition which aims at creating conditions for more promising life for all three nationalities and the region itself.

Gavrilo Grahovac, federal Minister for culture and sport, in his addressing, expressed his opinion by saying that the exhibition in Sarajevo is more beautiful and bigger than the previous ones.

- The exhibition was dedicated to the Bridge and the town whose name it symbolizes and it is a testimony of the exalted act of creation, barbaric act of demolition and a permanent power of people to revive themselves through the reconstruction of the Bridge.

Just in the name of what the reconstruction of the Old Bridge means for Mostar, citizens of this town and the whole BiH, in the name of what the destiny of the Bridge and its reconstruction teach us and direct us to, let us thank everyone who have traced this road we are jointly crossing today and especially to Mr. Safet Oručević who made foundations for reconstruction of the bridge as the multiethnic and international project, said Mr. Gavrilo Grahovac.

Head of the Presidency BiH, dr. Dragan Čović, confirmed permanent values of the Old Bridge, saying, among other things, the following:

- Nobody any longer considers the Old Bridge as a Bridge joining two river banks. It has today largely surpassed all problems of the area where it is being rebuilt and above which it stretches into heights. No construction, no appearance in BiH, through all this time has never attracted so much attention as the Old Bridge.

The exhibition was placed in two spacious rooms of Ethnographic department which used this occasion to welcome its guests for the first time after the post-war restoration.

This “traveling through time” that has lasted for almost four and a half decades was enriched by the performance of the ensemble «Mostarske kiše», the chamber orchestra and the chorus «Arion» from Banjaluka.





February, 3. 2004. Belgrade

## THE OLD BRIDGE EXHIBITION IN A PEACE MISSION IN SOUTH-EAST EUROPE

The fourth destination in Belgrade, a world museum exhibition «The Old Bridge – a monument of peace», gathered a very large number of visitors from all segments of social life, not only from the state community of Serbia and Montenegro, but from other neighbouring countries. In the gallery of the History Museum of Yugoslavia, The Old Bridge, the symbol of Mostar, has confirmed its historical role in diversity merging, of the east and the west, of the north and the south and their cultural-civilisational circles. The magnificent gathering seemed as the arch of the Bridge through the emanence of its accented wish for a faster dialog and coexistence in the the region of Herzegovina. Along with state representatives from Serbia and Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were also high religious dignitaries from the Catholic and Ortodox church, what was the mark for the reconnecting, and that it was the only way for establishing permanent peace in the region. The Peace and Multiethnic Cooperation Centre Mostar, as the exhibition organiser started with a peace mission journey from Vienna, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade, thus assembling all those who gave comfort to Mostar people in their most difficult moments, as well as all pacifists to make a common effort in the overcoming of misunderstanding and establishing of a dialogue.

The exhibition was opened by **Svetozar Marović**, the president of the state community of Serbia and Montenegro, reminding on the whole splendour and beauty of Mostar and its symbol The Old Bridge.

«The ties were woven for centuries, the bridges among people were built, friendships were made. But, that bridge is gone and so is the time. But, as a new day comes after night, having returned the body back to the bridge, they would take the soul back to the bridge, as soon as the bridge returns to its





eternal mission: to make people come closer to each other. We know that the bridge is the incarnation of the Old one, that would bring men to men. Mostar, again, becomes the city of light, so remembered by Ivo Andrić» said president Marović.

**Adnan Terzić**, the presiding in the Ministers' Council of BiH stressed that new old bridges were not being rebuilt not only in Mostar, but also in other cities across BiH and the region, and it was important that it was taking place between Bosnia and Serbia and Montenegro. «It is also my great pleasure to see faces tonight, the faces who rose their voice against atrocities which were clouding the region. Tonight exhibition and the time coming is a proof that you won. We are grateful that you helped the past and the future collide on the project of The Old Bridge reconstruction, protecting together our history, culture and tradition» said Terzić.

**Predrag Matvejević** spoke about heritage: «Small nations wish, with reason, to protect their heritage, and comes a moment when they have to protect themselves of that very heritage. In the past, we had to save our people's memories in order to survive, and now came a period when we have to save ourselves of those very memories. It our responsibility to rule our past, so that it could not rule us. That happened to many of us. We all pay their debts that become our mutual debts. The Bridge of Mostar is our mutual exam».

**Bogdan Bogdanović**, former mayor of Belgrade and an honourable citizen of Mostar, while talking about the Bridge said that in the moment of cognition that the Bridge was destroyed wrote an epithaph saying: «A slim stone shadow, a heavenly rainbow replica, a masterpiece of Hayrudeen, one of the most beautiful and noble architectural allegories, sank to the bottom of the river. From the city born in the symbol of the Bridge, its first and last word have been torn out, and the death is, I afraid, inevitable».







February, 17. 2004. Athens

## THE OLD BRIDGE IN MOSTAR -A SYMBOL OF PEACE IN THE BALKANS

**In the famous building Zappeio, under the Athens Acropolis**, in the immediate vicinity of the Parliament of Greece, The Old Bridge - Monument of Peace exhibition was presented as integral part of the round table program «Building the bridges of friendship - European perspectives». The exhibition became an important instrument of conveying not just the messages of the need for re-establishment of peaceful coexistence, dialogue and reconciliation, but it became an active agent in the peace reconstruction as well.

The round table under the chairmanship of Anna Karamanou, chairman of the Women's Rights Commission in the European Parliament, was held in the presence of approximately two hundred visitors including many accredited ambassadors in Greece.

**The chairman of the meeting, Anna Karamanou, read a letter written by Georgius Papandreu, the chairman of Pashok** in which he says:

*Ten years between 1990. and 2000. represented a period of the historical changes in the Balkans. It was a period of wars, conflicts and pain, but it was also a period of hope for something new that was being created through this struggle. The nations of the Balkans found the strength to make a step forward in the building of the democracy and to say no to ethnic cleansing by keeping up the hope of multicultural dialogue. Today, the Balkans is making a fresh start, and turning to Europe. The positive expectation is also visible in the reconstruction of the Old Bridge that is truly symbol of such an expectation of peaceful coexistence.*

The important events happening in the Balkans during the last few months attract our attention again. Anyone visiting Mostar today can see and feel the desire for separation by looking at the remains of the Old Bridge, as well as the power of the symbolism of the city in the reconciliation in the Balkans through





the reconstruction of this bridge. Mostar is one of the most multicultural areas in the Balkans and I believe that this multicultural feature will be a very important contribution to the creativity of whole Europe.

**Serafin Fidanjidis, the director of the Elejtepotipia newspaper house in Athens**

We had a very naïve impression of what was happening in the Balkans at the end of the 80's and the beginning of the 90's. Having in mind everything that was happening in the Balkans, I have to say that Greek press naively was for the orthodox Serbs while the Bosnians Muslims were considered our enemies. We have gone through this experience naively, but, of course, step by step, we understood that the things are not as they appeared to be. What we are celebrating today is exhibition "The Old Bridge in Mostar" which was destroyed by Croats. Today, that bridge is a symbol of reconciliation. I repeat that we in Greece were late to understand some things.

**The ambassador Kostas Zepos** spent certain time in that office in Mostar.

I congratulate the organizers of The Old Bridge exhibition. I sincerely believe that we have to be grateful for their effort and initiative to present an exhibition that shows the importance of the symbol of peace and reconciliation at the right moment. The bridge in Mostar is not just a

*Symbol of communication and peace but it is also a symbol of work, unified work, art and beauty. The esthetical harmony of this work could not soothe the hate and restrain the human hand in its act of self-destruction, a suicidal act.*

**Teta Papadopulo, journalist**

*The words are not enough to express the feelings this exhibition has provoked. No matter how many facts you know and how prepared you are for what you are about to see there, it is not easy to hide the emotions when you face the Bridge. It is a destroyed image, an open wound over the river Neretva. A normal human being who faces this terrible scene is left speechless.*





*How is this possible, how could such savagery happen? The hate, hostility and criminal stupidity and everything else that is negative was present during the shelling of the Old Bridge. The Old Bridge in Mostar is a historical bridge.*

**Haris Silajdžić, D. Sc.**

There are many people that show that Bosnia and Herzegovina and its struggle for normal and democratic country has many friends. I can say that there are many friends in Greece who support us. I am one of those who believe in pluralism because I know that no culture can understand its depths unless it mirrors itself in another culture. They will be enriched and this will happen if we do not allow politicians of those who abuse religion to have their way.

*The Old Bridge – Monument of Peace contributed not only in creating the dialogue and tolerance between nations, but it also gave a strong impulse to all those who actively create a long-lasting peace in the region of South-eastern Europe through their work.*

**Esad Humo, architect, the executive director of the exhibition**

The reconstruction of the Old Bridge is firstly a reconstruction of the destroyed values and secondly a great technical task. Here, today it is obvious that the idea of the reconstruction of the bridge and reconciliation is important not only for Mostar and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but for the region and even the world as well, and what is emphasized here today is that there are many places in the world where the similar interventions are needed as well as the building the bridges between the people.

**The participants signed The Charter of the Olympic games in Greece under the picture of the old Turkish bridge.**







## **THE OLD BRIDGE IN MOSTAR**

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