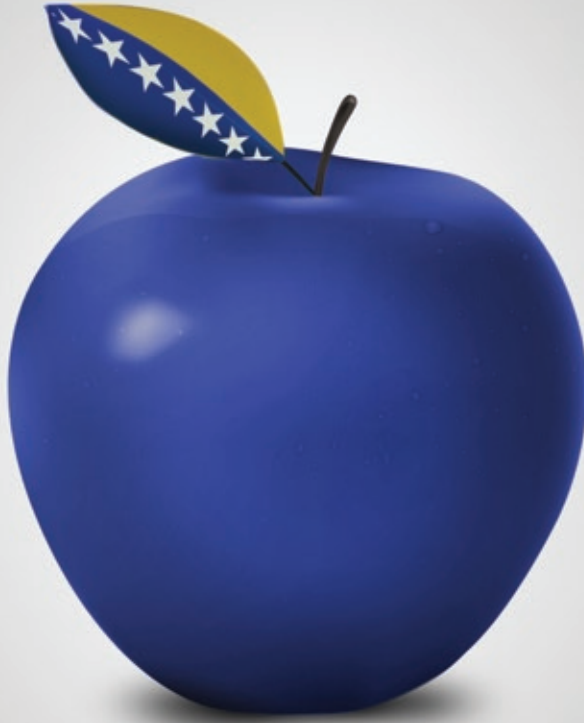


GROUP OF AUTHORS



European Union

EUROPEAN UNION
SUPPORT TO BOSNIA
AND HERZEGOVINA







INTRODUCTION



"The 27 Member States of the European Union are strongly committed to the integration of a sovereign and united Bosnia and Herzegovina into the Union. We are here, with our resources and expertise, to work in partnership and to assist the institutions, civil society and citizens to achieve that goal."

- Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina/ EU Special Representative, Ambassador Peter Sorensen

Since the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union has provided the country with more than three billion Euros in assistance funds. This funding has been disbursed with regard to the immediate and strategic requirements of BiH citizens. Therefore, between 1995 and 2000 the focus was on humanitarian aid, refugee return and rebuilding physical infrastructure.

After this, EU funds were directed towards establishing institutions and political and economic systems that would help Bosnia and Herzegovina become a fully functional state. Since the signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement in June 2008 the focus of EU funding, principally through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) 2008-11, has been on helping Bosnia and Herzegovina adjust its economic, political, security and social system to meet the requirements of future EU membership.

EU assistance has been disbursed within an overarching strategy as new (and sometimes more positive) circumstances have developed. At the same time, EU funding has been closely tied to projects that will deliver tangible and visible improvements in the daily lives of BiH citizens.

EU assistance was successful in the reconstruction of infrastructure after the war and in supporting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons. Bosnia and Herzegovina benefited from integrated reconstruction programmes involving buildings, water, energy and transport networks. For returnees, more than 40,000 houses were reconstructed, hand in hand with the rebuilding of health centres, schools and the revival of small businesses.

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of EU assistance to support key reforms, progress has been rather limited in terms of state building, governance and rule of law implementation, as well as in the approximation to European Standards. The complex constitutional set-up, insufficient political support and an overall weak administrative capacity have not been conducive to reform implementation.

The following case studies are notable success stories involving projects that are an integral part of the effort to help Bosnia and Herzegovina meet the political and economic criteria for future EU membership. These criteria have been developed within the EU because they have shown that when applied, they help to raise living standards. The successful implementation of projects should be viewed, therefore, not simply as 'boxes ticked' in the accession process but as practical steps to improve the lives of BiH citizens even before EU membership is formally achieved.







Reinforcement of Local Democracy Project, LOD



In Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in EU member states, the municipality is the place where government meets the people. Good governance begins at the municipality level. Yet citizens often have their least satisfactory experience of government when they encounter poor service, corruption or a general municipal failure to foster vibrant and safe communities.

For this reason, a significant part of EU accession actually takes place at the municipal level – which means that the 142 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina are at the forefront of the EU integration process.

The Reinforcement of Local Democracy Project (LOD) runs in 29 municipalities from all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina from November 2008 to March 2012, and is supported by IPA funds to the value of three million Euros. The project was implemented by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with municipalities and civil society organisations (CSOs), and the Entity associations of municipalities and cities, and as well as in close cooperation with the Directorate for European Integration. The project is focused on encouraging local authorities to engage in a meaningful way with local CSOs by establishing a working dialogue with them.



*Local governments need to establish partnership with
civil society organisations*







The Reinforcement of Local Democracy Project (LOD) runs in 29 municipalities in BiH

The underlying premise is that dialogue between citizens and their municipalities – over the long term – can improve the quality of municipal services delivery.

The project helps municipalities to introduce transparent mechanisms for the disbursement of funds to CSOs and at the same time it seeks to improve communication and partnership between municipalities and these organisations. It also seeks to encourage CSOs to raise their own professional standards, so that efficient financing and greater openness to dialogue on the part of the municipality would be met with constructive responses from CSOs. Among other things, the CSOs received training in project proposal writing and reporting under the project.

An important element of the LOD initiative is to establish a perception among BiH citizens and municipal officials that dialogue has to be the norm not the exception. Although the role of CSOs is recognised in Bosnia and Herzegovina's main development strategy, there continues to be a widespread and damaging assumption that key decisions are best left to political and administrative insiders. This project has helped to break down this assumption.

LOD has demonstrated that cooperation between municipalities and civil society actually works – it delivers tangible benefits to all citizens.

At the end of LOD project, the 29 participating municipalities will have the capacity to distribute budget funds allocated to finance CSO projects on transparent way and to serve as positive role models for neighbouring municipalities. Under the project, until now, a total of 114 municipal officials received training in project cycle management, and in two project phases there were financed 139 micro projects implemented by CSOs out of which, directly or in indirect way, tens of thousands BiH citizens had some benefits. The focus of the CSO projects was on poverty reduction, social inclusion, gender equality, human rights, environment protection, and improvement of conditions regarding minorities and vulnerable groups.







Programme of Technical Assistance for The Central Bank of BiH



The BiH Central Bank (CBBH) has been one of the most notable successes of the country's post-war recovery effort. It is widely acknowledged that without the prudent and sensible steps taken by the Central Bank since the onset of the global economic crisis the impact of the crisis on Bosnia and Herzegovina would have been far more severe.

The Central Bank has made significant progress towards introducing administrative and policy mechanisms that will allow it to participate fully in the European System of Central Banks as soon as Bosnia and Herzegovina secures EU membership. However, there is still a considerable way to go. Through its Programme of Technical Assistance for the BiH Central Bank, the European Central Bank sought to help the CBBH adapt to EU central banking standards. The project ran from April 2010 until September 2011 with one million Euros in funding from the EU.

Among other things, the programme helped the CBBH increase its capacity to provide high-quality statistical data to policymakers and offer recommendations and economic analysis that can help maintain macroeconomic stability.

Specifically, it helped the Bank reassess current procedures and develop new strategies and new project and action plans. It facilitated a review of methodologies, rules, policies and practices and introduced new staff training courses in Statistics, Economic Analysis and Research, Financial Stability, Legislation, IT and Coordination of EU integration.

The programme significantly enhanced the CBBH's capacity to deliver Interest Rate Statistics and Portfolio Investment Statistics, economic modelling leading to applicable forecasts, risk-focused financial stability analysis, and input on central bank legislation.

The programme organised 23 Eurosystem expert missions to the CBBH and 12 study visits by CBBH experts to Eurosystem partner banks.







The BiH Central Bank (CBBH) has been one of the most notable successes of the country's post-war recovery effort







Efficient Prison Management Project



Crime and corruption are constantly cited by BiH citizens as being, along with unemployment, the biggest scourge of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. EU-related reforms have boosted the efficiency of the police and judiciary, but much more needs to be done. As part of this broader effort to improve Bosnia and Herzegovina's overall security status, conditions in the country's 15 prisons and detention centres have been addressed through the Efficient Prison Management Project, which ran from February 2009 to December 2010, with funding of more than three quarters of a million Euros from the EU. The project was implemented by the EU together with the Council of Europe.

The success of this project has been important for three principal reasons:

- ▶ An effective, efficient and transparent custodial system is central to the justice system arresting and sentencing criminals is useless if prisons are insecure, or if they are mismanaged in such a way that prisoners are either effectively at liberty or are abused.
- ▶ Bosnia and Herzegovina is legally bound to maintain certain standards of prison management under international human-rights conventions and under the SAA.
- ▶ By asserting the rights of all its citizens – including those convicted of crimes and those who have been victims of crime – a well-run prison system can be a model for the rest of society.



The Efficient Prison Management Project improved day-to-day operations in BiH prisons and improved the treatment of inmates







More than 420 prison-related staff received training in human rights

The Efficient Prison Management Project improved day-to-day operations in BiH prisons and improved the treatment of inmates. It also helped the Ministries of Justice revise the policy and legal framework linked to prisons.

A major contribution made by the project was its encouragement of the use of alternative sanctions, opening up possibilities for non-custodial sentences that can have socially positive outcomes and which at the same time can reduce budget pressure on the prison system.

In addition, the project improved the treatment of vulnerable and high-risk prisoners by developing targeted programmes and guidelines on appropriate security measures, helped to amend the legal framework on mental health, proposed improvements to prison databases, and helped to draw up guidelines on independent prison inspection.

More than 420 prison-related staff received training in human rights, and the project sought to improve the situation of vulnerable inmates.

A major and positive impact of this project has been to make prison staff, civil servants and the general public more aware of the fundamental principles underlying the judicial and custodial system. The object has been to highlight human rights, effective rehabilitation and the overall security of the general population and demonstrate that these different challenges can be addressed most effectively through an integrated approach.







Strengthening Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (III) Reform of Higher Education in BiH



Working with the Council of Europe and other international agencies, the European Union is helping the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina address fundamental challenges in education.

Current EU-funded and EU-led projects are part of a long-term effort to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina meets its obligations under the Lisbon Convention, which it signed in 2003, and the Bologna Process, which it joined the same year. The Lisbon Convention and Bologna Process underpin a Europe-wide strategy to implement education policies that promote the development of human resources as well as economic growth.

Two projects funded under IPA 2007 were complementary to each other and their core objectives have been to:

- ▶ Advance the reform of the higher education system, which does not currently respond to the needs of the labour market,
- ▶ Combat unemployment and support the development of economy and society,
- ▶ Establish and strengthen state level institutions so they can effectively coordinate and manage higher education and higher education reforms for the whole country,
- ▶ Harmonise the higher education system by developing and applying common standards and procedures for quality assurance and HE qualifications across the country.
- ▶ Increase academic and labour force mobility within BiH and abroad through Diploma recognition according to Lisbon Convention,
- ▶ Support the institutional development of BiH's universities in order to increase cost-effectiveness of their administrative and management operations by introducing an integrated university model.







Regarding academic qualifications the main issues addressed through IPA assistance were:

- ▶ Facilitate the accurate and timely assessment of academic qualifications;
- ▶ Helping higher-education institutions establish systems that allow students to move more easily from institution to institution during courses (for example, spending one year of a three- or four- year course at a different institution, in BiH or abroad);
- ▶ Creating a valid basis for international confidence in BiH academic qualifications;
- ▶ Increasing the relevance of BiH higher-education courses to the labour market; and
- ▶ Ensuring that the administration and substance of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina is consistent with the values and requirements of a 21st century European democracy.

The issue of degree recognition has been one of the central elements of EU support for education reform. It continues to be unnecessarily difficult for people who acquire qualifications abroad to have these qualifications recognised in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It can even happen in some cases that a graduate from a top class University may be declined employment in BiH because his/ her degree is not recognised.

1. With a budget of 500,000 Euros from IPA 2007, Phase III of the Project to Strengthen Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina ran from February 2009 to March 2011 and focused on implementing recommendations formulated in Phase II.

2. With a budget of 1.500,000 Euros from IPA 2007, the Project Reform of Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina ran from October 2009 to October 2011 and focused on implementing Lisbon Convention and Bologna declaration

The projects:

- ▶ Helped the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HRA) and BiH universities to prepare the first external evaluation of BiH universities;
- ▶ Helped implement the Framework for Higher-Education Qualifications in BiH, in close cooperation with universities and the BiH Rectors' Conference; and
- ▶ Promoted a review of education-related legislation and expertise available in BiH Higher Education in order to recommend strategic steps for further progress.







Promoting Labour Market Competitiveness



Other countries in the region are already adapting their education, training and employment systems in preparation for entering the EU Single Market. Bosnia and Herzegovina urgently has to start doing the same.

IPA 2009 allocated 2,500,000 Euros to the Project to Promote Labour Market Competitiveness (II).

The project was divided into three parts:

- ▶ An initiative to support human-resources development by defining the concept of life-long learning institutionally and strategically, using statistical data;
- ▶ An initiative to support the Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education in order to develop a “knowledge-based economy” by improving the quality and outputs of education in line with the Lisbon Strategy; and
- ▶ A grant scheme to enhance Employment Capacity and Human Resources.

The overall objective has been to support the development of human resources by increasing opportunities for adult training, and to reduce unemployment by promoting lifelong learning.

The Project to Promote Labour Market Competitiveness facilitated the active participation of all stakeholders in preparing a BiH strategy for adult learning. Highlighting the need for greater investment in adult education, the project sought to address major education-related social disparities. For example 17 percent of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been classified as being without education, whereas the figure for men is just six percent. It also focused on education-related initiatives to increase social protection for vulnerable groups.

As well as helping to establish a policy and institutional framework for developing adult learning the project saw the launch of field activities to train and mobilise education providers. It also raised awareness of the urgent need to provide better statistical data on education and labour-market needs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.







Specifically, the project

- ▶ Developed a strategy, action plan and draft Framework Law on Adult Education and Training and set up a model of educational statistics in conformity with international standards;
- ▶ Supported the efficient and effective operation of the Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education; and
- ▶ Allocated grants to strengthen human-resources development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.







Four EU-funded demining projects



Since 2000 the European Commission has implemented 55 projects, worth a total of almost 39 million Euros, to help make Bosnia and Herzegovina mine-safe.

The IPA planning document for 2011- 2013 foresees resources to support mine victims and mine clearance, as a humanitarian imperative and also as a prerequisite for refugee return and for the full development of economic potential in rural communities.

IPA support for demining is listed as a “political” objective because mine-clearance is central to completing the return process and reintegrating communities that were divided during the conflict.

Although today less than three percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina's land area is contaminated with mines and although most of these areas have been mapped and signposted, mines continue to kill and maim.

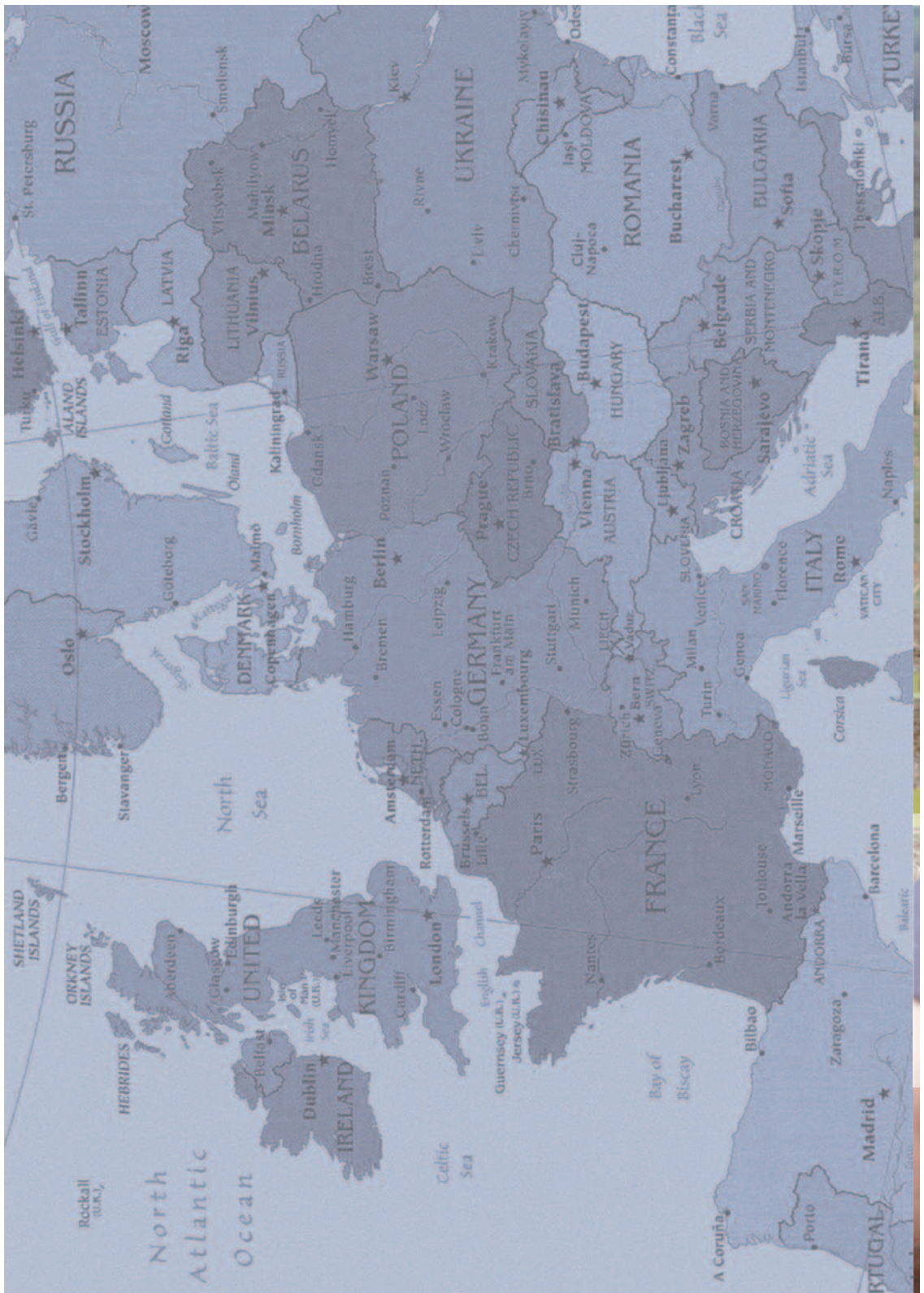
In addition to saving lives, mine clearance helps to eliminate the perception that Bosnia and Herzegovina is unsafe – a perception that has hindered investment and job creation – and it makes land available for agriculture, tourism and industrial development.

Four EU-funded demining projects illustrate the practical application of EU mine-clearance assistance at 81 mine affected locations all across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

IPA 2007 allocated 1.5 million Euros to a project implemented by Stop Mines, which is mapping and clearing minefields across an area of 2,000,000 m². In 2010 Stop Mines cleared 508,828 m², destroying 357 anti-personnel mines and 47 anti-vehicle mines.

IPA 2008 allocated 698,000 Euros to a project implemented by UEM (Udruzenje za Eliminaciju Mina), which is mapping and clearing minefields across an area of 800,000 m². In 2010 UEM cleared 60,551 m², destroying 112 antipersonnel mines and 15 anti-vehicle mines. A further 781,000 Euros has been allocated to this project under IPA 2010.







IPA 2008 allocated 700,000 Euros to a project implemented by Pro Vita, which is mapping and clearing minefields across an area of 780,000 m². In 2010 Pro Vita cleared 109,905 m², destroying 76 anti-personnel mines and 2 anti-vehicle mines. A further 805,000 Euros has been allocated to this project under IPA 2010.

IPA 2008 allocated 205,000 Euros to a project implemented by Posavina bez Mina to intensify efforts to educate the public on the location of minefields and the danger of mines. A further 228,000 Euros has been allocated to the project under IPA 2010.





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