

MANAGEMENT SELECTION FOR THE STATE BORDER SERVICE FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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ABSTRACT

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, governmental structures are being established with the support of the United Nations (UNMBiH). This includes the formation of a state border service (SBS) which is to protect the state border and check freight and passenger traffic to the border. The implementation of the SBS as the state police force took place on 13 January 2000. It is subordinate to the Ministry for Communication and Civil Affairs. The politically appointed leadership is formed by a triple presidency (one director, two deputies) in which the ethnic groups of Bosniacs, Serbs and Croats are represented. At the upper command level, the posts of commissioner, chief of staff; chief of operations and chief of administration had to be filled. The selection and training of the SBS members takes place under the direction of the International Police Task force (CPTF), a UN section. At the initiative of the IPTF. The psychologist of the GLCONSFOR (L) supported the planning and execution of the management selection for the upper command level of the SBS. The standards of an assessment centre were taken as a basis for the selection for the positions at the upper command level, although interactive, group-dynamic study situations could not be put into practice due to the language barrier. A multi-stage selection process with a sequential decision strategy was applied. The selection decision was based on the data of the applicant's biography, his/her self-conception and locus of control, intelligence, computer skills, management capability as well as self-presentation. The methods that were applied comprised psychometric tests, standardised questionnaires and interviews as well as samples of the applicant's work.

The report gives an overview of the assessment schedule, of the procedures that were applied and of the selection criteria. In addition, it presents the empirical results gained in the selection process.

Preliminary Remark

Since the task of ensuring peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been transferred to NATO, the German armed forces have been involved in the IFOR/SFOR mission. The German contingents include a troop psychologist who supports the military commanders in all matters concerning leadership and who is mainly occupied with preventing and treating cases of mission-related psychical strain. At the request of the International Police Task Force (IPTF), a UN section, cooperation was established with the psychologist of the 5th German SFOR contingent with regard to the conception and implementation of a personnel selection procedure for the upper management level of the State Border Service of Bosnia-Herzegovina (SBS), which was to be built up.

Introduction

The armed conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina ceased with the conclusion of the Dayton Agreement (21 November 1995). The principal result was that the parties involved decided that Bosnia-Herzegovina should continue to be a unified state with its current borders and should be internationally recognised. The UN was given a mandate to ensure peace as well as to resettle refugees and build up governmental structures. The organisation carried out this mandate by forming and deploying UNPROFOR and UNMiBiH. In addition to that, other important international organisations (the OSCE, the EU and NATO) have been involved in the reconstruction programme for Bosnia-Herzegovina. The protection of the state border and the control of passenger and goods traffic are of particular importance with respect to the establishment of national sovereignty. The implementation of the measures agreed in the Dayton Agreement is supervised by the High Representative (HR), an official who is appointed by the UN. On the basis of his mandate, the High Representative can, if need be, enforce the fulfilment of the terms of the agreement by issuing directives of his own. After the General Assembly of the Republika Srpska (RS) had repeatedly refused to agree to the formation of a joint border police force, the latter was implemented on 13 January 2000 on the instructions of the High Representative. In contrast to the composition of the SBS directorate, in which the three ethnic groups are each represented by one member, the SBS leadership was to be formed with no consideration for the applicants' ethnic origin and solely on the basis of a selection procedure that met international standards. At the upper management level of the SBS, the four posts of **Commissioner**, **Chief of Staff**, **Chief of Operations** and **Chief of Administration** had to be filled.

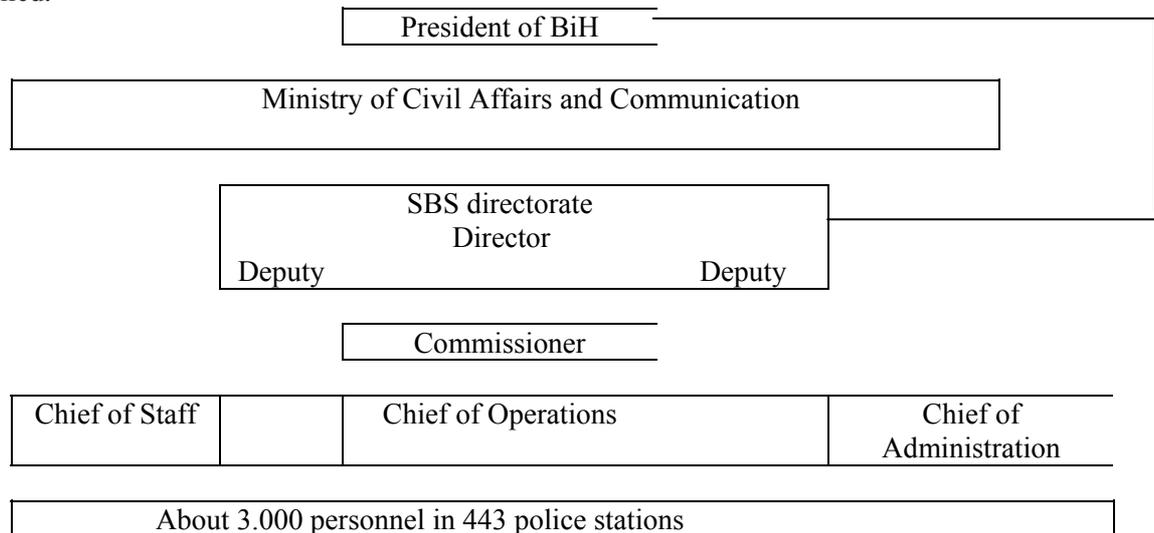


Figure 1: Organigram State Border Service BiH

Owing to the politically explosive nature of the formation of an SBS, it was particularly important to UNMiBiH that the selection of applicants would meet internationally approved standards so that the outcome would stand up to reviews of selection decisions in the event of appeals or complaints.

The method that was applied was a multi-stage selection process which comprised the following phases:

- pre-selection of applicants on the basis of a detailed questionnaire,
- recording of personality traits and capabilities which were relevant for the respective position,
- job interviews conducted by a selection committee.

The positions to be filled had been advertised in three national newspapers over a period of several days. The large-sized advertisements contained detailed descriptions of the jobs and their requirements.

The following qualifications and characteristics had to be proved:

- **university degree,**
- **at least ten years police work or public administration experience,**
- **work experience in management positions,**
- **Bosnia-Herzegovina citizenship holder,**
- active member or hold office without any political party/ impartiality,
- **no criminal record**
- have no debts,
- **received IPTF non-compliance notification,**
- subject of internal investigation,
- willingness to work countrywide,
- ownership of a real estate,
- knowledge of foreign languages,
- computer skills.

If no proof was furnished with regard to the requirements **printed in bold**, the applicant was excluded from the selection process.

In the wake of the advertisement, the Office of the IPTF Commissioner received 78 applications. The following table gives an overview of the applicants' ethnic origin, sex and average age.

Table 1: demographic characteristics of the applicants

	Ethnic Group			total
	Bosniacs	Croats	Serbs	
male	39	14	16	69
female	5	2	2	9
age	41,9	43,7	41,5	42,2
total	44 (56,4 %)	16 (20,5 %)	18 (23,1 %)	78

After the application documents had been looked through, 24 of the 78 applicants were admitted to the next stage of the selection process. In this connection, it was to be noted that due to the pre-selection procedure the Serb proportion in the group of applicants had increased considerably.

Independently of each other, two IPTF members (from Germany and Denmark) evaluated the application documents on the basis of a checklist. In the event of divergent assessments, the decision was taken by the chairman of the selection committee.

Stage 2 of the Selection Process (Written Part)

In addition to requiring the applicants for the SBS management positions to furnish proof of their job-specific training and work experience, information was obtained with respect to the applicants' personality traits – traits that had been derived from the job requirements. These traits were **self-perception and self-conception**, **capability to act as leader** and **leadership responsibility** as well as **social skills** (ability to guide personnel, negotiation skills). Although the required university degrees went to prove that the applicants' intellectual capacity was in accordance with the requirements, proof of analytical intelligence was demanded so that the applicants could be differentiated objectively.

When the decision was made as to what methods were to be used at stage 2 of the selection process, allowances had to be made for the language barriers which made group discussions, planning games or group work impossible. Instead, characteristics were to be assessed on the basis of the information that the applicants provided in the questionnaires.

Examination at stage 2 comprised the following test procedures:

1 – Questionnaire on Self-Conception and Locus of Control (KRAMPEN 1982)

The questionnaire records a person's generalised self-conception of his/her own capabilities as well as his/her convictions with regard to the control of his/her actions. It is based on ROTTER's "locus of control" concept and is made up of four sections each of which consists of eight questions.

Scale 1 – "Internal Control"

- the control the examinee perceives with regard to events that affect him and with respect to his/her own life

Scale 2 – "External Control"

- generalised expectation that important events in life depend on the influence of other people

Scale 3 – "Fatalistic External Control"

- generalised expectation that important events in life depend on fate, good luck, bad luck or chance

Scale 4 – "Self-Conception of One's Own Capabilities"

- generalised expectation that one has a scope of action in decision situations

The following quality criteria underlie the questionnaire:

reliability: CRONBACH Alpha = .89; split-Half = .83; retest (after 12 weeks) = .87

structural validity: correlation with the scales of other personality inventories

EYSENK Personality Inventory (EPI): neuroticism = -.29 extraversion = .37

Freiburg Personality Inventory (FPI): inhibition = -.26 satisfaction with life = .39

depressivity = -.40

emotionality = -.41

2 – "Progressive Matrices" Intelligence Test (RAVEN, version: 1969)

This well-known, language-free test is a particularly suitable means of recording intellectual performance in the area of logical and analytical thinking, which was deemed to be relevant to SBS management positions.

Reliability: r = .86 to .91

Validity: empirical results for differential validity

3 – "Royal Ulster Constabulary Questionnaire" for determining management capabilities

The determination of the required aptitude for being a leader and superior played a central role in the written part of the selection process. The method that was available for this was a questionnaire which had proved worthwhile in the selection of **British police officers**. By making the applicants give a self-assessment, this questionnaire allows to gain information as to the fulfilment of job requirements. In the questionnaire, one has to comment - in free writing - on concrete conflict or decision situations which can occur at the upper management level. For evaluation, it is important to establish whether the questions were understood in terms of content, whether adequate solutions were worked out and whether the examinee was able to give examples from previous work experience. The applicants had to comment on the following job-specific leadership capabilities: **communication skills, interpersonal skills, ability to solve problems, ability to make decisions, creativity/flexibility, drive and determination, ability to cope with pressure, ability to represent the organisation.**

The answers given were rated by two IPTF members who were familiar with the questionnaires. The answers also served as preparatory material for the job interviews in the decisive phase of the selection process.

4 - Computer Test

The computer skills which were required for all the posts - in particular for that of Chief of Administration - were determined by means of 24 multiple-choice questions about PC technology and by way of two assignments to format a text and draw up a table (MS Word, MS Excel). The quantitative assessment of the applicants' answers and results was based on the percentage of correct solutions.

Results at Stage 2

The distribution statistics of the performance scores of the applied test procedures are shown in the following table. Owing to the small sample survey, the statistical findings - especially with respect to significant differences in interference-related statistical calculations - should be assessed with certain reservation. They may be used for stating a trend, though.

parameter	Progressiv Matrices	Self-conception/ locus of control	RUCQ	computer-test
mean	17,3	29,3	54,8	48,3
median	18,0	27,5	54,0	53,0
standard deviation	5,1	10,7	13,0	28,5
range	24,0	43,0	51,0	97,0
minimum	7,0	12,0	25,0	0,0
maximum	31,0	55,0	76,0	97,0
Kolgomorov-Smirnov Z	.737	.594	.497	.794

Table 2: statistical parameters for the test procedures at stage 2 (N = 24)

As can be gathered from the standard deviation and the range, the applied methods form a suitable means of differentiating the applicants. A review of the distribution of relative scores by way of the Kolgomorov-Smirnov test (K-S) shows that the applied test procedures are compatible with the assumption of normal distribution.

The objective behind stage 2 was to single out those applicants who - at stage 3 - were to be presented to the committee as candidates for the four management positions that had to be filled.

To this end, quartile intervals were specified for the distribution of the individual test procedures, and the individual scores were converted into corresponding performance points (1-4). The total performance points of the applied test procedures determined the performance value of the respective applicant at stage 2. The applicants with the highest totals were allowed to remain in the selection process. For each of the four positions that were to be filled, the best four candidates were admitted to the oral test. Thus, 16 of the 24 applicants got through to the final stage of the selection process.

As you can gather from the following table, the comparison between the successful and the unsuccessful applicants shows a substantial difference only with regard to the RUCQ and shows considerably higher values for the personality questionnaire.

tests	group	average	standard deviation	significance
intelligence	unsuccessful	17,0	7,0	.875
	successful	17,4	4,1	
personality	unsuccessful	25,4	13,6	.292
	successful	31,3	8,7	
management skills	unsuccessful	46,4	13,8	.044*
	successful	58,9	10,7	
computer skills	unsuccessful	45,3	28,8	.717
	successful	49,9	29,2	

Table 3: comparison (T test) of the test results of successful (n = 16) and unsuccessful (n = 8) applicants at stage 2

As for the group of successful candidates, the selection strategy that was taken as a basis resulted in an improvement in leadership capability, internal control and self-confidence. In the areas of intelligence and computer skills, enhancement was insignificant. With the exception of the computer test, a considerably reduced standard deviation in the test results of the successful group is to be noted. This points to more homogenous performance. As is shown by the following table, the finding from the pre-selection procedure with regard to the applicants' ethnic origin continued with a further increase in the proportion of Serbs.

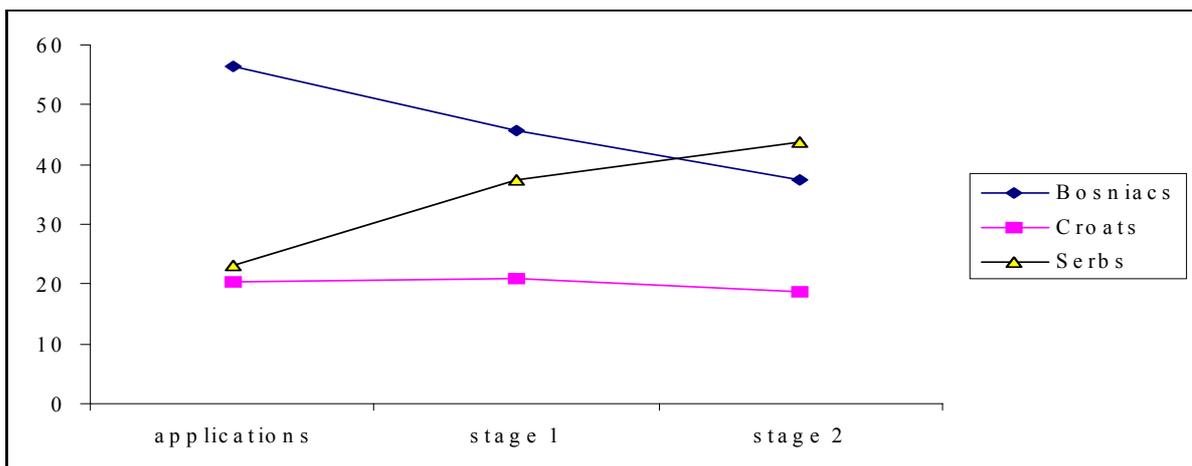


Figure 2: ethnic composition (in %) of the group of applicants at the individual stages of the selection process

Stage 3 (Oral Part)

In the oral part of the selection process, the applicants had to appear before a selection committee. The committee was made up of a chairman, three IPTF monitors and the psychologist of the 5th German Contingent SFOR, who were all entitled to vote. In addition to that, the director of the SBS sat in on the job interviews as an observer. His detailed knowledge of governmental organisations, responsibilities and areas of work was very useful when it came to assessing the particulars given in the application documents and evaluating statements given in the interviews. The director's knowledge also made it possible to precisely ask about details when necessary.

The findings and observations required for an assessment of the respective applicant ensued from the short lecture he was required to hold, from the reasons the applicant gave for being qualified for the job he was striving for, from intensive questioning about the particulars in the application documents on hand as well from the RUCQ. Each member of the committee gave an evaluation to what extent the applicants displayed the defined qualification features. The qualification features had been assigned weightiness factors by which the average values of the applicants' individual ratings were multiplied. The total of the feature points that were

calculated in this way constituted the individual, normally distributed interview scores (K-S Z=.869).

Given to a theoretical range from 55 to 155, the average was 130.5. After the quartiles of the interview scores had been calculated, the scores were converted into performance values (1-4).

To cover to the greatest possible extent the qualification spectra of the management positions that were to be filled, the selection of the test procedures was based on the postulate that the methods would largely be independent of each another. The correlation coefficients which are listed in the following table show that this assumption proved true to a great extent.

	intelligence test	personality test	management test	computer test	interview	final-score
intelligence test	--	.106	-.098	.676**	.047	.604**
personality test		--	.595**	-.028	-.029	.385*
managem. test			--	-.203	.172	.335*
computer test				--	.258	.680**
interview					--	.573*

Table 4: coefficients of intercorrelation for the test procedures and final-score (n = 16)

The fact that the final score depended on the results of the individual test procedures can be gathered from the beta-weights which were determined by means of multiple regression. As is shown by table 5, the performance in the intelligence test, in the RUCQ and in the interview indicate significant functional relations to the final score. The personality questionnaire on self-conception and locus of control as well as the computer test only make a minor contribution towards increasing the multiple regression coefficient R. The significant correlation between the intelligence test as well as between the personality questionnaire and the RUCQ explains the small share of one's own determination of variance in the final score.

model	included variables	R	beta	α	model	included variables	R	beta	α
1 dependent variable: final-score	interview	.952	.625	.00	2 dependent variable: final-score	interview	.969	.650	.00
	personality test		-.087	.45		intelligence test		.642	.00
	intelligence test		.629	.00		managem. test		.172	.06
	managem. test		.239	.07		excluded variables			
	computer test		.064	.73	personality test		-.086	.44	
					computer test		-.041	.75	

Table 5: coefficients of multiple regression/ beta-weights for test procedures

Result of Stage 3

For each of the 16 applicants, the total of the performance values achieved at stage 2 and at stage 3 was calculated. Then, the applicants rank on the eligibility scale was established on the basis of this final score. Choosing from the six applicants who occupied the ranks 1 to 4, the selection board by majority decision made its recommendations as to who should occupy the management positions. This filling list was then submitted to the IPTF Commissioner for decision and appointment.

Except for one post (that of Chief of Staff), the results of the selection process were adopted.

Each of the candidates who were invited to the oral test had been checked by the "Certification Unit" and the "Background Unit" for involvement in war crimes in Bosnia-Herzegovina. No incriminating facts were discovered in any of the cases.

Three weeks later, on 06 June 2000, the first border police station at Sarajevo Airport was officially handed over. The event met with great interest on the part of prominent members of the international organisations, of local politicians and of the press. Three more border police stations have followed so far.