This City Card is one of 13, which presents a very brief overview on the city. The information provided is not exhaustive, nor would it be possible encapsulate the entirety of the diversity of experience, outlook and communal identity of the population of any of these cities. Statements about political facts are not intended to prefer one perspective on those facts over another, the interest here is not in entering into political differences over the country’s sensitive institutional arrangements. The political parties are categorized according to local voter base, although some parties with a pronounced mono-ethnic constituency also oppose what they see as the predominant forms of ethnic politics. Furthermore, the 1991 census: did not give individuals choices of how to describe themselves, and its categories confounded ethnic and religious identities; the categories also did not allow for a representation of individuals or families from mixed backgrounds, which the reader should keep in mind. In addition, the segment that captures “Voices” of citizens are not filtered or approved but presented as a reflection of local perspectives that have been raised by individuals that attended one of the events during this research process. Lastly this project involves a long-term engagement with the people in these cities, and our will involve going back to them to examine the perspectives of parties interested in further reconciliation or trust-building activity. For more details about the project and the research results please visit the our website: Religion and Ethics in the Making of War and Peace and the Faktori pomirenja i izgradnja povjerenja (BiH/S Languages)

Trebinje is the southernmost municipality in Herzegovina; administratively, it falls within the Republika Srpska entity. It is a city that has throughout the ages had close commercial relations with Dubrovnik, as it connects Bosnia with Dubrovnik on the road to Constantinople. The population of Trebinje in 2013 was 31,433. Today, the population is almost totally Serb, while it was more diverse in 1991, with 18% identifying as Muslim in the census. The municipality assembly has since the war been primarily held by political parties with a Serb voter base, the most recent local elections of 2012 resulted in 9 Assembly seats for SNSD, 5 for PDP, 4 for SDS, 3 for DP, 2 for Pokret za Trebinje, and 1 for SP, DNS and Party of Unified Pensioners respectively.

During the war of the 1990s, the majority of Muslims (or Bosniaks) and Croats left, and numerous indictment cases at the ICTY testify of ethnic cleansing methods being applied in Trebinje by the Republika Srpska army. In 1991, Trebinje was one of main command bases for the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA). The commanders of the JNA were responsible for ordering the attack on the Croatian city of Dubrovnik. This is an issue that has left sour relations between Trebinje and Dubrovnik that had throughout the ages had a significant commercial connection.

Today, the city is suffering from economic stagnation. The registered rate of unemployed persons is above the country average at over 40% in 2015. According to the 2013 data, the average salary was 848 BAM (28th in BiH), and GDP per capita was 7,242.52 BAM (25th in BiH). Two-thirds of the employed work in the public sector, only 1/3 in the private, and this also contributes to the vulnerability of the city’s economy. Investments are primarily directed to viticulture. It picturesque views and stone-based architecture make Trebinje one of the most beautiful cities in BiH and an attractive touristic location. The city’s development strategy aims to promote its rich cultural heritage, combined with famous vine and food products. It also establishes cooperation with cities from neighboring cities (Herceg Novi, Dubrovnik) which have a developed touristic economy.

The Surveyed citizens in Trebinje highly support peace and reconciliation activities, which the graph on the left shows. Like in other cities, there is a high support for educational and culture events to support prejudice and remove obstacles, which is reinforced by the significance given to the teacher’s role in these processes.

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2 Available at www.mojemjesto.ba.
VOICES FROM TREBINJE: Participants at the research project’s Trebinje meetings indicated that they are very open to reconciliation, and affirmed that they have not experienced any obstacles in that regard. Most of the city’s Bosniaks are in Western European countries, are well integrated, and economically have established their lives there. They visit Trebinje and their homes only during summer vacation. While the city claims to have contributed as much as possible in terms of property restitution and reconstruction, and believes that these processes are 100% completed, the ethnic Bosniak and Croat population has not returned. The reasons for this lie not in the lack of welcome for returnees, they say, but in the poor economic prospects of the town and in its high unemployment rate, which equally affects the current inhabitants. A number of individuals added that the past still needs to be addressed properly, and facts must be established, but there is insufficient political support for this, and the media also have a role in this. Having in mind that the market place on Trebinje’s central square has been marked as a meeting place of people of different backgrounds, sparking conversation and cooperation, one of the main drivers for reconciliation for citizens in Trebinje is economic improvement, greater economic cooperation with other towns, which would foster a higher level of interaction between people of different ethnic backgrounds. A number of artists said that culture and art should take on a greater role, as it would foster exchange of experience, views and interaction; however, this is not very much supported through the public financing system, and there is little appreciation for its significance.

Share of Trebinje citizens that:

- about the role to be played by people not identified with any one constituent people, able to... 79%
- positive or very positive about the role to be played by teachers and politicians 82%
- support social and cultural programming focused on obstacles to a common life 91%
- back increasing support for victims of the 1990s war 82%
- support educational programming to combat prejudice 82%
- 70%

4 This section is a summary of discussions during the Focus Group and Public Event in Trebinje.