

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina

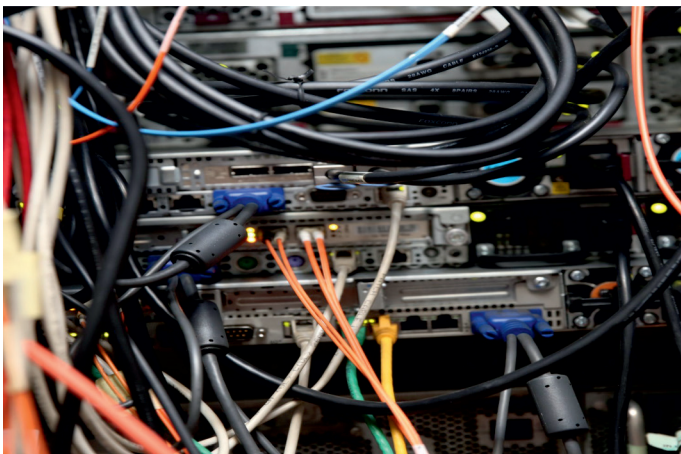


Who we are

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, negotiated in Dayton in the United States and signed in Paris in 1995, shapes the work of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The Agreement established the Mission as one of the bodies responsible for helping to secure lasting peace in the country and thus to build a stable, secure, and democratic state.

Based in the capital city of Sarajevo, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina relies on its network of nine field offices and one temporary office to fully engage with citizens and authorities at all levels – municipal, cantonal, entity, as well as State. The structure of the OSCE's field work and activities remains flexible to adapt as necessary to social and political developments.

The Mission's engagement focuses on several areas of priority: democratic governance, elections, human rights, education, the rule of law, gender equality, security governance and co-operation, arms control, anti-terrorism, environmental and economic activities and youth.



What we do

The Mission's principal aim is to promote stability and reconciliation while assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to regional, political, economic and social integration.

Democratic governance

The Mission works on safeguarding the main principles of democratic and good governance at all authority levels, and ensuring that institutions and governments are responsive, transparent, effective, representative of and accountable to citizens. Core activities include strengthening the capacities, transparency, and effectiveness of BiH legislatures, supporting the development, adoption and promotion of key reform-related legislation, such as conflict of interest and asset declaration legislation, facilitating the establishment of an effective corruption prevention system, increasing citizen participation in democratic processes and decision-making, and fostering social cohesion at community level in co-operation with local authorities and civil society.

Elections

The Mission's initial focus on conducting elections originated with the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, before this responsibility was transferred to the BiH Central Election Commission in 2002. The Mission today works on broader election-related initiatives. Guided by the recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Council of Europe's Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), the Mission supports the development of amendments to election legislation and legislation related to political party financing. The Mission works with local authorities, in particular the BiH Central Election Commission, to strengthen the technical capacities of election bodies to administer the election process with integrity and transparency and supports capacity building of civil society in the impartial monitoring of elections.

Human rights

The Mission works to advance understanding of and respect for human rights. The Mission works to advance respect for fundamental freedoms (of media/expression, peaceful assembly/association and religion or belief) through the harmonization of laws and policies with international human rights standards, addressing identified violations and promoting inter-religious dialogue. It aims to strengthen the implementation of policies and laws that eliminate discrimination and ensure integration of Roma and other national minorities, and collaborates with other international partners as well as domestic institutions to increase access to adequate housing, and social and economic rights for vulnerable groups, including returnees, Roma women, people with disabilities and youth.

Education

The Mission has the lead responsibility among international organizations present in the country for supporting primary and secondary education development. With a focus on quality, non-discriminatory, education, the Mission tackles policies and practices that deepen ethnic divisions and distrust by supporting local authorities to develop long-term, inclusive solutions. This work helps lay the foundations of a better future for all children in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Rule of law

Helping build a strong, effective, impartial, and independent judiciary, which treats all citizens equally, is a key objective of the Mission. The Mission supports the criminal justice system in tackling serious and sensitive crimes fairly and effectively. The Mission's assessments of judicial responses to war crimes, hate crimes, trafficking in human beings, domestic violence, organised crime, and corruption, based on its extensive trial monitoring programme, as well as its engagement with judicial sector reform processes, inform the Mission's targeted advice to and capacity building for authorities targeted advice to authorities, with a view to improving the judiciary's performance, protecting fair trial trials, and ensuring justice for victims.

Gender equality

The Mission recognises that gender equality is essential to democracy, economic development, and to security and stability in the OSCE region. Our work in this area is guided by key OSCE documents and commitments. The Mission has developed a comprehensive internal structure for integrating a gender perspective into all of the Mission's policies and programmes across the three dimensions. The Mission also implements thematic programmes to address cross-cutting issues of gender equality, including improving the political participation of women and supporting the improvement of structures strengthening gender equality in political parties. In combatting gender-based violence, our work focuses on data collection, capacity building and support to multi-sectorial co-operation, while implementation of the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security focuses on increasing the participation of women in security and defence institutions and mainstreaming gender considerations in BiH strategic documents and policies.

Security governance and co-operation

The Mission is supporting development of democratically-governed and rule-of-law-based security and defence sectors that are based on the principles of transparency and accountability. This support includes strengthening parliamentary oversight within the overall system of democratic control. The Mission is moreover helping to improve co-operation, capacity and governance in the areas of border security and management, law enforcement, protection and rescue, and cyber security.

Arms Control

Mission support on arms control and on small arms and light weapons (SALW) enhances the security and safety of BiH citizens

What we do

(continued)

and of military and law enforcement personnel. It also assists with implementation of, and reporting on, related international and regional commitments. The Mission is supporting the Armed Forces of BiH and law enforcement agencies to improve the management of weapons, ammunition and explosives, particularly as pertains to storage security, ammunition testing, and surplus disposal. The Mission is also helping to increase the capacity of BiH to address illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition.

Anti-Terrorism

The Mission supports BiH in addressing the threats of terrorism and violent extremism in an inclusive, co-operative, human-rights-compliant and rule-of-law-based manner. In addition to supporting the development and implementation of strategic policy documents, the Mission helps to build the capacity for countering the financing of terrorism, disrupting terrorist travel, and ensuring effective rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters and their families.

Environmental protection

The Mission stimulates dialogue between the authorities and civil society towards tackling the various environmental issues facing Bosnia and Herzegovina. It provides capacity-building support to the country's four Aarhus Centres and works to strengthen knowledge on environmental law as well as foster environmental

awareness and action at the local level. Working with State-level and local authorities, the Mission also builds capacities in disaster risk reduction and improves preparedness in cases of natural disasters.

Media freedom

The Mission pays special attention to the safety of journalists, in particular female journalists, and responds to different freedom of expression violations across the country. Through regular monitoring and analysis of civil and criminal proceedings against journalists and media outlets, the Mission identifies areas for improvement and makes recommendations. Its specialized capacity building programs support efficient co-operation between the media, judiciary, and police, and promote media law at BiH universities. With its international and local partners, the Mission works on raising awareness on the challenges and issues the media and journalists face through TV programmes, social media campaigns, and public reporting.

Youth

Recognizing young people as partners for positive change and promoters of peace and reconciliation, the Mission engages youth to counter radicalization and violent extremism, hate speech, bias-motivated incidents and hate crimes, segregation in education, and corruption. Throughout its activities, and with the Youth Advisory Group as a primary instrument, the Mission identifies and considers young people's concerns, needs and priorities.

Facts and figures

(as of March 2022)

Head of Mission



Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec of the United States heads the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina since September 2019.

Staffing



The Mission employs 34 international and 281 local fixed-term staff.

Budget



11,682,000 EUR¹

¹ Data from 2021.

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Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina



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