

# The Buzim City in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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**Abstract**— Buzim is a town (with about 2,300 inhabitants) located in the extreme northwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Geographic coordinates: 45°02'50.17"N, 16°01'46.95"E, elevation: 321). Remains of material culture testify that this area was inhabited even before the arrival of the ancient Romans. From the 7th century, the Slavs came to this area, so this area was part of the Croatian and Hungarian kingdoms for a long time. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the main occupation of the people, and its position on important roads contributed to the development of crafts and trade. There was a mint in Bužim in the 14th century.

**Keywords**— Bosnia and Herzegovina, Buzim

## I. INTRODUCTION

Buzim is a town (with about 2,300 inhabitants) located in the extreme northwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina <sup>[1]</sup> (Geographic coordinates: 45°02'50.17"N, 16°01'46.95"E, elevation: 321). (Figure 1). Remains of material culture testify that this area was inhabited even before the arrival of the ancient Romans. From the 7th century, the Slavs came to this area, so this area was part of the Croatian and Hungarian kingdoms for a long time. Agriculture and animal husbandry were the main occupation of the people, and its position on important roads contributed to the development of crafts and trade. There was a mint in Buzim in the 14th century <sup>[2]</sup>.

Until the arrival of the Ottomans, Bužim meant a fortified town on a prominent hill from where a wide area could be monitored. At that time, this fortress-city was called Cava, i.e. Cavski grad. According to written documents, the city-fort was built at the time when Juraj Mikulicic ruled this area, at the end of the 15th century. The Hungarian king Charles Robert (1288 – 1342) gave Buzim as a gift to Grgur Galles, which remained in the possession of his family until 1425, when (from 1429) it was in the possession of the Blagajski princes. In the following period, the power over Bužim passed from the hands of several lords: Counts of Celje, Juraj Mikulicic (1479-1494), Keglevici Buzimski (16th century).

The Ottomans occupied Bužim (1576) led by Ferhad Pasha Sokolovic (1530-1586) and established a permanent military garrison here. It is part of the Krup Captaincy, within the Bihac sandjak <sup>[2,3]</sup>. Since the arrival of the Ottomans, the town at the foot of the fort began to develop. The old town of Bužim was abandoned by the Ottoman military crew in 1851. During the 19th and 20th centuries, Buzim was part of the municipality of Bosanska Krupa, and since 1995 it has been an independent municipality.

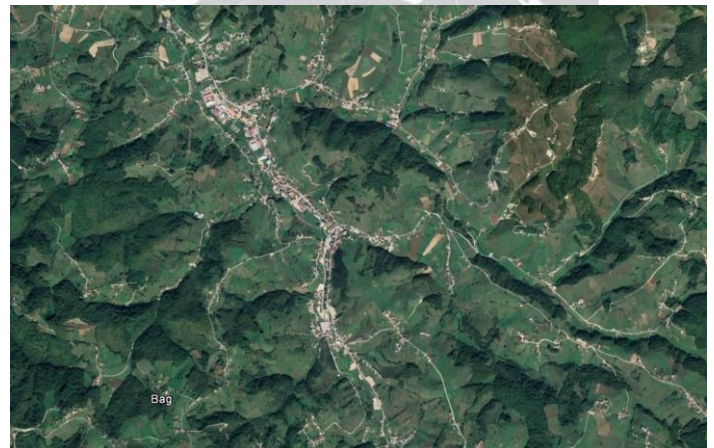


Figure 1. Buzim. The location

Source (left):

[https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia\\_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija](https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija), Accessed: June 24, 2023.,

Source (right): Google Earth: Accessed: June 24, 2023.

## II. ENVIRONMENT

By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence <sup>[4]</sup>.

### 1.1. Natural environment

By natural environment, we mean all those features that nature gave, and on which man (mostly) did not exert his influence: geographical location, geomorphology, watercourses and reservoirs, plant and animal life, available soil, climate <sup>[4]</sup>. In Buzim, the summers are warm, the winters very cold and snowy, and it is partly cloudy throughout the year. During the year, the temperature usually varies from -4 °C to 27 °C and is rarely below -11 °C or above 33 °C (Figure 2) <sup>[5]</sup>.

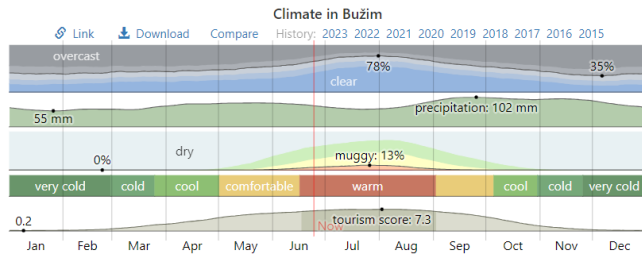


Figure 2. Bužim weather by month

Source: Climate and Average Weather Year Round in Bužim weatherspark.com/y/80846/Average-Weather-in-Bužim-Bosnia-&-Herzegovina-Year-Round Accessed: June 24, 2023.

The basic natural resources that have generated life in this area from prehistory to the present day are water sources (Figure 3), arable fields and slightly hilly areas where people engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry (Figures 4, 7). Bužim also has forest wealth, which is the basis for the industrial-processing industry. It is particularly famous for its quality oak, which ranks second in the Balkans [6].



Figure 3. Grosinovac spring in Cava near Bužim (Geographic coordinates: 45°02'43.50"N, 16°05'20.20"E, Elevation: 253)

Source (left): Google Earth. Accessed: June 24, 2023.  
Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

In the Spatial Plan of the Una-Sana Canton, for the Bužim Municipality, natural resources and sights are emphasized<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Source Svetinja, Hunting ground Dobro selo, Forest complex Jelovski potok, Ornate oak - Jelovski potok, Bužimsko lake, Riborevir Bužimsko lake, Dobro Selo.

SPATIAL PLAN OF THE UNSKO-SAN CANTON FOR THE PERIOD 2012-2032 [9]  
[http://vladausk.ba/v4/files/media/pdf/59c4b9d26d7df1.00021393\\_Prostorni%20plan%20USK%20-%20Prostorna%20osnova.pdf](http://vladausk.ba/v4/files/media/pdf/59c4b9d26d7df1.00021393_Prostorni%20plan%20USK%20-%20Prostorna%20osnova.pdf), Access: 22.05.2018.



Figure 4. Raspberry harvest in Bužim

Source (left): <http://hip.ba/2017/05/26/objaviti-akontativnecijene-maline-prije-pocetka-berbe/>, June 24, 2023

Source (right): <https://www.banaluka.com/aktuelno/bih/malinari-nezadovoljni-otkupnom-cijenom-najavljuju-proteste/>, June 24, 2023

In recent times, tourism has become an important economic branch, thanks to exceptional natural beauty and sights, where the Svetinja waterfall is the most famous (Figures 5,6).

All natural phenomena for which man has not found a rational explanation, as well as all human endeavors that go beyond the sphere of ordinary human experience, are shrouded in legends by the common people. One of them is the Svetinja locality with a source of water that is popularly called 'Ibret-water' ('Ibret-voda')<sup>2</sup>.

In the case of Svetinje water, it is a well-known geo-hydrological phenomenon of 'surge', where water from a deep reservoir rises to the surface at certain time intervals, depending on the season, or hydro-geological conditions.

This phenomenon is interesting in itself, and in the locality Svetinja got the meaning of holiness<sup>3</sup>. (A similar phenomenon occurs in the locality of Bjeljevina in Strgacina near Rudo).

The location of Svetinja is a place of exceptional mental strength and energy charge. Similar to many places throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, respect for God and ordinary human enjoyment of nature, prayer and teferič, contrition and (classy) showing others, pilgrimage and daily enjoyment and recreation in nature, with water, greenery and peace permeate here<sup>4</sup>.

This traditional Bosnian way of gathering people, where respect for God is shown and they enjoy games, conversation and general joy, is known as Dova<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibret (Turkish: miracle, lesson, message).

<sup>3</sup> Here the water suddenly flows (from a source above the travertine rock) and falls to the ground in the form of a waterfall about 15 meters high. The water flows for about an hour, dries up and flows again after an hour. People traditionally perceive this scene as a sublime sign, so they have always treated it with respect: "While the Ibret-water flows, insan (man) is silent"!  
(The author visited this locality on August 27, 2011, when he learned about the legends about the Sanctuary in a conversation with the locals).

<sup>4</sup> Traditionally, here every year, on the sixth day of the month of May, people from Bosnian Krajina and beyond gather en masse, recite a prayer after the noon prayer, to continue socializing in the form of a national 'teferic' (where future spouses met, among other things).

<sup>5</sup> 'Dua' ('Dova') in literal translation from the Arabic language means prayer. However, if we were to ask people in Bosnia and Herzegovina what dua is, we would get almost as many answers as there are respondents. Younger people always associate and equate the term 'dova' with the term 'teferic'.



Figure 5. Svetinja waterfall

Source: Author (August 27, 2011.)



Figure 6. Recreation center at the Svetinje spring

Source: Author (August 27, 2011.)

## 1.2. Social environment

By Social environment we mean everything that man has created and that separates him from the world of other living beings<sup>[6]</sup>. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less ordered products of their activity) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an ordered system of abstract symbols (letters, signs)<sup>[4]</sup>.

*Architectural cultural and historical heritage.* Buzim is located in the extreme northwest of Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the beginning of the existence of people in this area, the

area was considered a border area of states and peoples who came from the north, northeast and northwest, as well as those who came from the south and southwest. The old fortress town of Bužim, built in the 15th century, is a preserved witness of the past to this day (Figure 7). Among the buildings of exceptional architectural and ambient historical value are: the Old Wooden Mosque and the Old Mosque in Lubarda (Figures 8,9). The original wooden mosque was demolished, and a new mosque was built in its place (1938).

In the Spatial Plan of the Unskao-Sana Canteen, for the Buzim Municipality, cultural and historical heritage is emphasized<sup>6</sup>.



Figure 7. View from the old town of Buzim to the new town of Buzim  
Source: Author (July 19, 2011)

The old wooden mosque in Buzim, a building complex, is located at the foot of the medieval town-fortress Buzim<sup>7</sup>. The exact time of its construction is not known; according to the levha from 1838 (Hijri 1254) it is written that in 1838 Vedzihi Pasha (Mehmet Salih Vecihi Paşa, ? - 1867) renovated this mosque as well as Hudut-cesma, and the same statements are confirmed in the vakufnama from 1840 (Hijri 1256), which is

<sup>6</sup> Prehistoric site Buzim 1, Radostovo - prehistoric castle, Buzim, Medieval site Buzim 2, Medieval site Klisa, Varoska Rijeka, Medieval site Klisa, Buzim, Medieval site Medica Brdo, Varoska Rijeka, Medieval site Crkvina, Dobro Selo, Medieval site Crkvina (code Zimonja) Dobro Selo, Medieval site Cavnik, Dobro Selo, Medieval site Crkvina, Mrazovac, Izet Nanic's Turbe, Buzim, Sehidsko turbe, Vrhovska. SPATIAL PLAN OF THE UNSKO-SAN CANTON FOR THE PERIOD 2012-2032.

[http://vladausk.ba/v4/files/media/pdf/59c4b9d26d7df1.00021393\\_Prostorni%20plan%20USK%20-%20Prostorna%20osnova.pdf](http://vladausk.ba/v4/files/media/pdf/59c4b9d26d7df1.00021393_Prostorni%20plan%20USK%20-%20Prostorna%20osnova.pdf), Accessed: June 24, 2023.

<sup>7</sup> The Commission for the Protection of National Monuments of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared the Old Wooden Mosque in Buzim, a building complex, a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina by decision no. 07.6-547/03-1, dated July 2, 2003.

located in the mosque. The dimensions of the building are 14 m x 18 m + 2.5 m x 18 m; the clear height (sub-ceiling made of shishet) of the inner prayer space is 5 m. The walls of the building are made of oak planks (7 cm x 25 cm) which are attached to the edge wooden columns (section 21 cm x 21 cm), (Figure 8).



Figure 8. The old wooden mosque in Buzim

Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

The old mosque in Lubard. The mosque in the village of Lubarda, 3.5 km from Buzim, was built (1938) on the site of an earlier, old wooden mosque. Information about the construction of this mosque was found in the preserved archive (notebooks) kept by its imam, Alirizah Harcevic. This mosque was also devastated during the war (1992-1995). The mosque is under renovation, in a new design (Figure 9).



Figure 9. The old mosque in Lubard. Left: the mosque destroyed in the 1992-1995 war. Right: the renovated mosque

Source: <http://buziminfo.ba/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/lubarda.jpg>, Accessed: 22.06.2018.

Source: <http://mapio.net/pic/p-41641320/>, Accessed: 22.06.2018.

### III. MAN

Space acquires meaning only if it stands in some relation to man. This relationship ranges from the relations of the already known dimensions of space, through those that can be sensed, to those that are currently beyond the reach of human imagination. In other words, man is a being on the way, a being who continuously learns, a being of open possibilities. The term 'man' is a huge question, the essence of which he

himself is trying to decipher within his limits, within the limits of the Earth and the limits of the Universe<sup>[4]</sup>.

Given that it was located on the border between two powerful empires, the Ottoman and the Habsburg, Buzim and its wider surroundings were for a long time the scene of fierce battles and the suffering of the population. The lyrics of the song, which in different versions were often sung throughout the Bosnian region and even in Buzim, testify to the difficult and harsh circumstances at that time<sup>[6]</sup>:

“O Krajina, bloody dress,  
you always start a fight,  
you've been bloody since you became  
lunch with blood, and dinner with blood,  
each one chews bloody morsels,  
never white tribute, no rest”<sup>[7]</sup>.

After the entry of Buzim and its surroundings into the new empire in 1576, the next century was spent in the process of stabilizing the Ottoman military and political power, and the conversion of the remaining Catholic population to Islam. Although there were frequent incursions of individuals or smaller groups of bandits into this region, there was no movement of the border. A large number of public fountains were built along the roads in the wider area of Buži, testifying to the presence of the 'water cult' in this area (Figures 10-17).



Figure 10. One of the many public ('hair') taps in Buzim

Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

In the city of Bužim (the former suburb of the old city of Bužim), a memorial (martyr's) fountain has been arranged on the main city street in a way that is unobtrusive with any of its elements. It leaves a strong impression on passers-by with its expediency, accessibility and quality of drinking water (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Spomen (šehidska) česma u Bužimu

Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

In the finely arranged settlement of Cava, along the Bosanska Otoka-Buzim road, a memorial (martyr's) fountain was erected in honor of the fallen fighters (martyrs) of this region, from the 1992-1995 war. The monument, in which the central part is a fountain with water and the names of the

martyrs, was made in such a way that it forms a beautiful whole and architectural composition with the existing mosque, the surrounding meadows, trees and the settlement as a whole (Figure 12).



Figure 12. Memorial (martyr's) fountain in Cava near Buzim (Geographic coordinates: 45°01'25.73"N, 16°05'38.05"E, Elevation: 219)

Source (left): Google Earth. Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

Throughout history, the Bosnian Krajina has been known for its libertarian spirit. In the series of names of people who bear witness to this truth by their actions, there is also the name of general Izet Nanic (1965-1995), who fell for the freedom of the Buzim region in the 1992-1995 war. As a sign of respect for his work, a turbe was built in the Bužima valley (Figure 13).

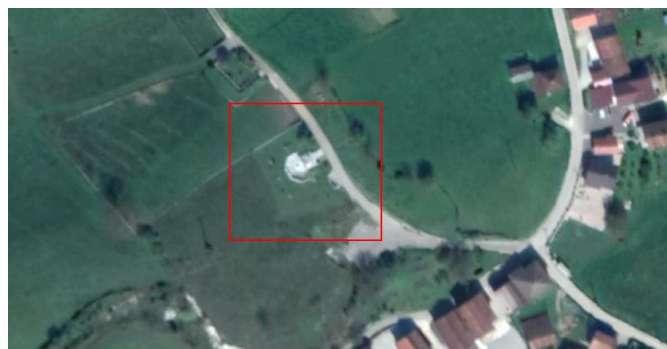


Figure 13. Turbe generala Izeta Nanica, (Geographic coordinates: 45°04'20.44"N, 16°00'56.02"E, elevation: 214)

Source (above): Google Earth. Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Source (left): <https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipOAYILe857daa4dt9IfG1vExWyE3GiF7eTnWb7C=w1440-h1440-pd>  
 Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Source(right):[https://www.google.com/search?q=turbe+general+izeta+nani%C4%87a&source=lmns&bih=969&biw=1920&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enBA814BA814&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiNoZ2cgN7\\_AhVrygIHHWhtAZ0Q\\_AUoAHoECAEQAA#lpg=cid:CgIgAQ%3D%3D,ik:CAoSLEFGMVFPcFBkQUwzWThVY0U5ZG45WTV4bzJfdzF6Zm10LThCUTYwOXItTzVJ](https://www.google.com/search?q=turbe+general+izeta+nani%C4%87a&source=lmns&bih=969&biw=1920&rlz=1C1GCEA_enBA814BA814&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewiNoZ2cgN7_AhVrygIHHWhtAZ0Q_AUoAHoECAEQAA#lpg=cid:CgIgAQ%3D%3D,ik:CAoSLEFGMVFPcFBkQUwzWThVY0U5ZG45WTV4bzJfdzF6Zm10LThCUTYwOXItTzVJ), Accessed: June 25, 2023.

Along the road Cava-Radoc (that is, Cava-Svetinja locality), we come across a large number of public fountains whose generosity is different, from those that dry up during the summer to those whose abundance of drinking water impresses passers-by. Also, one cannot fail to notice that almost all public fountains were built by the same man, a certain Bajric Salih (Figures 14-17). Every fountain attracts the attention of passers-by. Sometimes its modest performance, whiteness, accessibility, position in the natural environment where the traveler-passer-by stops as if at the invitation of a good man and friend <sup>[6]</sup>.



Figure 14. Hair fountain in Cava near Buzim  
 Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)



Figure 15. Hair fountain in Cava near Buzim  
 Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)



Figure 16. Hair fountain in Cava near Buzim (Svetinja locality)  
 Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)



Figure 17. Hair fountain in Cava near Buzim (Svetinja locality)  
Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

#### IV. BOUNDARIES: ARCHITECTURE AS A FRAMEWORK OF LIFE

Boundaries are those places in the environment where the situations encountered are controlled according to very specific human needs. Conditions are all those discovered and undiscovered phenomena in space that have a stimulating or degrading effect on humans. Borders, therefore, have the task of enabling the selection of influences. In the architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment<sup>[4]</sup>. The Buzim old town today is the ruin of a once powerful fortress, the origin of which is linked to the developed Middle Ages (Figure 18). The city appears in historical documents under two names, initially Cava and later Buzim. The ruins of the Buzim old town consist of an upper or inner and a lower or outer town, the total area of the entire complex is 7,267 m<sup>2</sup>. The fort was built of finely hewn tufa and 'ljutac' or 'bihacite' stone. The inner, older fortress used to be a smaller castle, with high circular towers at the corners. At the end of the 15th century, the castle was surrounded by a new fortification. The walls and towers of this fort are much lower, and at the top they had positions for cannons. The inner city has the contours of a rectangle, and traces of the water cistern ('čatrnja') and the stone walls of the former mosque, built after the arrival of the Ottomans on the foundations of the ancient parish church of St. Clement. At the corners of the inner city there are round keep towers, which are in a very bad condition today. The entrance to the city is on the western wall, next to the northwestern tabia. In terms of construction and architectural characteristics, the city represents a typical Renaissance achievement, although there are elements of the Romanesque and Gothic styles. In the past, it was multifunctional, and had the function of a city, a castle, then a fortress, a mosque and a house-fortress. At the beginning of the 19th century, there were 22 residential buildings of Old Bosnian architecture in the courtyard of the outer city. With the arrival of Islam, a copyist's workshop operated in the fortress, where the copying of the Qur'an was nurtured. The people who worked there left many manuscript books and Qurans in private collections. Thus, one document states that in 1620 Hasan, the son of Behram who belonged to the Bužim crew, copied a larger work, at the end of which he signed himself as the leader of the Islamic Krajina.

In the Buzim old town there was also a medieval necropolis of stećaks. Stećci were built into the walls of this city. At the entrance to the outer city, the following symbols were carved into the walls: an armored hand with a mace and a mace, a soldier with a flag, a crescent moon, several stars, an otter and two birds. The mentioned symbols are probably part

of the heraldic representations of the rulers of the Buzim city [8].



Figure 18. The Buzim old town

Source (left): <https://darkoantolkovic.wordpress.com/2018/03/21/stari-grad-buzim/>, Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Source (right): <https://www.klix.ba/lifestyle/putovanja/stari-grad-buzim-tvrđjava-koja-je-predstavljala-kontinuitet-zivota-u-razlicitim-vremenskim-epohama/170506009>, Accessed: June 24, 2023.

Source: Author (July 20, 2011.)

#### V. CONCLUSION (PERSPECTIVES)

By the term 'Perspective' (in the framework of the theory of Architecturally Defined Space) we mean „that dynamic relationship that connects now-future, existing-possible, realized-desired“<sup>[4]</sup>. Once the central place of military and civil government in Bužim, this dilapidated and abandoned medieval fortress today hosts visitors, the curious, lovers of antiquities and cultural-historical heritage. In addition to natural treasures, such as the Svetinja locality (with a waterfall that is temporarily activated) and the production of 'healthy food', Bužim will increasingly be oriented towards tourism.

For the purposes of developing the Development Strategy of the Unsko-Sana Canton, a SWOT analysis was made, which "determines internal and external factors that positively and negatively affect the development of the Unsko-Sana Canton"<sup>[9]</sup>. The evidence of the basic problems faced by this area, but also of very clear potentials, was confirmed through very similar conclusions given by the mentioned SWOT analysis, in relation to the conclusions presented so far by this Plan<sup>[9,10]</sup>.

As advantages of the Una-Sana canton, the Plan states: good geographical location, natural resources - wealth of water and forests (the canton with the most water), clean, unpolluted nature (Una National Park), well-organized preparation for the installation and implementation of 'water' infrastructure, passed laws at the cantonal level from the aspect of environmental protection, industrial tradition, entrepreneurial infrastructure/entrepreneurial zones, labor market - cheaper labor force, radon-capable people from the industry, financial potential of workers working abroad and retirees with foreign pensions, good cross-border cooperation, cheaper workforce compared to the EU and neighboring

countries, infrastructure for human resource development (for primary and secondary education, university), infrastructure for health (Cantonal hospital), culture (institutions), sport (sports facilities), social, property, personal citizens' safety, good conditions for quality housing (clean air, clean environment - Una and other rivers, parks), communal infrastructure (there is water installation, electrical installations, telecommunications, communal services), numerous non-governmental organizations - there are associations that cover certain areas ( child abuse, the fight against cancer, etc.), a rich cultural and historical heritage [9,10]. As particularly good opportunities for the future of the Una-Sana Canton, the Plan emphasizes: dynamic development of selective forms (rural, sports, eco, vitality, etc.) of tourism, growth in demand for eco and integral agriculture products (healthy food, organic products), use of funds The EU and other international financial sources for the development of the Una-Sana Canton, Croatia's entry into the EU and cross-border cooperation programs (creation of cross-border clusters, convenience for companies to move their facilities to the Una-Sana Canton, i.e. outside the borders of the EU), the potential for dynamic tourism development in the cross-border region Croatia - Plitvice Lakes, the possibility of traffic connections with other regions (III development OS), incentives for the development of civil society (foreign organizations and funds) [9,10].

Buzim is one of the few municipalities in the area of the Una-Sana Canton and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that has a constantly positive natural increase. The share of the working-age population is relatively high, 73.2%, and certainly represents an important comparative advantage of the municipality [10]. At the same time as increasingly pronounced migration movements, opportunities for connecting with the diaspora are also opening up. The potentials of the diaspora, especially for supporting the economic development of the municipality, are still not sufficiently utilized, and it is necessary to continue to nurture relations with the diaspora and build more direct connections, for which the formation of a database on the diaspora of the

municipality of Bužim is a prerequisite [10]. There are great opportunities for the development of (rural) tourism in the territory of the municipality, through an integral approach and connecting the activities of tourism, agriculture and traditional crafts, into a unique offer through which the rural areas of the municipality can be revived, which would reduce the unemployment rate [10].

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