

**Education Inspectors:
A Neglected Resource**

**Overview of status and activities of
Education Inspectors
in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**A Status Report
by
The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education Inspectors are the first control mechanism in case of a violation, misinterpretation, or non-application of the law. Their main responsibility is inspection of the administrative functioning of all education institutions – pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and institutions of higher education. Education Inspectors also investigate complaints from citizens about problems in these institutions. They are thus fundamental to a well-functioning system of education.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, Education Inspectors are not used properly. The reasons for this include:

- Legislation governing the role and responsibilities of Education Inspectors is vague and inadequate.
- Ministries of Education are often involved in both the appointment of Inspectors and review of their decisions, an arrangement that potentially compromises the independence of Inspectors and their decisions.
- Education Inspectors are faced with enormous practical constraints, such as a lack of financial and logistical support, professional training, acknowledgement, and respect.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

⇒ *Legislation should be amended to articulate more clearly the status, authority, responsibilities and role of Education Inspectors.*

⇒ *Mechanisms to ensure legal guidance from Ministries of Education to Education Inspectors should be developed.*

⇒ *Effective separation from Ministries of Education is required so that Inspectors cannot be improperly influenced by Ministerial oversight.*

⇒ *Ministries of Education and other responsible bodies should review and analyse the number of Inspectors, their areas of responsibility, and the resources necessary to perform their duties.*

⇒ *Effective co-operation and joint training among Inspectors should be established and conducted.*

3. METHODOLOGY

The Education Department of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has monitored the work of Education Inspectors over the past several years as part of its general involvement in education reform. It has also interviewed 19 out of the 32 Education Inspectors in the Republika Srpska, the Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Brčko District BiH.¹ The information contained in this report is a compilation of data obtained from these activities as well as from interviews with teaching staff, school directors, parents, school boards, and government officials.²

¹ The examples that follow are culled from these interviews with Education Inspectors.

² Data collected by the Education Department of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina by May 2007.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Status of Education Inspectors in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Education Inspectors are civil servants. The laws of the Republika Srpska, the Cantons of the Federation, and the Brčko District BiH prescribe the qualifications necessary for and the requirements of this job. Education Inspectors perform their duties under the auspices of Ministries of Education except in the Brčko District BiH and the Una-Sana Canton,³ where Education Inspectors fall into a separate inspectorate. In these two places, such separate inspectorates encompass all the inspection functions for the jurisdiction, including labour, housing, and construction.

Table 1 below shows the placement of Education Inspectors in the country, the body responsible for appointing them, and the competent body in the Republika Srpska, the ten Cantons of the Federation, and Brčko District BiH for reviewing appeals of their decisions.

³ At the timing of writing, the Republika Srpska was in the process of adopting legislation to move education inspection into a separate inspectorate.

Table 1: Status of Education Inspectors

Region	Education inspection operates within:	Appointed by:	Appeals of Inspector's decisions made to:
Una-Sana Canton	Cantonal Inspectorate	Chief Cantonal Inspector	Chief Cantonal Inspector
Posavina Canton	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Tuzla Canton	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Zenica-Doboj Canton	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Gorazde	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Central Bosnia Canton	Inspectorate Department within the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	An organizational unit within the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Chief Education Inspector is appointed by the cantonal government, at the Minister's proposal	Minister of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
West Herzegovina Canton	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport	Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
Sarajevo Canton	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science	Ministry of Education and Science
Canton 10	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sport	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sport	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Sport
Republika Srpska	Republic Education Inspection within the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.	Minister of Education, Science and Culture	Minister of Education, Science and Culture
Brčko District BiH	Department for Public Safety	Mayor	District Appeal Commission

4.2 Responsibilities of Education Inspectors

Education Inspectors are sometimes confused with Pedagogical Institute Supervisors. Their work, however, differs. The latter review and evaluate what goes on in the classroom, such as teaching and lecture preparation.⁴ Education Inspectors, in contrast, focus on the administration of schools. Thus, their duties generally include reviewing:

- Student records,
- Issues associated with school premises,
- Permits and licenses,
- Employment of teachers,
- Teacher qualifications and certificates,
- Disciplinary measures,
- Appointment of school boards and school directors.

While this distinction may seem straight-forward, Education Inspectors complain that in practice they often find Pedagogical Institutes Inspectors encroaching on their work. This is largely the result of vague or inadequate legislation. Education Inspectors across the Republika Srpska note that since the rulebook regulating the activities of pedagogical inspection duplicates the responsibilities specified in legislation covering education inspection, the Pedagogical Institute is currently doing inspections that ought to be done by Education Inspectors. Education Inspectors also find themselves entangled with Labour Inspectors as well, because the legislation delineating responsibilities is similarly unclear. For instance, cases regarding employment issues⁵ are often left unresolved after being tossed back and forth between Labour and Education Inspectors. This lack of clarity does not allow for efficient resolution of disputes and increases mistrust in inspections as a whole among citizens.

⇒ *Legislation that better defines the responsibility and authority of Education Inspectors would decrease overlapping of competences with Pedagogical Institute Supervisors and other Inspectors (e.g. Labour Inspectors).*

4.3 Workload of Inspectors

Tables 2 and 3 below give an overview of the number of Education Inspectors and of how education institutions are covered across Bosnia and Herzegovina⁶. These tables raise questions whether there are enough Inspectors in each area to inspect each school regularly and to address individual complaints. (According to law, the Education Inspectors are obliged to act upon all written or verbal complaints, including anonymous complaints.) On average

⁴ General responsibilities of Pedagogical Institutes include:

- Advising Ministries of Education on curricula issues,
- Analyzing grading and successful completion of coursework,
- Evaluating educational facilities (i.e. libraries, computers, labs),
- Advising on the appointment of teachers by assessing and confirming relevancy of qualifications,
- Providing professional development opportunities for teachers and organizing in-service training courses,
- Evaluating school development plans.

⁵ Information collected in the field indicates that employment cases and cases involving complaints regarding the work and appointment of school boards and school directors are the most common kinds of things addressed by Education Inspectors.

⁶ In addition to public education institutions, Education Inspectors are also responsible for inspecting private institutions.

across Bosnia and Herzegovina, the minimum number of legally required inspections is two visits to each school per year. Each inspection must include review of all of the elements pertaining to the administrative functioning of the school. In some cases, this may require Inspectors to spend several days or a week at each school. Inspectors must also address individual written, verbal, and anonymous complaints within legally prescribed deadlines. It is difficult to estimate an average number of individual complaints or how much time these might take to address.⁷ One Inspector, however, reports having visited 12 schools in one month to investigate complaints.

An associated concern arises over the quality and thoroughness of inspections. If there are not enough Education Inspectors, then how can Education Inspectors examine all the necessary details in a particular education institution, case or issue? Education Inspectors, after all, do not have a staff or administrative support. Ethnic divisions also exacerbate these difficulties. In Central Bosnia Canton a Bosniac Inspector covers only schools that follow the Federation curriculum (Bosnian language) while a Croat Inspector does the same for the schools that follow the Croat curriculum (Croat language). In Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Education Inspectors must visit all schools in pairs – that is, a Bosniac and a Croat inspector must visit a school together. In Posavina Canton, which has a relatively small number of educational institutions, the authorities have not assigned anyone to the post of Education Inspector so far. Canton 10 also does not have a specifically designated Education Inspector, either. There the Head of the Department for Pedagogical and Inspection Control performs the duties of Education Inspector as well.

⁷ The number of individual complaints naturally varies across the country and across the year.

Table 2: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Brčko District BiH

Area	Number of public education institutions						Total	Number of Inspectors
	Pre-school	PS		SS		University/ Faculty		
		Main	Branch	Main	Branch			
Una-Sana Canton	7	46	109	20	-	1/6	189	2
Posavina Canton	2	7	17	2	-	-	28	0
Tuzla Canton	23	88	119	33	-	1/14	278	2
Zenica-Doboj Canton	8	64	115	35	-	1/6	229	3
Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Goražde	2	7	9	3	-	1	22	1
Central Bosnia Canton	8 ⁸	52 ⁹	95	23 ¹⁰	3	branch faculties ¹¹	189	3
Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	16	45	90	26	1	2/18	198	1 main + 4
West Herzegovina Canton	4	17	59	6	-	-	86	1
Sarajevo Canton	24	64	18	33	-	1/24	164	3
Canton 10	4	9	49	8	-	-	70	1
Brčko District BiH	1	16	20	4	-	1	42	1

⁸ Plus one within the Catholic Church of Bugojno.

⁹ Including one Catholic School Center.

¹⁰ Including two Catholic School Centres and Madrassas.

¹¹ According to the information available, the Universities of Mostar and Tuzla have branches in Central Bosnia Canton. The number of faculties within these two branches is five, but they were never subject to inspection.

Table 3: Republika Srpska

Area	Number of public education institutions						Total	Number of Inspectors
	Pre-school	PS		SS		University/ Faculty		
		Main	Branch	Main	Branch			
Banja Luka HQ	18	30	35	13	-	1/13	110	1
Banja Luka/ Čelinac Kneževo, K. Varoš	3	9	40	3	-	-	55	3
Bijeljina	9	34	115	12	-	4 faculties (+ 2 branches)	176	1
Trebinje	7	17	51	11	2	5 (+ 1 two-year school for tourism and hotel management)	94	1
Sokolac	9	14	35	9	2	8 faculties ¹²	77	1
Doboj ¹³	5	28	72	14	-	2 faculties	121	1
Prijedor	3 (+ 3 branches in Prijedor)	25	83	14 (2 are mixed PS/SS schools)	-	5 ¹⁴	133	2 (based in Banja Luka)

⇒ *A thorough review of the number of inspectors and their workloads would indicate whether staff allocations are rational and can ensure effective, quality inspections.*

4.4 Legislation

Nine cantons in the Federation and Republika Srpska have adopted laws on education inspection. (Canton 10, like the Brčko District BiH, has not.)¹⁵ In addition to the laws that directly regulate the role of Education Inspectors, many other laws must also be respected during Inspectors' regular activities. These include laws on administrative procedure and laws on primary and secondary education.¹⁶ The majority of Inspectors interviewed believe that the

¹² Part of University of East Sarajevo.

¹³ 33 education institutions in Teslić are covered by both Doboj and Banja Luka education inspection. At the time of writing this report, the authorities were addressing this confusion.

¹⁴ 1 four-year faculty, 2 three-year colleges and 2 two-year colleges.

¹⁵ See Appendix.

¹⁶ In Brčko District BiH, where there are no laws on education inspection, the applicable laws are: Brčko District Law on Amendments to the Law on Executive Authority of Brčko District of BiH, Law on Public Administra-

laws regulating education inspection are vague, outdated, leave space for interpretation, and are inconsistent across Bosnia and Herzegovina. In some jurisdictions, they leave the role of Education Inspectors in higher education undefined. In the Republika Srpska the Pedagogical Institute rulebook conflicts with education inspection regulation. In Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Goražde legislation is so out-of-date that it does not reflect the current status of education inspection within the governmental structure.

Most Education Inspectors also believe that legislation is created without proper consultation with or the participation of qualified and experienced people in this field. This results in legislation that does not provide properly for the Inspectors' work. If competencies were redefined and regulated by appropriate legislation, Inspectors believe that the entire system would operate more smoothly. Inadequate legislation also leads to inconsistencies within the country. Since education inspection laws vary throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, it would appear that cases with identical circumstances could be dealt with differently in different parts of the country. Hypothetically, an Inspector in one part of the country might conduct an inspection immediately upon receipt of an anonymous complaint while an Inspector in another part of the country would have to wait for the Minister's approval before doing the same thing. Education Inspectors therefore feel that stronger support from the legal unit of their respective Ministries of Education is also necessary.

⇒ *A mechanism for receiving guidance from legal departments of Ministries of Education would promote consistency and strengthen Inspectors' decisions. The education inspection system could benefit from cooperation among Inspectors, joint training and information sharing.*

4.5 Independence of Inspectors

Under all education inspection laws, inspectors are supposed to be independent in their work. In practice, however, it is difficult for Inspectors to maintain this independence. In many instances, Education Inspectors are appointed by Ministers of Education and in the majority of cases, Ministries of Education also serve as the competent body for reviewing appeals of Education Inspectors' decisions (*see Table 1*). In some parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministers of Education even have the ability to choose the cases in which an inspection will take place. This sometimes results in certain protected schools allowed to operate without regular inspection. Education Inspectors in most cases also report to Ministers of Education.

The EU's 1995 Functional Review of Public Administration in the Education Sector recommended transferring functions related to school inspection to three new independent inspectorates – one in each of the entities and one in Brčko. There now appears to be a trend favouring moving education inspection into separate inspectorates. At the time of writing, the Republika Srpska is in the process of adopting legislation that would do so. To date, however, such attempts have not always improved the situation. In Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Goražde, where education inspection was removed from the Ministry of Education, no supporting legislative framework was put in place to support the move. Education Inspectors found themselves only able to apply select segments of the relevant law on education inspection. As a result, appointments of school board members and school directors were not covered by inspection. In West Herzegovina canton, a law was adopted that moved education inspection into a body that conducts inspections in various fields. The canton, however, failed to appropriate funds to enable this move, with the result that, although the legislation is in place,

tion of Brčko District, even the Law on Education Inspection SR BiH from 1977 and the Law on Amendments and Addenda to the Law on Education Inspection SR BiH from 1982.

education inspection is still operating within the Ministry of Education. This is not always helpful. In January 2006, Education Inspectors in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton submitted a petition requesting support from the Cantonal Government. The letter listed, in detail, the difficulties Education Inspectors face in their work, such as problems obtaining vehicles, lack of direct telephone extensions, lack of an official stamp, and so. Additionally, Education Inspectors pointed out that the Cantonal Ministry of Education often issues instructions contrary to legislation and stated their general concern at the mistrust and lack of respect exhibited by the Minister towards the education inspectors. No reply was ever received.

Well over half of all Education Inspectors interviewed raised concerns about their lack of independence. They felt that the only way to ensure their independence was to separate inspection from the Ministries of Education – at least as far as their appointments and the review of their decisions was concerned. The remainder of those interviewed were of the opinion that it was not important whether the Education Inspectors were part of a Ministry of Education or of some separate inspectorate unit, such as in Una-Sana Canton, as long as they were independent in their work and were respected by the Minister of Education. These Inspectors felt that complete separation of the Education Inspectors from the Ministry of Education would make the Inspectors' work even more complicated, especially when appeals arose. They were mainly concerned with the practical aspects of having decisions reviewed by a body lacking expertise in education.

⇒ *Education Inspectors must be guaranteed independence to ensure thorough inspections and respect for their decisions.*

4.6 Practical constraints

Education Inspectors also face practical barriers to doing their jobs. More than two-thirds of them feel that they do not have the necessary logistical support from their Ministries of Education. Transportation to various locations is, for instance, one such barrier. Some Inspectors have large areas of responsibility and the schools in these areas are often widely dispersed. The Education Inspector in Sokolac, for instance, covers the following municipalities: East Sarajevo, Trnovo, Kasindo, Pale, Sokolac, Rogatica, Višegrad, Han Pijesak, Vlasenica, Milići, Šekovići. The Education Inspector in Široki Brijeg reports that he does not have access to a vehicle nor is there adequate public transport available to visit all schools. As a result, he does not perform on-site school inspections. In Trebinje, at the time of the interview, the Education Inspector received hardly any reimbursement for the travel expenses incurred.

The lack of adequate office space and minimal office services, such as telephones and computers, often make the daily work of Inspectors extremely difficult as well. The Education Inspector in Sokolac has his office on the premises of a local school. The Education Inspectors in Mostar have no direct telephone line. They also lack a *sine qua non* for any official or administrative action in Bosnia and Herzegovina – a stamp. This means the Education Inspector cannot officially render a decision. Instead, the decision has to be stamped – and thus officially issued – by the Minister, who would also then, should the party in question decide to appeal the decision, act as the appeals body as well.

⇒ *A thorough review of Inspectors' offices, services, training, and transport requirements would determine where and whether improvements are needed.*

5. CONCLUSION

Education inspection appears to suffer from maladies common too much, if not all, of public administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Education inspection is also neglected in its own right. Any effort to improve education inspection should thus probably begin with an analysis of the number of Inspectors, their areas of responsibility, and the resources available to them. Training programs for Education Inspectors are urgently needed as well, as is the encouragement of sharing good practices among them and amendments to legislation regulating education inspection. Ideally, such legislation should enable inspection to prevent problems in school administration rather than simply serving as a means to report problems that have already arisen.

The risk of political interference is also overly present. Because Ministries of Education play an important role in the appointments of Education Inspectors and because Ministers of Education are often the body reviewing appeals of Education Inspectors' decisions, the independence of the work of Education Inspectors and the ability of Education Inspectors to shield themselves from political interference comes into question. At the same time, however, Education Inspectors need adequate support from Ministries of Education. With increased assistance from the legal departments of Ministries of Education, Inspectors would be able to make decisions with a greater basis in law and thus increase confidence that Ministers would support these decisions. This would also lead to greater consistency across areas of responsibility and eventually increase public trust in the institution of education inspection – something that is now largely lacking.

Appendix

Table 4: Laws on Education Inspection

Area	Regulation	Number
Una-Sana Canton	Law on Upbringing-Education and Teaching-Science Inspection	Official gazette no. 11/98
Posavina Canton	Law on Education Inspection	Official gazette no. 5/01
Canton Tuzla	Law on Inspection for Education	Official gazette no. 4/96
Zenica-Doboj Canton	Law on inspection for Education	FBiH Official gazette no. 16/96
Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Goražde	Law on Inspection for Education	Official gazette no. 17/99
Central Bosnia Canton	Law on Inspection Supervision in the area of Education, Science, Culture, Sport and Information	Official gazette no. 1/04
Herzegovina-Neretva Canton	Law on Education Inspection	Official gazette no. 4/04
West Herzegovina Canton	Law on Education Inspection	Official gazette no. 6/99
Canton Sarajevo	Law on Education Inspection	Official gazette no. 9/00
Canton 10	There is no law on education inspection.	
Republika Srpska	Law on Education Inspection	Official gazette no. 26/93
Brčko District BiH	There is no law on education inspection.	