

[ REFERENCE CASE ]

Product: Ascom Access Node

Customer: United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH)

Platform: Ascom openAccess®



## UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (UNMIBH) ASCOM ACCESS NODE NETWORK SOLUTION

UNMIBH began its operations under inauspicious conditions. As a result of the conflict, over 200,000 people had died, 20'000 were missing and 1.2 million were internally displaced. The country was divided along ethnic lines. The fratricidal war, in which civilians were the principal target and victims, had left a legacy of hatred and widespread fear of retribution.

Fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina came to an end on 11 October 1995. From that date until 20 December 1995, forces of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) monitored a ceasefire put in place to allow for peace negotiations being launched in Dayton, Ohio. On 21 November 1995, in Dayton, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initialled along with 11 associated annexes.

The UN summarizes the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its own engagement as follows: 'Set up in 1995, UNMIBH exercised a wide range of functions related to the law enforcement activities and police reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Mission also coordinated other UN activities in the country relating to humanitarian relief and refugees, demining, human rights, elections and rehabilitation of infrastructure and economic reconstruction. Following the successful conclusion of its mandate, UNMIBH was terminated on 31 December 2002.

### **Solution and the role of ascom access node**

Finland participated in this UN operation and the task of setting up the communication network was given to Finland. Finnish troops had previous experience of the Ascom openAccess® technology and the Ascom Access Node product, so they chose to use it. Ascom Access Node is designed to build up tactical networks and especially to connect different networks. "Earlier, the biggest problem was that our information system consisted of several separate systems that did not communicate properly with each other. Transferring data from one system to another was difficult, since these systems were not compatible. Maintenance of these systems became expensive, and our own organization needed a system that would be generally interoperable from one system to another within the Finnish Defence Forces," says colonel Kyösti Halonen from the Defence Staff of the Finnish Defence Forces.

In Bosnia, Ascom Access Node was used to connect all the different networks that each of the peacekeeping troops had. There were together 6 nations represented, all with their own tactical network and communication equipment. The difficulty came when there was a need to connect these networks in order to allow the different countries to communicate with each other. Ascom Access Node was the tool to solve this problem. "There are several possible roles in international crisis management operations and joint operations with various public authorities. The Ascom Access Node integrates incompatible communication networks to work together in these operations as well. Ascom Access Node technology is ideal for international collaboration and ensuring interoperability," Halonen outlines.

A total of 20 Ascom Access Nodes were installed in this key communication network that formed the heart of UN communication in Bosnia. All countries were integrated to this key network. Without the Ascom Access Node network, the communication between troops would not have worked.

Finland used Ascom Access Nodes also in their own tactical network that was separate from the key network. For example the Finnish UN-soldiers could use their mobile phones via Ascom Access Node in a way as they had been in Finland. The pricing etc. was in Finnish level and no additional roaming fees were added to their costs. This was a major issue in order to keep the Finnish troops able to stay in contact with their loved ones back in Finland.

Setting up the Ascom Access Node network was (and is) extremely easy and fast. This was a big surprise to many signaling troops in Bosnia operation. Ascom Access Node's ability to connect the different networks was also something new, as well as simplicity and flexibility of the usage.

Compared to former solutions the Ascom Access Nodes persuaded through its simplicity and reliability of management services, its connectivity to a large variety of different subsystems and its reliability under harsh conditions. 'The Ascom Access Node enables the extension and transformation of a military operation into a civilian crisis management operation and further into a network operated by local operators,' colonel Kyösti Halonen concludes.