



# The OSCE

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is the world's largest regional security organization, consisting of 57 participating states. Recognised as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a forum for political negotiations, focusing on conflict prevention, crisis management, and post-conflict rehabilitation. Decisions made in the OSCE are politically rather than legally binding and are made on the basis of consensus.

The OSCE takes a comprehensive approach to security: it integrates the politico-military, economic-environmental, and human dimensions of security. The Organization's activities cover the fields of arms control, confidence and security-building measures, human rights, national minorities, democratisation, policing strategies, counter-terrorism, and economic and environmental activities.

## The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina: Who We Are

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFAP), negotiated in Dayton and signed in Paris in late 1995 to end nearly four years of conflict, shapes the work of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This agreement specifies the OSCE as one of the agencies responsible for helping to secure lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), implying the role of the Mission in helping to rehabilitate the country after the conflict and contributing to the building of a stable, secure, and democratic state.

## The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina: What We Do

The OSCE continues to play a vital role in strengthening the country's ability to foster a sustainable and stable security and defence environment by supporting the establishment of institutions, associations, and processes that will prevent future conflict, strengthen Bosnia and Herzegovina's governance, and encourage its consolidation as a multi-national and multi-ethnic democratic society. Additionally, the OSCE is one of the

main promoters of civil society building. It supports political and educational reform and works to promote and protect the human rights of all citizens of BiH.

The Mission does this primarily through its eleven thematic sections and a network of fourteen field offices throughout the country. This structure enables the OSCE to work closely with people and officials in municipalities, cantons, and entities as well as in the capital of the country and the central institutions of the state.

The Mission's eleven thematic sections include: Community Engagement; Governance Development; Parliamentary Support and Monitoring; Judicial and Legal Reform; Economic and Social Rights and Equality; Education; Compliance Assistance; Arms Control; Parliamentary Oversight of the Security Sector; Institutional Capacity of the Security Sector; and Monitoring of Cross-cutting Security Issues.



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## Community Engagement

Building inclusive democracy at the local level and working with communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina to encourage their sustained engagement with local authorities

Developing inclusive local governments that recognize and accommodate diversity can only be achieved by strengthening civic engagement and ensuring that the views and voices of all are heard and reflected in shaping local policies. The Community Engagement section promotes processes and mechanisms through which citizens are increasingly able to participate in the decision-making process. Particular attention is placed on strengthening the level of participation of vulnerable and under-represented groups and building their capacities to hold elected officials accountable for delivering vital services.

Through the *Local First Initiative*, the Mission works with civic groups to increase their involvement in the economic, social, cultural, and political processes that affect their lives. The programme encourages rural communities, youth, women, minorities, returnees, and other hard-to-reach groups to take action that will benefit their communities and foster greater dialogue across community divides.

School communities, national minority associations, and other civic bodies are regularly engaged and integrated into initiatives to promote real grassroots involvement. Within targeted projects, the Mission specifically supports stronger civic participation in municipal commissions and public hearings, greater youth engagement, volunteerism, the development of municipal partnership projects, and more active usage of democratic mechanisms of checks and balances to ensure transparency and safeguard the accountability of local institutions.

## Governance Development

Working with select municipal and cantonal governments to improve the efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness of legislative and executive bodies at these levels

Good governance at all levels of authority is critical for the development and growth of democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through the *Local First Initiative*, the Mission works to improve the effectiveness and responsiveness of local governments to ensure that municipalities have the political will and institutional capacity to address the needs and demands of all citizens. Particular attention is placed at the local level of government since municipalities form the most accessible level of government for citizens. Via its network of field offices across the country, the Mission focuses on improving the work and building the capacities of mayors, municipal administrations, municipal assemblies/councils, and local media. The Mission also aims to cultivate greater inter-municipal learning and co-operation via peer-to-peer reviews and the exchange of best practices.

The Mission supports local self-government legislative reform, assisting the process of harmonizing municipal and cantonal legislation with higher level laws. Reforms underway will ultimately enable municipalities to exercise competencies with greater efficiency and are in line with post-accession requirements set by the Council of Europe. Through tailored support, the Mission also works with select cantonal assemblies and governments in efforts to improve their capacities and raise their level of accountability to citizens.



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## Parliamentary Support and Monitoring

Working with the state parliament (the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina), entity parliaments (the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska National Assembly), and the Brčko District Assembly to improve their efficiency, transparency, and accountability

Efficient and effective parliamentary government is essential for Bosnia and Herzegovina's transition from peace implementation to full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. State and lower level parliaments play a central role in leading the country toward successful fulfilment of accession requirements, particularly in harmonizing certain legislation and bringing the process closer to citizens. As the legislative workload increases during integration processes, the Mission contributes to equipping the institutions with technical and professional expertise necessary for their effective functioning. Strengthened parliamentary services are pivotal for the overall success of integration.

The Mission also monitors plenary and committee sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, the FBiH Parliament, the RS National Assembly and the Brčko District Assembly in order to promote greater adherence to international standards. Working with both members of parliament and parliamentary services, the Mission implements activities aimed at increasing the transparency and accountability of these institutions via the promotion of citizen participation in the legislative process.

## Judicial and Legal Reform

Promoting human rights and strengthening the rule of law

The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaims that the country shall be a democratic state adhering to the rule of law and requires that state and entity governments ensure full respect for internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms. Implementation of these objectives depends on a strong, effective, impartial, and independent judiciary. Therefore, the Mission focuses on justice sector monitoring and advocacy, accountability for war crimes, protection of vulnerable individuals facing the justice system, and combating human trafficking.

The Mission is committed to ensuring that all people have equal access to the justice system. An important part of the Mission's work is a state-wide trial monitoring programme, which focuses on the judicial process in criminal cases from start to finish, from pre-indictment to trial and appeal procedures, with particular attention to war crimes, organized crime and corruption, trafficking, gender-based violence, and the execution of criminal sanctions. The results of monitoring have been used to propose and promote the necessary judicial and legal reforms and to provide assistance and advice on human rights conventions and obligations to authorities at all levels of government.

The Mission assists the justice sector in ensuring that laws and practices comply with the BiH Constitution and with international human rights instruments, the judiciary operates in an independent, efficient, and transparent manner, victims' rights in the proceedings are protected, defendants exercise their right to a fair trial, and the media and civil society play a constructive role in ensuring justice for all.



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## Economic and Social Rights and Equality

Promoting human rights compliant policies and practices with particular focus on equality and non-discrimination, and strengthening the capacities of state human rights institutions and civil society

Social stability, social security, and social rights are inextricably linked in every society, particularly in one emerging from violent conflict. The Mission assists BiH authorities at all levels to meet their obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil economic and social rights of vulnerable individuals and groups in a progressive and sustainable manner and in accordance with international and European human rights standards. The Mission works with authorities towards improved human rights compliant legislation and practices with an accent on civil procedural legislation and implementation of judicial decisions. It also assists the BiH Ombudsman for Human Rights and civil society actors to increase their ability to advocate for and defend the rights of the marginalized and socially excluded.

In the area of social rights, the Mission works on eliminating inequalities in legislation, policies, and practices in the field of social assistance and social housing, as well as on capacity building of social welfare service providers to ensure long-term sustainability. Of particular importance is the Mission support to activities and efforts aimed at ensuring the sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons – a direct requirement of the GFAP in BiH.

The Mission also focuses on improving the protection and promotion of the rights of Roma and other national

minorities, promotes equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, and strives to reduce and eliminate gender-based discrimination and raise the level of women involvement in public and political life.

## Education

Promoting good governance within the education sector and inclusive, accessible, and accountable schools throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina

In co-operation with domestic partners, the Mission is addressing BiH's obligation to bring the education system in line with Bosnia and Herzegovina's international commitments through reform of the content of education and the political framework and through the development of more inclusive and accessible schools. Addressing the roots of discrimination and separation in education as a consequence of former conflict is essential for promoting sustainable peace.

The Mission seeks to strengthen oversight mechanisms and encourage citizens to actively participate in the decision-making process. Projects focus on training and capacity building for school boards, school networks, school directors, and education inspectors. Mission efforts towards *curricular reform* support the development and establishment of country-wide curriculum standards and outcomes based on modern learning objectives that promote inclusivity and respect for diversity. Specifically, the Mission's projects have supported history textbook reform and modernization and increased respect for diversity by teaching about national minorities in the mainstream curricula.

The Mission further focuses on increasing the capacity of student councils and parent councils, promotes *peer*



*mediation* as a means of conflict prevention and resolution in schools, and works to strengthen co-operation between all school stakeholders. The Mission also supports education institutions in introducing and implementing the *Index for Inclusion*, a self-assessment tool whereby schools and communities together assess and improve their levels of inclusivity and participation.

## Compliance Assistance

### Assisting BiH to fully implement its OSCE and other international politico-military commitments

The Mission assists the state authorities in implementing norms and principles stipulated in various OSCE documents, including the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, the OSCE Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the OSCE Document on Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, and the Vienna Document 2011 on Confidence and Security-Building Measures.

Every year, the OSCE participating states are invited to participate in a number of exchanges of information on a variety of topics, including democratic control of security institutions, confidence and security-building measures, weapons exports, and the management of military stockpiles.

The Mission works with the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and the Ministry of Security as well as with their respective subordinate agencies regarding information sharing, awareness raising, and capacity building.

Additionally, the Mission continues to conduct subject specific seminars for state and entity level officials on the

OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security and Confidence and Security-Building Measures and, in co-operation with the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, conducts conferences to review BiH's compliance with its politico-military commitments and propose means of improving interagency coordination for overall compliance activities. This co-operation offers the possibility to conduct ad hoc seminars on other documents or decisions of the OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation as needed.

### Promoting effective management of military stockpiles

The OSCE Mission is promoting and assisting efforts to improve the management of BiH's stockpiles of military arms, ammunition, and explosives. It does so by promoting destruction as the preferred method of disposing surplus munitions and by encouraging improvements in the physical condition and security of the associated storage sites. The BiH Ministry of Defence has determined that it has a surplus of approximately 40,000 weapons and approximately 17,000 tons of ammunition. The OSCE, in co-operation with other international organizations, promotes an opinion that all of the surplus ammunition and most, if not all, of the surplus weaponry should be destroyed and encourages BiH to accelerate the pace of destruction by seeking, if necessary, assistance from the OSCE or other international organizations or bilateral agreements.

## Arms Control

### Supporting Sub-Regional Arms Control implementation

Due to continued progress in implementing the Sub-Regional Arms Control Agreement associated with Annex 1-B, Article IV of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the process of ownership transfer to the Parties to the



Agreement, the Mission supports the Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Article IV during the preparation and execution of his duties by providing linguistic, logistical, and administrative assistance.

## Parliamentary Oversight of the BiH Security Sector

### Ensuring effective democratic control over the security sector

To exercise parliamentary oversight of the BiH security sector, the BiH Parliamentary Assembly employs a parliamentary military commissioner to ensure respect for the human rights of military personnel and two joint committees charged with overseeing the security sector's policies and expenditures. The Mission promotes the authority, responsibility, and accessibility of the BiH Parliamentary Military Commissioner. It also assists the members of the Joint Committee on Defence and Security and the Joint Committee for the Oversight of the Work of the Intelligence-Security Agency of BiH to increase their capabilities for exercising their respective Joint Committees' oversight responsibilities.

Parliamentary oversight ensures that the BiH Ministries of Defence and Security, their respective subordinate agencies, and the Intelligence-Security Agency of BiH (OSA) fulfill their legal obligations. These include exercising respect for fundamental freedoms of the public as well as their own personnel. The Joint Committee on Defence and Security also reviews the annual plans and expenditures of the security sector institutions. The Joint Committee for the Oversight of the Work of OSA does the same regarding the OSA and oversees the legality of the security sector institutions' implementation of the BiH Law on Protection of Secret Data.

Through bilateral and regional co-operation, the members of both Joint Committees learn the capabilities, best practices, and challenges of other participating states in executing parliamentary oversight of security institutions. Committee members also visit various institutions within the territory of BiH and conduct meetings with BiH Border Police, OSA officials, and BiH Armed Forces units. These visits serve to increase members' awareness of the actual needs, concerns, and capabilities of the people serving in a variety of security functions.

In order to demonstrate the lessons they have learned and to continue the exploration of their respective subjects, the Joint Committees work with the Mission to conduct seminars, meetings, and workshops on selected topics. The OSCE also assists the Joint Committees and their staff by providing legal and subject matter expertise in preparing, reviewing, and applying legislation which concerns the state's security sector.

## Building Institutional Capacity within the Security Sector

The Mission works in co-operation with the BiH Council of Ministers' Inter-Ministerial Working Group for the Implementation of BiH Security Policy to promote awareness and the implementation of the country's adopted Security Policy, to raise awareness about the need for such a policy, and to promote the establishment and maintenance of permanent institutions and other resources required for these purposes. It does so by conducting a series of annual and ad hoc events for officials and selected members of the public. The Mission also encourages the modification of the current Security Policy to account for ongoing security sector reforms and to address wider security issues, such as the role of media, academia, and science and industry in security matters. Accordingly, the Mission also supports forums for regional dialogue on best practices in preparing for and



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managing responses to possible natural and man-made disasters and is working with the BiH Ministries of Defence and Security to make their respective operations and communications centers interoperable.

With the BiH Ministry of Defence, the Mission has worked to conduct regular annual strategic politico-military seminars for executive and senior representatives of the BiH Presidency, BiH Council of Ministers, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Security, and the BiH Armed Forces and members of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, media, and civil society organizations. The purpose of these seminars is to assemble decision makers, policy advisors, and civil society actors to explore the process by which critical decisions affecting the deployment of BiH officials on peace support operations and the country's ability to move toward Euro-Atlantic integration are made.

## Monitoring Cross-cutting Security Issues

The Mission monitors the democratic control of the state's security sector. It is often requested to give advice or facilitate activities on topics that were not specifically described in its original mandate, but fall under its approach to encouraging comprehensive security. In such cases, the Mission co-ordinates efforts with the OSCE Secretariat and Conflict Prevention Center and their respective subordinate units to ensure that the best advice is offered and appropriate activities are supported by the OSCE. The OSCE Mission focuses on four cross-cutting security issues: border management, combating terrorism, civil protection/crisis management, and special police matters, including promotion of gender inclusiveness in the security sector.



The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 57 states through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

## Field Network of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

Through its network of 14 field offices, the OSCE Mission to BiH covers the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This extensive field presence is one of the Mission's key assets.

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