



Bosnia and Herzegovina, General Fronda (EUFOR): “Stable Balkans Are in Europe’s Strategic Interest”

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SARAJEVO – In an **interview** with *Report Difesa*, **Major General Maurizio Fronda**, who has led the **EUFOR** mission since **21 gennaio**, outlines the assessment and strategic vision for the stabilization of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dates, everywhere in the world, are fixed points in the history of a people. In the Balkans, this is even more evident. The upcoming **21 novembre** will mark **31 years** since the historic **Accordi di Dayton**, signed in **1995** to end three and a half years of devastating armed conflict and establish a single sovereign state divided into two entities: **Republika Srpska** (with a Serb majority) and the **Federazione di Bosnia ed Erzegovina** (with a Croat-Bosniak majority). Today, the demographic and ethnic landscape is marked by complex coexistence across the country, while the region's security remains under close scrutiny by international institutions. Having taken over from the NATO SFOR mission in **dicembre 2004** under **Risoluzione ONU 1551**, the European Union mission **EUFOR / Operazione Althea** continues to play a key role in

maintaining stability.

Ahead of the annual renewal of the mandate (whose “D-Day” is set for **October 30**), the EUFOR Commander discusses in the interview the evolution of the mission, the role of the Italian contingent, and the geopolitical challenges in the Western Balkans.

An evolving and complex security environment

Over the course of **22 years of presence**, the EUFOR operation has seen the local landscape change radically. As General Fronda explains, in the 1990s the priority was implementing the military aspects of peace, separating the forces, and establishing basic security on the ground. Today, following the successful completion in **2018** of the training program for the local Armed Forces (**AF BiH**), EUFOR's mandate is focused on **supporting local authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment (Safe and Secure Environment)**.

*«We operate in a **far more complex and less tangible security environment**. The risks we monitor are not defined by front lines, but by a **combination of political dynamics, developments in the information space, and broader regional influences**», Commander Fronda observes.*



Presence on the ground and the "Quick Response 2026" exercise

EUFOR's effectiveness is based on a balanced approach comprising **operational readiness, constant dialogue, and area monitoring**. Comprehensive monitoring is ensured by the **Battaglione Multinazionale di Manovra** and the **20 "LOT Houses" (Liaison and**

Observation Teams) located in the main cities. Among them, the **Italian LOT House** operated by the **Arma dei Carabinieri** in **Drvar** stands out.

Demonstrating operational readiness and rapid reinforcement capability, the important annual exercise **Quick Response 2026** recently concluded. The training involved units from **8 countries**, integrating the army, navy, and air force. Among the highlights of the exercise:

- The **parachute insertion** of a company from the **183° Reggimento Paracadutisti "Nembo"** directly from Italy;
- Maritime logistical support provided by the **Nave "San Giorgio"** of the **Marina Militare Italiana**;
- Combined rescue, medical evacuation, and tactical intervention maneuvers in the **Mostar** area.

Italy's central role

Italy's contribution to the EUFOR mission is significant and of the highest importance. In addition to providing its Commander, Italy holds command of the **Task Force Intelligence**, the **Battaglione Multinazionale di Manovra**, and the **light aviation component**. Deployed units include:

- A maneuver company from the **151° Reggimento Fanteria della Brigata "Sassari"**;
- Aviation assets equipped with **CH47** and **AB205** helicopters;
- A **Surveillance and Reconnaissance** company;
- **Carabinieri** assigned to the LOT House in Drvar.

The entire contingent operates with recognized **impartiality**, ensuring transparency and close engagement with all of the country's ethnic communities.

NATO-EU cooperation and strategic outlook

Regarding institutional coexistence with the Atlantic Alliance (present in the country through **NATO HQ Sarajevo**), General Fronda reiterates that EUFOR and NATO operate in close synergy under the **Berlin Plus** arrangements. Cooperation was recently reaffirmed by the joint visit of the **Chairmen of the Military Committees of the European Union and NATO** to Sarajevo. In conclusion, the strategic vision for the region's future remains clearly anchored in Europe:

«Southeastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular, matter. **A stable and secure Western Balkans and a peaceful Bosnia and Herzegovina are in Europe's strategic interest.** Sustained international attention, together with local institutions' increasing assumption of responsibility, remains essential to consolidating the progress achieved and **supporting lasting peace**».