



SIMULATION-BASED TRAINING FOR ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Trafficking in human beings (THB), a modern form of slavery, is a complex and multidimensional crime that severely violates human rights and dignity. It affects all OSCE participating States and often transcends borders, requiring international, national and regional co-operation. THB can affect individuals of any gender, age, race or religion. OSCE participating States have committed to taking action to prevent THB, prosecute perpetrators, and protect victims. The OSCE supports participating States by assisting in implementing commitments and developing effective policies to combat THB.



In this context, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in co-operation with the Office of the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Human Trafficking, organized the first simulation-based training exercise on THB in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The exercise was implemented under the Extra-Budgetary Project, **Simulation-Based Training Exercise for Local Anti-Trafficking Structures in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, funded by the United States Mission to the OSCE.

The five-day hands-on simulation brought together participants from different sectors to resolve a realistic, multi-actor scenario, enabling them to experience first-hand the complexities and challenges of responding to real-world trafficking cases. It aimed to enhance participant's understanding of the dynamics of THB; strengthen victim-centred, human rights-based and trauma-informed approaches; foster multi-agency and inter-institutional co-operation and co-ordination; and improve capacity to identify and provide adequate assistance to victims. Additionally, the training sought to build participants' capacity to respond effectively to various forms of THB by applying anti-

trafficking principles in their daily work. To ensure the relevance of the exercise, a group of experts designed the simulation to reflect the current human trafficking and migration situation in BiH. Representatives from both entities, the Federation of BiH (FBiH) and the Republika Srpska (RS), took part. In total, the immersive exercise engaged 112 participants, both national and international.

The 56-member trainee group was divided into teams based on their professional roles, including as law enforcement and police officers, prosecutors, labour inspectors, psychologists, lawyers, interpreters, social workers, and civil society representatives. Participants worked closely to co-ordinate operations, fostering collaboration across institutions and locations. For instance, BiH Border Police officers engaged with officials they had not previously worked with, enhancing inter-agency co-operation.

The exercise was supported and overseen by key actors. The Antennas – 17 anti-trafficking experts – monitored activities and reported to the Direx, a team consisting of 9 professionals responsible for managing

the exercise. The 12 Role Players simulated victims, suspects and interpreters, while 12 Observers from national and international backgrounds assessed the exercise. Additionally, six people provided logistical assistance.

By co-operating and collaborating in multidisciplinary teams to investigate the cases, collect and secure evidence, conduct co-ordinated interviews with victims and alleged perpetrators, and carry out rescue operations and arrests, participants gained insights from both successful outcomes and common problems. The scenario highlighted areas requiring improvement and opportunities for further progress.

Key obstacles included language and cultural barriers when engaging with victims, lack of communication between different offices, and jurisdictional conflicts. Overall, the training reinforced effective strategies and good practices in identifying and responding to THB cases. Thanks to this "learning-by-doing" exercise, participants enhanced their skills in a realistic and controlled environment, equipping them to apply and integrate new capacities in their daily efforts to combat THB.



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