

# Enjoyment of Fundamental Freedoms



The Mission supports BiH in efforts aimed at improving and harmonizing laws and practices with international human rights standards in the fields of freedom of peaceful assembly and association, freedom of expression/ media and freedom of religion or belief.

The Mission monitors the application of international human rights standards by law enforcement agencies during peaceful assemblies, and supports journalists and human rights defenders in carrying out their human rights work. The Mission works with the authorities at all levels

to ensure compliance with international standards and advocates for improvement of the legal framework governing the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms.

The Mission provides relevant training to key partners including law enforcement

agencies, human rights organizations and activists, members of the judiciary, media, and political representatives. It recognizes the essential role of human rights defenders and supports them in carrying out their functions that are vital to any democratic society.

## **Freedom of Assembly and Association**

Co-operating closely with relevant authorities and institutions, the Mission engages in numerous advocacy efforts throughout BiH aiming at improving the legislative framework governing the enjoyment of the freedom of peaceful assembly. The Mission plays an advisory role in the development and adoption of laws and bylaws

related to freedom of peaceful assembly and association to ensure full compliance with OSCE and other international human rights standards and practices. By the end of 2022, Brčko District of BiH had adopted a fully harmonized peaceful assembly law, while several FBiH cantons have started the process of harmonization. The Mission systematically monitors and reports on the enjoyment of the right to peaceful assembly and maintains close liaison with law enforcement agencies and human rights defenders. In addition, the Mission provides regular training and professional development opportunities to representatives of police agencies, judiciary and civil society organizations.

## Freedom of Religion or Belief

The Mission is committed to protection and promotion of the right to freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) and works on recognising and addressing obstacles to the enjoyment of this right. Such challenges often include attacks against religious property or officials and discriminatory practices based on religion or belief. In addition, lack of inter-religious dialogue in some regions of the country as well as certain high-level issues tend to hinder inter-religious relations. The Mission recognises the important role of religious communities and in that regard closely liaises with the key actors in promoting inter-religious dialogue as part of its broader reconciliation efforts.

The Mission further supports capacity building on FoRB, including awareness-raising on relevant international human rights standards and national legal framework, aimed at enabling greater enjoyment of this right. Through its field offices, the Mission keeps track of potential violations of the FoRB and of other relevant developments across the country, to keep abreast of the social trends and opportunities to tackle some of the main security- and human rights-related concerns.

## Freedom of Media

The Mission strives to promote a safe working environment for all journalists and media professionals in BiH. In pursuing this aim, the Mission works closely with prosecutor's offices and police departments across the

country on development of a more effective mechanism for protection of journalists.

The OSCE's country-wide network of human rights officers monitors threats, intimidation, and harassment directed at journalists and follows up with authorities to pursue justice. Individual attacks against journalists are regularly reported to the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, and are often publicly condemned.

The Mission collects and analyses data related to lawsuits brought against journalists and media outlets in BiH. It closely follows the adoption of new media legislation and advocates for greater transparency in media ownership and protection of journalists through amendments to the criminal legislation.

In co-operation with the Press and Online Media Council of BiH, the Mission organizes capacity-building workshops for journalists and editors and supports the work of the Council in the area of online media regulation.

Furthermore, the Mission promotes media law among all students in BiH through its annual Media Law School as well as through the specialized master programme at the University of Sarajevo – Faculty of Law.



For more information, scan the QR code.



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