

Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029

Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029

CM(2025)166
21 October 2025

Document prepared by the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination

*Document approved by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
on 7 November 2025 (CM/Del/Dec(2025)1542/2.5)*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029 (the Action Plan) is a strategic programming instrument that aims to bring Bosnia and Herzegovina's legislation, institutions and practice further into line with European standards in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Action Plan is intended to support the country's efforts to honour its obligations as a Council of Europe member State and will be implemented as part of the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, whereby member States recommitted to "work together to protect and promote the three fundamental, interdependent and inalienable principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights, as enshrined in the Statute of the Council of Europe and in the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms".¹

The Action Plan priorities take into account decisions, resolutions, recommendations, findings, conclusions of reports and opinions, notably of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (the Congress), the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (the Commissioner), the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and other advisory and monitoring bodies of the Organisation, as well as the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (the European Court) regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is based on the strategic priorities of the Council of Europe, as reflected in the "[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)", and concentrates on areas where the Organisation can offer competitive advantages.

The Action Plan also reflects the European Commission's opinion of May 2019 on Bosnia and Herzegovina's European Union (EU) membership application, setting out 14 key priorities as a comprehensive roadmap to advance its EU path, as well as the subsequent recommendations of 12 October 2022. The document furthermore incorporates the findings of the report issued in March 2024 by the European Commission on progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, recommending that the European Council open accession negotiations with the country, and its 2024 report on Bosnia and Herzegovina published on 30 October 2024.² On 21 and 22 March 2024, the European Council adopted the decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina and invited the European Commission to prepare the negotiating framework with a view to its adoption the moment all relevant steps set out in the Recommendation of 12 October 2022 are taken. By assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in implementing Council of Europe standards, the Action Plan will also contribute to supporting the EU accession process.

Under this Action Plan, the Council of Europe and the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have agreed to carry forward jointly, through co-operation programmes, reforms aiming to: enhance the implementation and consistent application of the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) and the case law of the European Court at national level; align national legislation and anti-discrimination practices with European standards; promote gender equality and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence; enhance the independence and efficiency of the judiciary; enhance the fight against economic crime, including corruption and money laundering; improve electoral legislation and practice; ensure compliance of the policing and penitentiary systems with European standards; ensure freedom of expression, freedom of the media and protection of journalists; enhance the protection of social rights; develop youth policies and access of young people to quality education for democratic citizenship; further interethnic dialogue and societal dialogue on history; and improve local democracy through innovative forms of deliberative democracy.

To assist Bosnia and Herzegovina more effectively in implementing reforms, the Action Plan also aims to scale up the Council of Europe's support with new areas of co-operation, such as the fight against counterfeit medical products and other similar crimes; the protection of human rights in biomedical and health fields; the promotion of children's rights; the improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks on artificial intelligence (AI) technologies and environmental crimes; and the development of policies and practices to ensure ethical, inclusive, fair and safe sport, in line with Council of Europe standards.

The implementation of the Action Plan may be complemented by projects from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB). The CEB can co-finance investment projects with a high social value that have been approved by the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It already provides assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the form of grants and loans.

The current Action Plan builds on the outcomes of the previous Action Plan (2022-2025) which, despite a challenging political context, resulted in: the enhanced direct application of the Convention at domestic level, thanks to fruitful co-operation with the Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the Republika Srpska, and the adoption of legislative

1. The Reykjavík Principles for Democracy are part of the "Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values", adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe that took place in Reykjavík on 16 and 17 May 2023.

2. "EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina".

amendments marking significant steps toward the full execution of several judgments of the European Court; bolstered action against economic crime, ultimately leading to the adoption of a Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest and a Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing, and enhanced skills of supervisory authorities; strengthened capacities to recognise and address hate speech and monitor freedom of expression and access to information; improved functioning of the judiciary through consolidated data collection in line with European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) tools, with Bosnia and Herzegovina positioning itself as a regional reference in data-based case management; further embedding of a human rights approach towards persons deprived of liberty within law-enforcement agencies and successful implementation of unified tools for the management and rehabilitation of violent and extremist prisoners (VEPs) across all 14 prisons; enhanced action against discrimination, with improved measures to foster Roma³ inclusion and the opening of the first shelter for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) victims of domestic violence in Sarajevo; the adoption of a comprehensive national Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2024-2027 and related action plans; the strengthening of deliberative democracy at the local level with the organisation of citizens' assemblies in Mostar and Banja Luka; enhanced capacities to promote democratic culture within educational institutions; and enhanced efforts against cybercrime, with improved investigative skills in virtual assets and institutional approvals paving the way for the country's upcoming accession to the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence.

The Action Plan aims to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to implement the [United Nations \(UN\) Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) of the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), notably goals 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 16.

The overall financing needs for this Action Plan are estimated at €27 million. While funding to the amount of €1.96 million (7% of the estimated needs) has been secured as of 22 September 2025, additional funding is essential to fully implement the priority actions identified for 2026-2029.

The Council of Europe and Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue co-operation to improve existing legislative frameworks, ensure their effective implementation, and enhance the capacities of national institutions to bring the country's legislation and practice closer to European standards, in order to promote human rights, strengthen the rule of law and ensure democratic principles of governance.

3. The term "Roma and Travellers" is used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lon and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term "Gens du voyage", as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies. The present is an explanatory footnote, not a definition of Roma and/or Travellers.

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	6
Part I – INTRODUCTION	8
1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW	8
1.1.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE	8
1.1.2 Added value of the technical assistance programmes of the Council of Europe	9
1.1.3 Main results of the previous action plan(s)	10
1.1.4 Consultation process	12
1.2 ACTION PLAN GOALS.....	13
PART II – PROPOSED ACTIONS – ACTION PLAN FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2026-2029	14
2.1 SECURING HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS	14
2.1.1 Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights	15
2.1.2 Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights at national level	17
2.2 ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE, GOOD HEALTH AND A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT	18
2.2.1 Effective implementation of the European Social Charter	19
2.2.2 Human rights in biomedicine and health.....	20
2.2.3 Protection of the environment and human rights	22
2.2.4 Secretariat of the Council of Europe Development Bank	23
2.3 ACTING FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT	24
2.3.1 Gender equality – violence against women and domestic violence – human trafficking	24
2.3.2 Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion – Roma and Travellers – national minorities, regional or minority languages – LGBTI – migrants	27
2.3.3 Children’s rights	32
2.4 BUILDING TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	33
2.4.1 Independence and efficiency of justice	34
2.4.2 Prisons – police – deprivation of liberty	36
2.5 UPHOLDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF SOCIETY AND PERSONS	38
2.5.1 Corruption – money laundering – economic crime	38
2.5.2 Digital challenges: artificial intelligence – cybercrime – data protection.....	41
2.5.3 Integrity and governance of sport	43
2.6 ANCHORING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES.....	44
2.6.1 Freedom of expression and information, safety of journalists	44
2.6.2 Local democracy	47
2.6.3. Elections – democratic governance and dialogue – civil society.....	48
2.6.4 Education	50
2.6.5 Youth.....	52
PART III – IMPLEMENTATION	54
3.1 METHODOLOGY	54
3.1.1 Human rights approach.....	54

3.1.2 Lessons learned.....	57
3.1.3 Risk management and sustainability	58
3.2 CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS	59
3.3 CO-ORDINATION.....	62
3.4 FUNDING	62
3.5 GOVERNANCE	63
APPENDIX I: LOGFRAME.....	65
APPENDIX II: RISK REGISTER.....	90
APPENDIX III: FINANCIAL TABLE AS OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2025.....	94
APPENDIX IV: SOURCES/RELEVANT DOCUMENTS	95

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

2022-2025 Action Plan	Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025
Action Plan	Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029
AI	Artificial intelligence
AML/CFT	Anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism
Budapest Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime
CEB	Council of Europe Development Bank
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice
CETS	Council of Europe Treaty Series
CM	Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe
the Commissioner	Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights
the Congress	Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
the Convention	European Convention on Human Rights
CPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
CRA	Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
CSO	Civil society organisation
DNFBP	Designated non-financial businesses and professions
DPC	Directorate of Programme Co-ordination
ECRI	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
ECSR	European Committee of Social Rights
EU	European Union
the European Court	European Court of Human Rights
GR-DEM	Rapporteur Group on Democracy – Council of Europe
GRECO	Group of States Against Corruption
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
HELP	Council of Europe European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals
HJPC	High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council
ICT	Information and communication technology
Istanbul Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
IT	Information technology
Language Charter	European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages
Lanzarote Committee	Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
Lanzarote Convention	Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
MEDICRIME Convention	Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health
MONEYVAL	Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OB	Ordinary budget
the Organisation	Council of Europe
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Oviedo Convention	Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PMM	Council of Europe Project Management Methodology

Santiago de Compostela Convention	Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SIPA	State Investigation and Protection Agency
SLAPP	Strategic lawsuit against public participation
Tromsø Convention	Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Venice Commission	European Commission for Democracy through Law
VEPs	Violent and extremist prisoners

Part I – INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

1.1.1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Bosnia and Herzegovina became the 44th member State of the Council of Europe on 24 April 2002. Accordingly, it has entered into, and agreed to honour a number of specific commitments, which are listed in Parliamentary Assembly Opinion [No. 234 \(2002\)](#).

Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted the obligations incumbent on all member States under Article 3 of the Statute:⁴ compliance with the principles of pluralist democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons placed under its jurisdiction.

To date, the country has signed 96 conventions and protocols of the Council of Europe, of which 94 have been ratified,⁵ and it is subject to a number of Council of Europe mechanisms, including those of the European Court of Human Rights (the European Court), the Committee of Ministers, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE), the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe (the Commissioner), the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO), the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL), the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR), the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the Committee of the Parties to the Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Committee), the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Language Charter), and the Council of Europe Congress of Local and Regional Authorities (the Congress).

The country has benefited from the co-operation programmes of the Council of Europe since 2003. Past programmes backed by the European Union (EU) aimed to assist the country in complying with Council of Europe standards and the EU *acquis* in the context of the enlargement process, most notably in the areas of fundamental rights, anti-discrimination, social inclusion, freedom of expression, education, penitentiary reforms, combating trafficking in human beings and cybercrime. Similarly, voluntary contributions by Council of Europe member and observer States have made it possible to implement projects in the areas of reinforcing the capacity of the judiciary, strengthening human rights protection and efforts to combat discrimination and racism, managing the rehabilitation of violent and extremist prisoners (VEPs), promoting freedom of the media and media literacy, supporting transparency and integrity of electoral processes, enhancing democratic participation at the local level, combating digital and sexual violence against women, and strengthening action against corruption, money laundering and trafficking in human beings. The successive Action Plans set out to support democratic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, covering the periods from 2015 to 2017, from 2018 to 2021 and from 2022 to 2025, have provided a more strategic framework for co-operation with the Council of Europe.

In February 2016, Bosnia and Herzegovina applied for EU membership and was granted EU candidate status in December 2022. In an opinion issued in May 2019, the European Commission identified 14 key priorities as a comprehensive roadmap to advance Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU path, most of which pertain directly to the functioning of democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law. The European Council meeting of 21 and 22 March 2024 decided to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, inviting the European Commission to prepare the negotiating framework with a view to its adoption the moment all identified steps are taken. Accordingly, the country's EU accession perspective remains a major factor in setting the priorities for co-operation, focusing on required benchmarks and based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies and the case law of the European Court. The Council of Europe remains well placed to support the integration of the country into the EU and the implementation of ambitious reforms advancing towards this goal.

4. Statute of the Council of Europe.

5. Council of Europe Treaty Office, Treaty list for Bosnia and Herzegovina: signatures with ratification and Treaty list for Bosnia and Herzegovina: signatures without ratification.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a member of the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) since 2003. The CEB can provide a meaningful contribution by part-financing investment projects with high social added value, following a member State-driven application process.

The CEB invests in projects that foster inclusion and contribute to improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations across Europe. With the Strategic Framework 2023-2027, the CEB committed to strengthening its focus on member States where social needs and the CEB's additionality tend to be higher. The CEB part-finances projects (loans and guarantees) in the following lines of action: investing in people and enhancing human capital, promoting inclusive and resilient living environments, and supporting jobs and economic and financial inclusion. The CEB has played an active role in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular through the funding of projects aimed at providing durable housing solutions and improved living conditions for internally displaced persons, and facilitating access to microcredits, with a view to supporting viable job creation and income-generating activities, ensuring financial inclusion for vulnerable populations, young people, women-led businesses and rural communities. The CEB also supports energy efficiency investments for low-income households and co-finances the construction of a cultural and sports centre in Mostar, with the aim of fostering community integration.

1.1.2 Added value of the technical assistance programmes of the Council of Europe

As emphasised in the “[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)”, Council of Europe co-operation programmes form an integral part of the unique strategic triangle of standard setting, monitoring and co-operation: the development of legally binding standards is linked to their monitoring by independent monitoring bodies and other mechanisms, and supplemented by technical co-operation to facilitate their implementation. The Council of Europe's actions are developed and implemented in areas where the Organisation has strong expertise and offers added value.



Figure 1: Council of Europe strategic triangle

This Action Plan builds, to a large extent, on the most recent decisions, resolutions, recommendations, findings and conclusions of reports and opinions of the Council of Europe's monitoring mechanisms and expert advisory bodies in respect of the country, as well as the judgments of the European Court regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also takes into account the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy and the Secretary General's annual reports.

In addition, it is developed on the basis of the results of the previous Action Plan (2022-2025) and reflects the priorities of the country's reforms. The document furthermore incorporates the findings of the European Commission report on progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, issued in March 2024, and the subsequent annual report published on 30 October 2024.

In developing the present Action Plan and designing the technical co-operation support given to reforms, the gaps identified by the Council of Europe institutions, monitoring mechanisms and expert advisory bodies have been taken into account, with the relevant source documents being included in Appendix IV.

Relevant Council of Europe conventions and other instruments of the Organisation have also been used as reference material for areas of co-operation included in this Action Plan, including major instruments promoting gender equality, such as the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on preventing and combating sexism.

The Council of Europe European Programme for Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals (HELP) will continue to play a significant role in supporting the national capacity of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) and other Council of Europe standards, as well as the recommendations of Council of Europe institutions and monitoring mechanisms, in partnership with local institutions and relying on the expertise developed in different areas of the Organisation. The relevant thematic HELP online courses will be integrated transversally into the capacity-building activities of the present Action Plan.

1.1.3 Main results of the previous action plan(s)

The present Action Plan takes into account the outcomes of the Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2022-2025⁶ as summarised below.

Human rights

- The improved draft legislative amendments addressing general measures required by several judgments of the European Court, including *Hadžimejlić and others v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* and *Hadžajlić and others v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*.
- A developed instruction on handling classified data in judicial and prosecutorial proceedings to fully implement the *Šćepanović v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* judgment.
- The piloting of a case law department at the second-instance Cantonal Court in Sarajevo.
- Completion of mandatory initial human rights training by newly appointed judges and prosecutors in both entities and certification of a pool of over 40 qualified domestic HELP tutors.
- The introduction of “Law of the Council of Europe” as a master’s programme at the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo.
- The equipment of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman – designated as the National Preventive Mechanism – with a working methodology to assess conditions in places of deprivation of liberty.
- The adoption of reporting guidelines on freedom of expression and access to information by the cross-co-ordinating working group chaired by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the development of an initial pilot report based on these guidelines.
- The establishment of a co-operative framework to ensure the safety of journalists, bringing together prosecutors and police officers.
- Enhanced understanding of legal professionals, media professionals and representatives of relevant institutions regarding standards related to hate speech, journalist protection, strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) and access to official documents.
- Enhanced implementation of GREVIO recommendations related to digital and sexual violence.
- Strengthened knowledge among 251 representatives from government institutions at the State, entity and local levels, judicial bodies and law enforcement on the digital dimension of violence against women, gender bias in the justice chain and the transition to a consent-based definition of sexual violence in line with Istanbul Convention standards.
- The adoption of amendments to the Criminal Code in Brčko District, introducing a consent-based definition of sexual violence.

6. Council of Europe Action Plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina: 2015-2017 (GR-DEM(2015)4), 2018-2021 (CM(2018)46) and 2022-2025 (CM(2021)161).

- Bolstered capacities of over 100 civil servants in recognising and responding to cases of hate speech, based on the proactive approach of the Civil Service Agency.
- Enhanced ability of police officers and law enforcement to protect vulnerable groups and respond effectively to racism and hate crimes.
- Increased awareness among religious communities on their role in preventing and combating hate speech, with 26 imams empowered to act as multipliers of tolerance in their respective communities.
- The adoption of a report on the implementation of the national Action Plan 2021-2024 to improve the State of human rights and fundamental freedoms of LGBTI people.
- The opening of the first shelter for LGBTI victims of domestic violence in Sarajevo and the successful organisation of successive pride marches.
- An observed increase in the allocation of funds by municipalities to Roma inclusion priorities at the local level following the publication of guidelines on Roma-responsive budgeting.

Rule of law

- Delivery of high-quality, detailed and reliable judicial statistics upon capacity-building support on European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ) tools and methodology, with Bosnia and Herzegovina becoming a regional reference in data-driven, objective case management.
- The adoption of comprehensive communication strategies in five pilot courts, ensuring transparent interaction with the media and the public.
- The finalisation of draft amendments to align the Law on the Financing of Political Parties with international standards and GRECO recommendations.
- Bolstered capacities of anti-money laundering/countering the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) supervisory authorities to effectively oversee lawyers and notaries exposed to money laundering risks in the real estate sector, and improved knowledge of legal professionals regarding their gatekeeping responsibilities in preventing and mitigating money laundering risks.
- Enhanced knowledge and skills of law enforcement, prosecutors and cybersecurity experts on virtual assets, dark market investigations, cryptocurrency evidence, advanced financial forensics of online frauds, online child sexual exploitation and abuse, and practical co-operation at interagency, public-private and international level.
- Enhanced knowledge and practical skills of law enforcement on the application of a human rights approach to persons deprived of liberty.
- Implementation of unified VEP-specific tools in all 14 prisons of Bosnia and Herzegovina and enhanced skills of prison staff to assess radicalisation, manage VEPs and support their reintegration back into society.
- Establishment of prison intelligence units (PIUs) in all 14 prisons to ensure the collection, analysis, processing and sharing of information between prisons, law enforcement and other relevant agencies, based on developed standard operating procedures.
- Piloting of a mechanism for dealing with stress and burnout in two prisons, with a view to strengthening the well-being and mental health of prison staff.
- Adoption of a new Anti-Trafficking Strategy 2024-2027 by the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, addressing urgent GRETA recommendations; adoption of a related Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking 2024-2027 in Republika Srpska.
- Adoption of an Action Plan 2024-2026 on access to justice and free legal aid.
- Signature by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the labour inspectorates in two cantons of a protocol of co-operation between the police and labour inspectorates in detecting and investigating trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation.
- Signature of protocols for multidisciplinary teams to prevent, detect and refer child trafficking cases by three administrative communities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- Establishment of local referral mechanisms to effectively handle child trafficking cases in Olovo, Kiseljak, Velika Kladuša and Brčko District.
- Enhanced knowledge and practical skills by law-enforcement professionals to combat labour and child trafficking and to support victims effectively.

Democracy

- Organisation of Citizens' Assemblies in Mostar and Banja Luka.
- Creation of a local pool of expertise on deliberative democracy, leveraging Bosnia and Herzegovina's pioneering experience among peers in the region.
- Bolstered knowledge and skills of local elected representatives and public officials on innovative, collaborative and human rights-based local governance.
- Participation of Modriča and Travnik as the first-ever local authorities from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Open Government Local Programme.
- Bolstered knowledge and skills of teachers, school leaders and other school staff from pilot schools on how to promote democratic culture within educational institutions.
- Enhanced awareness of pupils on democratic culture, critical thinking, human rights, cultural diversity, openness to different beliefs, empathy and respect, leadership and understanding of the importance of values based on competences for democratic culture.

1.1.4 Consultation process

This Action Plan has been prepared following extensive consultations with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in an inclusive process involving permanent representations of Council of Europe member States. Relevant national strategic documents identifying priorities and/or main lines of action have also been consulted to ensure the Council of Europe's support matches the country's needs and priorities, and is coherent with other national initiatives. Any reference in the current Action Plan to national legislation, strategies, policies, action plans or any other national document does not represent an endorsement of such documents by the Council of Europe.

In addition, consultations with international partners, especially the EU, through co-ordination and project steering committee meetings, have taken place during the preparation of this document.

On 30 April 2024, the Committee of Ministers examined the progress review report on the implementation of the 2022-2025 Action Plan, took note of its outcomes, and paved the way for the new Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029.

On 16 June 2025, the Secretariat of the Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM) and the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC), in close co-ordination with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, organised an information meeting with all interested delegations to the Council of Europe in order to discuss and exchange views on the outline of the present Action Plan.

Gender equality was also extensively discussed during the preparation of the Action Plan, benefiting from the expertise of the regional gender mainstreaming adviser⁷ covering South-East Europe and Türkiye. The adviser ensured that gender was mainstreamed throughout the Action Plan.

An external evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025 was finalised in May 2025.⁸ The evaluation report concluded that all the interventions implemented within the Action Plan 2022-2025 were largely demand-driven and clearly aligned with the country's policies and main areas of reform. Therefore, the Action Plan was found to be highly relevant to Bosnia and Herzegovina's needs. Stakeholder consultations on the Action Plan and flexibility to adapt to emerging priorities enhanced its impact.

7. Seconded by Germany.

8. The evaluation report and the accompanying management response and action plan are available on the website of the Council of Europe Directorate of Internal Oversight.

The evaluation also concluded that the Action Plan achieved strong coherence, with the Council of Europe's strategic triangle approach ensuring alignment with national and international initiatives and addressing gaps through effective collaboration. According to the report, formal sectorial alignment challenges and overlapping risks in some areas highlighted the need for more systematic approaches. Despite this, the evaluation concluded that the Action Plan effectively fostered synergies and complemented broader objectives. In addition, it assessed that the Action Plan demonstrated overall efficiency, and that despite financial constraints, limited staffing, and phased funding, project teams had shown resilience and adaptability in delivering results. Moreover, the Action Plan was considered as having effectively balanced challenges with creative solutions, ensuring strong alignment between resources and project outcomes. According to the evaluation report, the Action Plan had been effective in contributing to sustainable reforms and capacity development and to overarching objectives in human rights, the rule of law, and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Challenges would remain in sustaining outcomes, addressing gaps in governance, and ensuring local ownership, highlighting the need for continued engagement and resource allocation to maintain progress. Notwithstanding the many policy areas which were institutionalised, sustainability faced certain risks stemming from governance complexity and financial constraints. Therefore, the evaluation found that continued support was essential to ensure the long-term impact of achievements.

In addition, an external mid-term evaluation of the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye" was completed in March 2025. Among the cross-cutting recommendations⁹ is the need to improve effectiveness by placing greater emphasis - both in terms of time and resources - on results monitoring as well as strengthening the capacity of project teams and partners to track progress towards impact. Another recommendation stemming from the evaluation is the need to enhance partners' knowledge of, and project teams' practical capacity to apply the full Human Rights Approach framework. This includes CSO participation in all actions and more specific focus on CSOs' role in monitoring the implementation/impact of action results. The evaluation also recommended enhancing gender mainstreaming to ensure more in-depth and systematic coverage across all action reporting, in Steering Committee discussions, in all expert contracts, and more harmonised gender analyses. The evaluation found that the added value of the Council of Europe as a technical co-operation partner should be enhanced by ongoing efforts to build project teams' programming skills, and enhanced networking and co-ordination of the pool of contracted substantive experts.

1.2 ACTION PLAN GOALS

The present Action Plan is a strategic programming instrument for the period 1 January 2026 to 31 December 2029. The Action Plan aims to continue supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to fulfil its obligations as a Council of Europe member State and to bring the country's legislation, institutions and practice further into line with Council of Europe standards in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It also contributes to its European perspective by supporting the implementation of key reforms that are paramount for the EU accession process.

The Action Plan areas for co-operation are described below.

The Council of Europe will continue to support the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in progressing with (and completing where possible) the reforms undertaken in strategic areas, in particular the following:

- execution of judgments of the European Court;
- effective implementation of the Convention at national level;
- effective implementation of the European Social Charter;

9. The complete list of recommendations is included in the final report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the European Union/Council of Europe Joint Programme "Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Türkiye", as well as in the accompanying management response and action plan. Both documents are available on the website of the Council of Europe Directorate of Internal Oversight and the Horizontal Facility website.

- gender equality; combating violence against women, domestic violence and human trafficking;
- anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion (Roma and Travellers, national minorities, LGBTI, migrants);
- independence and efficiency of justice;
- prisons, police and deprivation of liberty;
- fight against corruption, money laundering and economic crime;
- digital challenges (cybercrime, data protection);
- freedom of expression and information; safety of journalists;
- local democracy;
- elections, democratic governance and dialogue, civil society;
- education;

The Council of Europe and the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina jointly identified new areas of co-operation on the basis of the more recent work carried out by Council of Europe institutions, monitoring mechanisms and expert advisory bodies, in particular the following:

- human rights in biomedicine and health;
- protection of the environment;
- children's rights;
- artificial intelligence (AI);
- integrity and governance of sport;
- youth.

Work undertaken in these areas will be based on the Council of Europe's conventions and/or recommendations from the relevant monitoring and advisory bodies. The Action Plan will provide expert and technical assistance in the practical implementation of the Council of Europe's standards in priority areas and in enhancing the capacity of relevant institutions to function effectively. This will also include measures for enhancing co-ordinated actions between stakeholders, which are a prerequisite for addressing complex governance challenges and for fostering dialogue with civil society.

The Council of Europe applies a human rights approach at all levels and stages of its activities. This approach incorporates human rights norms and processes into project management. At the same time, the human rights approach seeks to avoid any unintentional human rights harm, imbalance or negative impact in its work. This approach is a cross-cutting priority for the Action Plan.

As part of the human rights approach, promoting gender equality and therefore gender mainstreaming remains a key component of the present Action Plan. Gender mainstreaming will help to address more effectively the needs of individuals living in Bosnia and Herzegovina without discrimination and enhance the quality and effectiveness of the implementation of the Action Plan.

In meeting its objectives, this Action Plan will support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to implement the [United Nations \(UN\) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

PART II – PROPOSED ACTIONS – ACTION PLAN FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2026-2029

The proposed actions are detailed below for each operational pillar as defined by the structure of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget 2024-2027.

2.1 SECURING HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified the major European and international human rights instruments, most of which are included in its constitution, including the Convention.¹⁰ Bosnia and Herzegovina nonetheless lacks a comprehensive policy framework on the promotion and enforcement of human rights, including countrywide strategies on non-discrimination or the protection of minorities. Accordingly, the protection of human rights remains uneven across the country.

10. Article II.2 of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina incorporates the Convention and its protocols, which are directly applicable in Bosnia and Herzegovina and have priority over all other laws.

The Council of Europe stands ready to support the authorities in devising such a framework in line with European and international standards, to build know-how and enhance adequate domestic institutional capacities to monitor its implementation.

The Organisation is also prepared to follow up on previous capacity-building support provided to the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman, notably with a view to further strengthening its role, independence and effectiveness.¹¹

Moreover, ethnic divisions, ways of dealing with the past and freedom of expression and association remain challenging areas, as well as the long outstanding implementation of a number of judgments of the European Court.

The aim of this operational pillar is to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention and the European Court's judgments at national level in order to secure human rights and fundamental freedoms. Accordingly, it comprises the following sub-programmes:

- execution of judgments of the European Court;
- effective implementation of the Convention at national level.

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs), especially goal 10 (reduced inequalities – target 10.3) and goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.1, 16.3 and 16.10).

2.1.1 Execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights

The [Reykjavík Declaration](#) states that “the execution of the Court’s judgments and [its] effective supervision (...) [are of fundamental importance] to ensure the long-term sustainability, integrity and credibility of the Convention system”. The full, effective and timely execution of the European Court’s judgments is indeed a crucial aspect of the collective guarantee established by the Convention for protecting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe.

According to the Council of Europe Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, 31 cases involving Bosnia and Herzegovina were pending before the Committee of Ministers in its human rights format in December 2024, comprising 12 leading cases and 19 repetitive cases, some of which have been awaiting execution for several years.¹²

The European Court identified patterns of repeated violations of the Convention relating to electoral rights (examined under enhanced supervision by the Committee of Ministers) and the protection of property,¹³ as well as violations relating to the unlawful detention of mentally ill persons, the excessive length of judicial proceedings and the non-enforcement of domestic judicial decisions.

Out of a total of 170 cases transferred to the Committee of Ministers for supervision in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 82% have been closed. The PACE has welcomed the reform efforts by the new ruling coalition following the 2022 general elections and assessed the execution of European Court judgments by the national authorities as satisfactory, apart from the notable exception of the long-pending and challenging *Sejdić and Finci* (2009) group of cases.¹⁴

11. The Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Bosnia and Herzegovina is composed of three ombudspersons, one from each of the “constituent peoples” (Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs). Drawing on recommendations by ECRI, past support has contributed to better equipping the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to respond to discrimination, in line with its mandate and European human rights standards. In its sixth report adopted on 9 April 2024, ECRI welcomes an increased budget of the institution while expressing concern as to the persistent lack of full implementation of its priority recommendation on streamlining decision-making processes. Issued in 2016, the said recommendation observes that the requirement for the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to adopt all decisions by consensus leads to a situation where cases deemed too politically sensitive are in practice not considered while slowing down decision making. Following the adoption of amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman in August 2023, designating the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman as the preventive mechanism against torture and ill-treatment, dedicated support has contributed to strengthen its capacities to assess conditions in places of deprivation of liberty. According to the European Commission’s “Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina”, there remains a need to strengthen the ombudsman’s independence and to encourage a more proactive stance upon non-compliance with its recommendations.

12. In 11 cases, judgments remained unexecuted for over five years. In four cases, this timeframe has exceeded ten years. Department for the Execution of Judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (2024), “Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

13. These cases mainly concern the non-execution of domestic judicial decisions against a number of cantons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the inability of members of the armed forces of Yugoslavia to regain possession of their pre-war apartments in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

14. In *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the applicants, both citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina holding prominent public positions, are respectively of Roma and Jewish origin. Under the 1995 Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina – an annex to the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement – only Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs, described as “constituent peoples”, are eligible to stand for election to the tripartite State presidency and the upper chamber of the State Parliament, the House of Peoples. The applicants complained that, despite possessing experience comparable to the highest elected officials in the country, they were prevented by the constitution from being candidates for such posts solely on the grounds of their ethnic origin. The Court found violations of Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 (inability of a Roma and a Jew to stand for election to the highest political office in the country) and Article 14 (inability of a Roma and a Jew to stand for parliamentary elections).

Requiring both constitutional and electoral reforms, the latter concern citizens' ineligibility to stand for elections to the Presidency and the House of Peoples due to their non-affiliation with one of the "constituent peoples" (whether because of their situation or their choice). Examined under enhanced supervision by the Committee of Ministers since 2010, with four successive elections taking place under a legal framework in violation of the Convention, the *Sejdić and Finci* group of cases has given rise to five interim resolutions.¹⁵

In the meantime, the PACE, the Congress, the Commissioner¹⁶ and the Venice Commission have repeatedly called on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to bring the electoral legislation in line with the Convention in this respect. The PACE explicitly called upon the authorities to revise the constitution by replacing "the mechanisms of ethnic representation by representation based on the civil principles",¹⁷ thus ending the constitutional discrimination against "Others".

In light of the political complexity of the *Sejdić and Finci* group of cases, technical support provided by the Council of Europe Execution Department under the 2022-2025 Action Plan focused on other judgments and related co-operation with national judicial training institutions. In this context, assistance delivered to national authorities at different levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina in conducting structural reforms and preparing new legislation allowed for substantial progress in the effective execution of European Court judgments, including with regard to the enforcement of domestic court rulings (*Kunić and Others* group of cases), the excessive length of proceedings (*Hadzajlić* group of cases), procedural requirements of the right to family life (*Šćepanović* case) and unlawful detention of persons in social care centres (*Hadžimejlić* group of cases).

Building on results achieved, future targeted assistance could aim to further reinforce domestic capacity to execute the European Court's judgments, with particular support directed to the government agents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, both with regard to their status and to the development of concrete action plans.

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced effective execution of the European Court's judgments with respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on general measures requiring legislative and other changes.
- Increased capacity of the government agents to represent the State before the European Court, adequately supervise the measures for the execution of judgments and to implement the Convention standards at the national level.

Main national partners

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministries of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), government agents before the European Court.

15. Having examined the *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* at their 1521st meeting from 4 to 6 March 2025, the deputies welcomed the presence of the Deputy Minister of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a demonstration of the country's commitment to comply with the judgments of the European Court, yet deeply deplored the fact that despite repeated assurances by the authorities over the past 15 years, the constitutional and legislative amendments required were still outstanding, with time running out to bring the legislative framework in compliance with the Convention before the 2026 general elections. Stressing the urgency of finding new ways and means of progressing in this regard, they exhorted the authorities to devise without further delay a concrete action plan, with a clear timeframe, with a view to finding rapidly a solution, also encouraging them to take advantage of all expertise available within the Council of Europe, notably by the Venice Commission, to rapidly reach consensus on the electoral system reform. In the absence of tangible progress by December 2025, the deputies affirmed their readiness to consider taking new action aimed at strengthening their political dialogue and co-operation with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to ensure the effective execution of this group of judgments.

16. Submission under Rule 9.4 of the Rules of the Committee of Ministers for the supervision of the execution of judgments in the *Sejdić and Finci* group of cases, CommHR(2023)13, 24 April 2023.

17. The honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Document 16039, 13 September 2024, paragraph 42.

2.1.2 Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights at national level

In 2023, the European Court dealt with 328 applications concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which 326 were declared inadmissible or struck out. It delivered two judgments, both of which found at least one violation of the Convention.¹⁸ Currently, 57 cases are pending before the European Court in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of them concern the election process and the general prohibition of discrimination, as well as the non-enforcement of domestic judicial decisions.

The Constitutional Court has been playing a key role in the implementation of the Convention at national level and provides the main judicial remedy against potential human rights violations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet, the inability of the Constitutional Court to function at full capacity due to political pressure and delays in the election of judges, together with the lack of follow-up and enforcement of some of its final decisions by a range of institutions, has been affecting its credibility and diminishing the Court's effectiveness, while occasionally leading to a legal vacuum. Simultaneously, the Constitutional Court has been facing significant challenges due to limited human, technical and financial resources, which have been further threatening its ability to perform its functions effectively and are rendering access to constitutional justice excessively lengthy, as noted by the Venice Commission.¹⁹

Consequently, the Council of Europe stands ready to help reinforce the Constitutional Court's institutional capacities at all levels and to tackle the issue of non-enforcement of the Constitutional Court's decisions through the promotion of dialogue, awareness raising and co-ordination with members of Parliament, representatives of administrative bodies, representatives of the Ministries of Justice, courts and other judicial institutions.

The Committee of Ministers has also emphasised the crucial importance of initial and continuous training of judges for guaranteeing the long-term effectiveness of the Convention system²⁰ and recommended that Council of Europe member States ensure university education and training of a large variety of professionals in the human rights field in line with needs and expectations. Accordingly, past co-operation activities contributed to quantitatively and qualitatively improving systematic human rights education provided by the Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training by developing a human rights training curriculum²¹ and incorporating HELP courses into their curricula. At the level of the judiciary, support allowed for tangible achievements, including the establishment of case law departments in several courts and the good level of knowledge displayed by judges regarding the direct and consistent application of the Convention.

Nonetheless, the high number of cases lodged with the Constitutional Court points to the continuous need for capacity building of judges on the Convention, as well as for support to judicial dialogue, dissemination of the Constitutional Court's case law and the promotion of the preliminary question procedure before the Constitutional Court as afforded to judges of general jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, the ongoing process of setting up a lawyers training centre within the Bar Association of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and prospects for the establishment of a similar structure within the Bar Association of Republika Srpska, represent a unique opportunity to develop a comprehensive, mandatory human rights training curriculum for all lawyers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Future co-operation could furthermore focus on developing the ability of lawyers and CSOs to engage in litigation on Convention-related matters and to claim and protect individual rights before all competent courts.

18. Overall, the violations found in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina mainly concerned: Article 3 (freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment), Article 5 (right to liberty and security), Article 6 (right to a fair trial), Article 7 (no punishment without law), Article 8 (respect for your private and family life), Article 14 (protection from discrimination), taken together with Article 3 of the First Protocol (right to free elections), Article 9 (freedom of thought, belief and religion), Article 10 (freedom of expression), Article 13 (right to an effective remedy), Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property), Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination) and Article 1 of Protocol No. 12 (general prohibition of discrimination) of the Convention. European Court (2024), Press country profile Bosnia and Herzegovina.

19. Venice Commission, "Opinion on certain questions relating to the functioning of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina", adopted in March 2024, paragraphs 4 and 32.

20. Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training.

21. Developed under the previous Action Plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Expected outcomes

- Improved legal and policy frameworks on the promotion and enforcement of human rights.
- Enhanced human rights protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina through constitutional justice, based on: (a) the effective enforcement of decisions of the Constitutional Court and better implementation of its overall case law through judicial dialogue and communication and co-ordination among national stakeholders; (b) increased capacities of legal professionals to claim and protect individual rights before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and courts of general jurisdiction; and (c) strengthened institutional capacities of the Constitutional Court.
- Strengthened capacity of judicial, prosecutorial and law-enforcement authorities as well as lawyers to ensure consistent application of the Convention and related Council of Europe standards through comprehensive human rights education among legal professionals.
- Continued digital empowerment of judicial training institutions in this regard.
- Strengthened institutional capacity of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to carry out its mandate effectively, including in its recent capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism against torture and ill-treatment.

Main national partners

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministries of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Supreme Courts (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Appellate Court of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, parliaments at all levels, national law and policy makers, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), members of the judiciary (judges, lawyers, prosecutors, legal aid staff), Bar Associations of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, lawyers and other legal professionals, law-enforcement agencies, civil servants, law faculties, CSOs.

2.2 ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE, GOOD HEALTH AND A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

The Reykjavík Declaration underlines “the urgency of taking co-ordinated action to protect the environment by countering the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity”. It also emphasises that “human rights and the environment are intertwined and that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations”.

The Council of Europe has developed several conventions recognising the right to a healthy environment. Although not explicitly enshrined in the Convention or the European Social Charter, the case law of the European Court and the conclusions of the Committee of the European Social Charter affirm the undeniable interconnectedness between the environment and human rights.

These standards have wide-ranging positive outcomes, such as combating extreme poverty and social exclusion and, as a vector of social cohesion, rebuilding social ties and trust in national institutions and enhancing democratic resilience. Nonetheless, serious weaknesses persist in the protection systems of a broad range of social and human rights in the health and environmental fields. With a strong track record in protecting social rights, public health and the environment through a number of unique instruments that form the basis of its action, the Council of Europe stands ready to strengthen the capacity of relevant national and local authorities to put social and environmental policy into practice.

The operational pillar “Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment” comprises the following sub-programmes:

- effective implementation of the European Social Charter;
- human rights in biomedicine and health;
- quality of medicines and healthcare;
- protection of the environment and human rights;
- Secretariat of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the SDGs, especially goal 3 (good health and well-being – targets 3.1, 3.4 and 3.8), goal 10 (reduced inequalities – targets 10.2 and 10.3), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities – targets 11.1 and 11.6), goal 12 (responsible consumption and production – target 12.3), goal 13 (climate action – targets 13.1 and 13.3) and goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.3 and 16.7).

2.2.1 Effective implementation of the European Social Charter

Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified the [revised European Social Charter](#) and has accepted 51 provisions. The country has not accepted the system of collective complaints. Statutory reports are often of uneven quality and provided with some delay.

From the monitoring perspective, the most pressing areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina to address concern:

- tackling unemployment, especially in technical fields;
- preventing and addressing forced labour;
- providing adequate vocational training and guidance, particularly for youth;
- protecting young workers;
- preventing gender discrimination and ensuring labour rights.

While no technical assistance has been conducted in relation to social rights under the 2022-2025 Action Plan, potential co-operation remains of interest. Country-specific technical co-operation will take into consideration the previous conclusions of the ECSR on situations of non-conformity with regard to “employment, training and equal opportunities” (2020), “health, social security and social protection” (2021), “labour rights” (2022), and “children, families and migrants” (2023).²²

Future assistance will aim to strengthen the capacities of authorities at national and entity level in implementing and respecting social rights as enshrined in the European Social Charter, while also raising awareness of the European Social Charter standards among social partners, legal practitioners and civil society to promote the acceptance of additional provisions of the European Social Charter and of the collective complaints procedure.

Expected outcomes

- Harmonised national legislation and practices in the area of social and economic rights with the provisions of the revised European Social Charter.
- Enhanced capacity of State stakeholders to understand ECSR conclusions and apply them in practice.
- Improved ECSR monitoring process as a result of higher-quality reports prepared by national authorities.

Main national partners

Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Federal Ministry of Displaced Persons and Refugees (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, legal professionals and other responsible authorities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Brčko District).

22. On 27 September 2022, the Committee of Ministers adopted a reform package aimed at modernising the European Social Charter system (CM(2022)114-final). In the reporting procedure, the provisions on which States Parties are required to report are now divided into two groups, with a report on one group to be submitted every two years.

2.2.2 Human rights in biomedicine and health

The protection of human rights in the health and biomedical fields, including the right to health protection, is an essential element of life in society with a direct impact on other fundamental human rights and freedoms. Ensuring equitable access to good-quality medicines and healthcare remains a challenge for many Council of Europe member States.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party to the Convention on Human Rights and Biomedicine (the Oviedo Convention) and its additional protocols concerning Biomedical Research (CETS No. 195) and the Prohibition of Cloning of Human Beings (CETS No. 168).

Moreover, the country has ratified the Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (the MEDICRIME Convention). The Convention on the Elaboration of a European Pharmacopoeia (CETS No. 50) entered into force in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 30 March 1995, making the quality standards for medicines published in the European Pharmacopoeia legally binding throughout the country.

In its [2021 report](#) regarding the thematic group “health, social security and social protection”, the ECSR highlighted the following situations of non-conformity in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to Article 11 of the European Social Charter (the right to protection of health):

- Article 11, paragraph 2 – Advisory and education facilities: lack of a systematic implementation of screening policies;
- Article 11, paragraph 3 – Prevention of diseases and accidents: absence of efficient immunisation and epidemiological monitoring programmes, and the absence of necessary measures taken to ban smoking in public places.

While the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and Healthcare (EDQM) is presently not conducting dedicated activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country benefits from a broader co-operation framework with the EU aimed at improving the quality of medicines and addressing challenges in its healthcare system. Bosnia and Herzegovina has been undertaking healthcare reforms for several years, which remain difficult to assess in a highly fragmented context. As a consequence of the longstanding prevalence of smoking in public areas, the increasing mortality rate due to cancer appears as one of the country’s most pressing public health concerns. Following earlier ECSR findings, smoking bans have become effective in 2023 in all closed public places, workplaces, public transport and private transport with minors present.²³

As assessed by international experts, domestic legislation is partly in line with the MEDICRIME Convention, with several gaps remaining to be addressed at State level. To date, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a dedicated strategy to fight counterfeit medical products and other similar crimes involving threats to public health, despite the existence of a national platform. Current health-related protection laws are at an early stage of preparation, thus hindering the prevention and protection of patients and consumers.²⁴ In this context, capacity-building support could be provided upon request to strengthen interagency co-operation and information sharing among those involved in the fight against counterfeit medical products, also increasing institutional capabilities to co-operate at international level.

The Council of Europe also stands ready to further bolster and sustain the capacities of police, prosecution authorities and customs, co-operating closely with training institutions to systematically incorporate pharmaceutical crime-related topics into educational curricula, while placing particular emphasis on ensuring further compliance with the MEDICRIME Convention and other relevant Council of Europe instruments. It also stands ready to further increase awareness and to build capacities of relevant professionals on the Oviedo Convention and its protocols, as well as on other health-related instruments, including the Council of Europe Convention against Trafficking in Human Organs (Santiago de Compostela Convention).

23. The ban was enforced following the adoption of the Tobacco Act in 2022.

24. “EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is also a member of the Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions (the Pompidou Group), which contributes to developing and enhancing drug policies that guarantee a fair balance between the demands for public safety and the protection of the individuals' rights. It participates actively in two of its regional co-operation networks,²⁵ allowing field professionals to exchange experiences and improve their operational capacities with the aim of creating safer communities. In this context, the Council of Europe stands ready to provide tailor-made support to further apply acquired knowledge and regional partnership in practice.

Expected outcomes

- Improved national legislation, policies and practices that effectively protect human rights in the fields of biomedicine and health, aligned with European standards and with the principles enshrined in the Oviedo Convention.
- Increased awareness and strengthened capacity of national stakeholders and healthcare professionals to ensure adequate protection of human rights in the biomedical and health fields, including in regard to relevant challenges raised by new scientific and technological developments.
- Improved legislation and policy frameworks on counterfeit medical products and other similar crimes in full compliance with the MEDICRIME Convention.
- Further enhanced capacities of authorities to search, seize and confiscate MEDICRIME proceeds, to engage in interagency co-operation to conduct related financial investigations and to co-operate at international level in the fight against counterfeit medical products.
- Strengthened capacities of judicial authorities to prosecute and adjudicate MEDICRIME offences.
- Enhanced drug and addiction policies, legislation and practice addressing the risks of drug use and behavioural addictions, in line with the Council of Europe's core values.
- Increased operational co-operation at regional level between police and customs officers working at airports to tackle drug trafficking.
- Empowered prison staff, healthcare professionals and social workers to improve access to quality drug addiction treatment for inmates.

Main national partners

Ministries of Justice, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Health (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska and Department for Health and other services of Brčko District, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, legal professionals and other responsible authorities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Brčko District), prison administration, prison staff, law-enforcement agencies, health and psychosocial professionals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

25. The co-operation group of South-East European airports on fighting drug trafficking via air (AIRSEE) brings together police and customs officers working at airports from 14 beneficiaries to discuss trends, modus operandi and case studies to combat trafficking in drugs and precursors via air. The co-operation group on developing comprehensive drug treatment systems in prisons in South-East Europe focuses on empowering prison practitioners across 14 countries to provide better treatment and care for people with substance use disorders in custodial settings, in line with international standards.

2.2.3 Protection of the environment and human rights

Human rights and the environment are intertwined: a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations. The Reykjavík Declaration underlines the “urgency of additional efforts to protect the environment” and the need to “counter the impact of the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity on human rights, democracy and the rule of law”. Accordingly, it commits to strengthening the related work of the Council of Europe in this field and to making the environment a visible priority for the Organisation. As set out in [Appendix V of the Reykjavík Declaration](#), Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited, along with other member States, to actively participate in the Ad hoc Multidisciplinary Group on the Environment which elaborated the [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#)²⁶ and a related [action plan](#), subsequently adopted by the Committee of Ministers at its 134th Ministerial Session in Luxembourg on 13 and 14 May 2025. In parallel, the ministerial session adopted a new [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#).

Moreover, the Committee of Ministers’ Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2022\)20](#) calls on member States to review their national legislation and practice to ensure that they are consistent with the guidance “on the nature, content and implications of the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment”.

In its subsequent [Opinion No.17, the Consultative Council of European Prosecutors](#) highlights the role of prosecutors as key players in any strategy to protect the environment, public health and safety through criminal, administrative and civil law.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention), as well as to the European Landscape Convention and its amending protocol. It is also a member of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement – a platform for co-operation aimed at improving the prevention of, and the protection of people against, major natural or technological disasters, while promoting projects addressing the role of nature-based solutions in disaster risk reduction.

Under the 2022-2025 Action Plan, regional co-operation activities in South-East Europe provided support to national stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including relevant authorities, legal professionals and CSOs, strengthening their understanding of the interconnection between human rights and the environment. In this context, the preparation of a baseline study mapping the current state of play regarding policies, legislation and judicial practices laid the groundwork for future efforts in this field.

Technical co-operation in this area will also take into consideration recommendations that call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:

- ensure that legal and policy frameworks comply with European standards on a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and the protection of related human rights;
- develop the capacity of State and non-state stakeholders to better protect the human right to a healthy environment;
- raise public awareness of the human right to a healthy environment and improve access to environmental justice;
- ratify the Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law.

Accordingly, the Action Plan will bolster the capacity of relevant national and local authorities to put environmental policy into practice, while contributing to the alignment of the domestic legal framework with European standards. Support to legal professionals could further enhance their ability to effectively address the linkages between environmental issues, criminal law and human rights at national level. In addition, dedicated training for law-enforcement agencies could improve their capacity to effectively prevent, detect and prosecute environmental crime through a holistic approach and multistakeholder co-operation. These actions will be supplemented by awareness-raising initiatives for civil society, the general population and particularly vulnerable groups to increase their knowledge of the right to a healthy environment and access to judicial and other procedures available to address environmental cases, including strategic litigation.

26. The strategy is intended for Council of Europe institutions and bodies. It focuses on areas where the Council of Europe has a comparative advantage and/or unique legal instruments and expertise, ensuring an inclusive consultation process and leveraging synergies with partners and stakeholders with a view to providing added value.

Expected outcomes

- Improved national legislation and practices on environmental protection, in line with European standards, contributing to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and related human rights protection, also providing effective legal remedies.
- Enhanced national legislative and regulatory framework to prevent, identify and combat environmental crimes.
- Increased public awareness of the relation between the protection of the environment and human rights among legal professionals and the general public.
- Bolstered co-operation between government agencies, companies, industry associations and CSOs on issues related to the environment and protection of human rights.
- Enhanced capacities of relevant authorities, legal professionals, CSOs and other stakeholders to ensure a better application of human rights standards related to the environment.

Main national partners

Ministries of Justice, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Environment and Tourism (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Spatial Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology (Republika Srpska), Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, legal professionals, law faculties, CSOs and other responsible authorities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Brčko District).

2.2.4 Secretariat of the Council of Europe Development Bank

Following a member State-driven application process, the CEB²⁷ invests in projects with high social added value, fostering inclusion and improving the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations across Europe. With its Strategic Framework 2023-2027, the CEB has committed to focus increasingly on member States where social needs appear higher, thus maximising its impact. In this context, the CEB mainly part-finances projects in the following lines of action: investing in people and enhancing human capital, promoting inclusive and resilient living environments and supporting jobs and economic and financial inclusion.

The CEB has played an active role in Bosnia and Herzegovina ever since the country joined the Partial Agreement in 2003, providing co-financing for a total of 27 projects for an amount of over €300 million. While the initial focus was mostly on providing durable housing solutions and improved living conditions for internally displaced persons, rehabilitation of educational institutions and construction and/or renovation of medical facilities enhancing primary healthcare services, the CEB subsequently mainly co-funded projects facilitating access to microcredits, supporting job creation and income-generating activities, ensuring financial inclusion for vulnerable populations, young people, women-led businesses and rural communities, as well as the construction of penitentiary infrastructures and psychiatric care facilities.

The CEB furthermore co-finances the construction of a cultural and sports centre in Mostar, with the aim of fostering community integration, supports microcredit companies providing micro-loans to women-led businesses as well as to low-income clients, individuals and micro-entrepreneurs mainly in rural areas, supports micro, small and medium enterprises for the creation and preservation of viable jobs, and supports energy efficiency investments for low-income households in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The CEB stands ready to consider any further applications by the national authorities for additional social infrastructure development.

27. For more information about the Council of Europe Development Bank, please visit: <https://coebank.org/en/>.

2.3 ACTING FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

The aim of this operational pillar is to ensure gender equality, protection of children's rights and the strengthening of inclusive societies, without marginalisation, exclusion, racism, intolerance and discrimination based on any ground. Accordingly, it comprises the following sub-programmes:

- gender equality – violence against women and domestic violence – human trafficking;
- anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion – Roma and Travellers – national minorities, regional or minority languages – LGBTI – migrants;
- children's rights.

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the SDGs, especially goal 4 (quality education – targets 4.5 and 4.7), goal 5 (gender equality – targets 5.1 and 5.5), goal 10 (reduced inequalities – targets 10.2 and 10.3), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities – target 11.7) and goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.1 and 16.7).

2.3.1 Gender equality – violence against women and domestic violence – human trafficking

Gender mainstreaming in all policies and measures is a strategic objective of the [Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#). The [Council of Europe Plan of Action on strengthening judicial independence and impartiality](#) simultaneously invites Council of Europe member States to introduce measures to tackle the harmful impact of stereotyping in judicial decisions.

Legislation on gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to lack harmonisation and effective enforcement across the country.²⁸ The Gender Action Plan 2023-2027 has yet to be adequately funded and monitored. A new action plan on women, peace and security has been pending adoption since 2023. While Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a partial Gender Equality Index,²⁹ the institutional data collection, including on gender-based violence, should be further improved to systematically identify and target relevant gender gaps.

Consequently, technical co-operation in this area will address gaps identified and focus on the alignment of legislation across the country with the Law on Gender Equality in order to increase the public and political participation of women.

Violence against women and domestic violence

Published in 2022, GREVIO's [baseline evaluation report](#) regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed several positive measures introduced by the authorities, including gender equality policies and legislation on stalking, sexual harassment and forced marriage.

It also identified major remaining challenges as to an outstanding alignment with obligations under the Istanbul Convention, notably requiring further amendments to criminal legislation. Accordingly, GREVIO urged the authorities to:

- amend the sexual offences provisions under the national and entity-level criminal codes³⁰ to fully incorporate the absence of freely given consent as required by the Istanbul Convention, and to specify the type of non-consensual sexual acts that are criminalised;
- introduce systematic and mandatory initial and in-service training on all forms of violence against women for relevant professionals who deal with victims or perpetrators, particularly law-enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges, staff in centres for social work and medical personnel, in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention;

28. "EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina".

29. Compared to the Gender Equality Index developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality, the Gender Equality Index for Bosnia and Herzegovina presents the full index scores for two domains ("knowledge" and "power") and partial index scores for the domains "work" and "health".

30. In 2024, Brčko District amended its Criminal Code introducing a consent-based definition of sexual violence, including rape.

- take legislative and other measures to ensure that risk assessment and management are systematically carried out, and that emergency barring orders and restraining and protection orders are systematically issued in relation to all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, using standardised, evidence-based risk-assessment tools;
- collect, regularly and systematically, administrative data for all forms of violence against women at all stages of the criminal justice process (from reporting, to investigation, to the opening of criminal proceedings and their outcome), disaggregated by sex and age of both the victim and the perpetrator, type of violence and the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, throughout the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- establish perpetrator programmes taking due account of the best practices developed internationally and guaranteeing a human rights approach;
- adopt measures to ensure that any offence of sexual violence applies between former or current spouses or partners and ensure proportionate and dissuasive sanctions for all sexual acts without the victim's consent, irrespective of personal characteristics;
- take "priority actions" to ensure the safety of victims and their children and to "break the cycle of power and abuse" exercised by perpetrators for custody and visitation rights.

GREVIO also expressed concern about judges still appearing to consider domestic violence and other forms of violence against women as offences of low social danger, highlighting the widespread use of plea-bargaining agreements and the imposition of very lenient sentences as worrying practices that reinforce a sense of impunity among perpetrators and victims alike.

Support provided under the 2022-2025 Action Plan (both at country-specific and regional level) addressed shortcomings in the legal framework for combating sexual violence and strengthened tools to improve women's access to justice in a more gender-responsive justice chain. It furthermore enhanced the understanding of government institutions, judicial bodies and law-enforcement agencies as to the digital dimension of violence against women.

Despite the national authorities' constructive engagement on GREVIO recommendations and positive developments with regard to combating domestic violence at all levels, significant gaps in legislation and its implementation persist. Current legislation fails to adequately address sexual violence and technology-facilitated forms of violence against women, leaving victims vulnerable in the digital space. Overall, public trust in the system remains low, as indicated by very weak reporting rates, with only 11% of victims reporting. Moreover, there is a continued need to combat harmful gender stereotypes, as women remain subjected to discriminatory practices in divorce and custody cases as well as in the majority of cases related to violence against women. Bosnia and Herzegovina also continues to be confronted by anti-gender and anti-human rights movements.³¹

Building on previous co-operation, capacity-building support under the Action Plan will promote further alignment of domestic legislation and practice on gender-based violence with international standards, while continuing ongoing work on a consent-based definition of sexual violence.

31. "EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina"; GREVIO [baseline evaluation report](#).

Expected outcomes

- Strengthened national legislative and normative frameworks to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including in the digital sphere, in line with GREVIO's findings and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.
- Strengthened legislative and policy frameworks to ensure systematic risk assessment and management, as well as the issuance of emergency barring orders, restraining orders and protection orders for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.
- Improved capacity of authorities, justice sector professionals, frontline professionals and civil society to implement the standards of the Istanbul Convention, effectively removing obstacles to women's access to justice.
- Improved quality and availability of treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence, in accordance with the principles of the Istanbul Convention.
- Regular and systematic collection of administrative data on all forms of violence against women at all stages of the criminal justice process, disaggregated by sex and age of both the victim and the perpetrator, type of violence and the perpetrator-victim relationship, across the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Main national partners

Ministries of Justice, Ministries of Internal Affairs, the Board for Monitoring and Reporting on Implementation of the Istanbul Convention and Femicide in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Gender Equality Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees), the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Gender Equality Centre of the Republika Srpska, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), law faculties, CSOs.

Human trafficking

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to be a country of origin, destination and transit for trafficked persons. Support provided by the Council of Europe significantly contributed to the development of a comprehensive national anti-trafficking strategy – aligned with the most urgent recommendations of GRETA – and a related action plan for 2024-2027.

In recent years, the criminal justice response to trafficking in human beings has been strengthened with the establishment of a dedicated section in the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, increasing the number of investigations and indictments. A task force on human trafficking has enabled solid co-ordination efforts between prosecution and law-enforcement agencies, leading to an increase in convictions. Specific protocols were developed for multidisciplinary teams to prevent, detect and investigate trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation and child trafficking cases. A network of specialist lawyers and CSOs providing free legal aid to victims of trafficking was established in 2023.

Despite these significant achievements, important challenges remain, including an insufficient understanding of the need to improve access to justice and effective remedies for victims of trafficking in human beings. The lack of consensus on the development of a draft law on a State compensation fund for victims has prompted the Council of Europe to redirect support toward the establishment of local compensation mechanisms.

The Action Plan will consolidate comprehensive capacity building for law-enforcement agencies and legal professionals to sustain long-term efforts and ensure effective implementation of new tools and policies. Technical co-operation will also take into consideration outstanding GRETA recommendations from the [third evaluation report](#) (as issued in June 2022), which call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:³²

- ensure that legal assistance is provided as soon as there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person is a victim of trafficking, and that prosecutors inform victims of their right to legal representation;

33. GRETA (2022)06 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Third evaluation round.

- ensure that victims obtain a decision on compensation from the offender as part of the criminal trial, and establish without further delay a State compensation scheme accessible to victims of trafficking;
- ensure that human trafficking offences are prosecuted as such, rather than as lesser offences, whenever the circumstances of the case allow this, and lead to effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions;
- make further efforts to ensure full compliance with the non-punishment provision by developing guidance and training for police officers and prosecutors on its implementation;
- fully use all available measures to protect victims and witnesses of trafficking and to prevent intimidation during the investigation, as well as during and after court proceedings;
- further promote specialisation among police, prosecutors and judges;
- pay increased attention to detecting victims of trafficking among migrants and asylum seekers, by providing training and issuing clear operational instructions for frontline professionals;
- train labour inspectors, law-enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges throughout the country, including through joint training, on trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and the rights of victims.

Expected outcomes

- A strengthened criminal justice response to trafficking in human beings, focusing on the effective investigation and prosecution of offences.
- Improved protection of victims of trafficking in human beings before, during and after proceedings.
- Enhanced prevention policies and measures addressing core drivers of trafficking in human beings.
- A strengthened rights-based approach, focusing on victim identification and referral procedures, and improving access to justice and effective remedies.

Main national partners

State Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), border police of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Service for Foreigners' Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), co-ordinator for the fight against human trafficking in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, co-ordinator for the fight against human trafficking in Republika Srpska, Brčko District police, co-ordinator for the fight against human trafficking in Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prosecutors' Offices, labour inspections, anti-trafficking teams of the entities, Brčko District and cantons.

2.3.2 Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion – Roma and Travellers – national minorities, regional or minority languages – LGBTI – migrants

Discrimination represents a serious human rights violation. Inequalities, racism and intolerance fuel hate, deepen divides and destabilise democracies. Accordingly, the Reykjavík Declaration acknowledges “the need to ensure equality and combat any kind of discrimination” and commits to strengthening the work of the Organisation “towards inclusive societies without marginalisation, exclusion, racism and intolerance”. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)16](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech sets out actions to prevent and combat hate speech, promote a culture of inclusiveness and help those targeted by hate speech to assert their rights through a comprehensive and multistakeholder approach. [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2024\)4](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate crime provides additional comprehensive guidelines for member States to effectively prevent and combat hate crime within the frameworks of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The recommendation emphasises the necessity for member States to implement effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal law provisions to address hate crimes, ensure specialised support services for victims and promote co-operation with civil society and other stakeholders.

It also highlights the importance of training law-enforcement and judicial authorities to recognise and address hate crimes effectively. Despite an overall qualitative legal framework, discriminatory language and hate speech remain prevalent in Bosnia and Herzegovina and continue to negatively impact interethnic relations. Electoral contexts tend to further exacerbate the phenomenon.³³ The execution of the *Sejdić and Finci* group of cases is still pending. There are no countrywide strategies on non-discrimination or on the protection of minorities. The Roma population remains the most vulnerable and disadvantaged minority, with stigmatisation and stereotyping hindering its social inclusion: Roma people continue to face discrimination in politics, education, employment, access to social protection, health services, housing and property rights. Despite being in breach of 2014 and 2021 rulings of the Federation entity Supreme Court, the practice of “two schools under one roof” continues. According to available data, discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation and gender identity is still widespread: in 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina scored 40.25% on the Rainbow Europe Map and Index (compared to previous scores of 40% in 2023 and 38% in 2022) and hence ranks 23rd on the European continent with respect to the legal and policy situation for the human rights of LGBTI persons.³⁴

Assistance provided by the Council of Europe nevertheless allowed for good progress over the last years, notably regarding the implementation of the national LGBTI Action Plan 2021-2024, the successful organisation of the pride march in Sarajevo in 2023 and 2024 – with the latter events relaxing security measures to a more adequate size compared to previous editions – and a better equipped Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to respond to discrimination and intolerance. Local authorities strengthened their capacities to improve Roma inclusion policies, alongside active monitoring of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2025. In November 2023, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina furthermore adopted a pioneering document, “Mapping responses to hate speech”, setting out a clear roadmap and priority measures for addressing this issue on a systemic level and considering the recommendations issued by ECRI. Council of Europe support provided under the 2022-2025 Action Plan also appeared conducive to combating discrimination in the education system and fostering democratic school culture.

Despite these achievements, significant challenges remain. In its [sixth monitoring cycle report](#) issued on 25 June 2024, ECRI emphasised the need for a fundamental paradigm shift to overcome deeply entrenched resentments, mistrust and hatred still too often characterising the state of the country’s interethnic relations. In addition to calling for interethnic and interreligious dialogue, ECRI also, once again, highlighted the imperative need to comply with the *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* judgment of the European Court and address discrimination in education by eliminating the practice of “two schools under one roof” and other forms of non-inclusive school environments. In its 2024 report, ECRI furthermore pointed out the need for better LGBTI equality, greater accountability for LGBTI-phobic hateful acts, and further measures for effective Roma inclusion.

In its fifth Opinion adopted in February 2024, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities convergently insisted on the importance of inclusive education systems, access to quality preschool education for Roma children and intercultural dialogue between ethnic and religious groups (see also: section 2.6.4. “Education”). The need for the protection of Roma children and ensuring adequate access to education and improved living conditions (housing) was highlighted also through the 2023 conclusions of the ECSR.³⁵

In its [third evaluation report](#) adopted in March 2022, the Committee of Experts of the Language Charter found that Bosnia and Herzegovina had not yet implemented most of its undertakings under the Language Charter. It noted in particular the lack of a structural approach vis-à-vis the 15 regional or minority languages protected, in fields such as education, broadcasting or the use of traditional place names in the minority languages, where applicable.³⁶

33. However, following the 2022 High Representative amendments to the Electoral Law, the Congress mission deployed to observe the October 2024 local elections noted a less hostile campaigning environment and fewer instances of hate speech.

34. Rainbow Europe – ILGA-Europe’s annual benchmarking tool – is comprised of the Rainbow Europe Map and Index and national recommendations. ILGA-Europe has produced the Rainbow Index since 2009, using it to illustrate the legal and policy situation of LGBTI people in Europe. The Rainbow Index ranks European countries and territories on their respective legal and policy practices for LGBTI people, from 0 to 100%.

35. Report of the European Committee of Social Rights (2024), Conclusions 2023.

36. See also the subsequent Recommendation CM/RecChL(2022)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Accordingly, future technical co-operation will focus on:

- providing expert support in devising strategic legislative and policy frameworks;
- continued capacity building related to the existing strategic frameworks (on hate speech, LGBTI) and those under preparation (on Roma and Travellers) or envisaging countrywide strategy for combating discrimination and related action plan;
- further supporting the systemic approach to addressing hate speech and hate crimes, enhancing related awareness raising and positive messaging;
- combating intolerance and hatred through improving social cohesion in co-operation with religious and sports communities as well as the business sector;
- empowering local CSOs to advocate for and help citizens claiming their rights, to effectively contribute to the development and implementation of inclusive policies and plans and to ensure psycho-social support and safe spaces for victims of discrimination and hatred;
- encouraging the participation in political and public life of persons belonging to minorities.

Technical co-operation will also take into consideration reports and outstanding recommendations of ECRI, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the Committee of Experts of the Language Charter, which call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:³⁷

Education/youth

- strengthen the role of the education system of primary, secondary schools and higher education institutions in promoting and implementing anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion among students;
- systematise the offer of preschool education and raise awareness of the importance of such education among persons belonging to the Roma minority;
- strengthen and ensure the sustainability of community services conducive to better educational outcomes for children from marginalised communities (daycare, after-school centres), and of the Roma educational mediators' scheme contributing to the inclusion of the most vulnerable Roma children;
- lower the threshold for vocational training courses to ensure that members of the Roma community who have limited literacy skills can also participate;
- build the capacity of psychosocial service providers in educational institutions to meet the needs of LGBTI students and their families;
- provide appropriate forms and means for the teaching of minority languages protected under the Language Charter at all stages, inform students and parents directly about the offer and encourage them to make use of it;
- establish a scheme for financing cultural activities and facilities relating to minority languages;
- provide more funding to municipalities to establish or expand cultural centres that promote encounters and shared interests to overcome ethnic boundaries, especially for youth;
- advocate for the introduction of the Romani language, as well as content on Roma history and culture, in school curricula and textbooks.

Minority rights/participation

- ensure the implementation of domestic court judgments relating to cases of discrimination affecting persons belonging to national minorities;
- conduct an analysis of the needs and interests of persons belonging to national minorities, with a view to maintaining and further developing and protecting national minority cultures, identities and languages;
- strengthen the status of national minority councils, granting them statutory powers in different parliamentary bodies;
- strengthen the capacity of the national Roma contact point in the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees to ensure the adequate development and implementation of its strategic framework ("Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for social inclusion of Roma 2026-2030") and effective interinstitutional co-operation for increased awareness of antigypsyism;
- increase awareness of the Language Charter and establish a structured policy facilitating its application.

37. Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Fifth Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina; ECRI report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, sixth monitoring cycle.

LGBTI

- provide and implement a legal framework that affords same-sex couples the possibility to have their relationship recognised and protected;
- ensure that domestic law guarantees a quick, transparent and accessible process by which people can obtain legal gender recognition;
- ensure professional, respectful treatment of LGBTI people by all relevant service providers, such as law enforcement, civil servants, health and education professionals.

Hate speech/hate crimes

- guarantee comprehensive recording of bias-motivated violent incidents, by completing the improvement of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council's database;
- ensure full and credible investigations into incidents of violence and hatred against LGBTI persons;
- ensure improved capacity of different stakeholders to respond to hate speech and promote counter narratives;
- lower intolerance and hatred through work with religious and sports communities, schools as well as the business sector;
- intensify anti-hate training efforts for law-enforcement officials and members of the judiciary;
- extend the mandate of the Central Election Commission (CEC) to respond to hate speech during electoral campaigns.

Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers

The need to address human rights challenges in the field of refugees and migration is underlined, *inter alia*, in the Reykjavík Declaration, which reconfirms the commitment to respect the human rights of migrants and refugees and support frontline States within the existing Council of Europe frameworks.

On 20 August 2023, the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted a Law on Foreigners, inserting corrections to the “non-refoulement” mechanism as the main pillar of international protection policy. In recent years, migration management continued to improve, including with regard to the situation of migrants housed in temporary reception centres.³⁸

In this context, technical co-operation could further:

- advance the legal, policy and regulatory framework and encourage the alignment of reception, asylum and detention policies and practices with European standards, including special guarantees for the enhanced protection of vulnerable persons, especially migrant children;
- develop the expertise of relevant authorities, judicial, law enforcement, legal and other professionals on migration and asylum, including with regard to the human rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in line with European standards;
- strengthen the capacities of relevant authorities to implement effective alternatives to immigration detention and ensure that detention is applied only as a measure of last resort, with appropriate procedural safeguards and under adequate conditions;
- improve the legal status of individuals under subsidiary protection;
- ensure the provision of support services and intercultural inclusion programmes to migrants, refugees and displaced persons at local level using a multilevel approach that facilitates collaboration and governance of migration and integration policies between national and local authorities;
- ensure sufficient funding for income generation activities for returnees and resolve the problem of disadvantages for returnees in the area of social benefits;
- include a gender analysis and perspective in integration measures for refugees and beneficiaries of subsidiary protection.

38. “EC Annual Report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

Expected outcomes

Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion, Roma and Travellers, national minorities, regional or minority languages, LGBTI persons

- Strengthened institutional capacity of national and local authorities, including equality bodies, law enforcement and the judiciary, to address discrimination, hate speech, racism and intolerance on all grounds and to respect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in line with Council of Europe standards and best practices.
- Improved capacities of national and local authorities to design and implement policies and plans aiming at sustainable social inclusion of disadvantaged communities, including Roma.
- Increased capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to raise other institutions' awareness of the normative framework on hate speech and to devise policy responses to curb this phenomenon.
- Established policy framework on minority languages in accordance with European standards.
- Empowered Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to effectively respond to discrimination and intolerance, in line with its mandate as the national equality body. Enhanced capacity of police, prosecutors and judges to identify, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of hate crime, including those targeted at LGBTI persons and other vulnerable groups, in line with ECRI country-specific recommendations.
- Increased awareness among non-state stakeholders, including education professionals, youth, religious communities, sport organisations and civil society, of the dangers of hatred, discrimination, stereotypes and related violence in society.

Main national partners

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the national Roma contact point within the ministry, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Federal Ministry of Health (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska, Ministries of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Government of Republika Srpska, Federal Ministry of Education and Science (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, Ministry for European Integration and International Co-operation of Republika Srpska, Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Parliamentary Committee of Human Rights, Councils of National Minorities (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Agency for Gender Equality, gender mechanisms in both entities, Agency for Civil Servants at State and entity level, Government of Brčko District, Prosecutors' Offices (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, district and cantons), Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CRA) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnia and Herzegovina Roma Board, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training in both entities, Press Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, municipalities, other relevant authorities, civil society and media.

Migrants and refugees

- Enhanced national legislation and policy framework in the field of migration and asylum, in line with relevant European and international standards.
- Strengthened protective measures for vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum, including the promotion of family-based care for unaccompanied children.
- Enhanced capacity of relevant authorities to ensure an adequate standard of living and access to dignified reception conditions in centres.
- Enhanced capacity of relevant authorities to develop and implement effective alternatives to immigration detention and to ensure that detention is applied only as a measure of last resort, with appropriate procedural safeguards and in adequate conditions.
- Improved access for migrants, refugees and displaced persons to support services and intercultural inclusion programmes at local level, using a multilevel approach that facilitates collaboration and governance of migrant and integration policies between national and local authorities.

Main national partners

Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministries of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman, Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Supreme Courts (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Appellate Court of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, HJPC of Bosnia and Herzegovina, parliaments at all levels, national law and policy makers, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), legal professionals and members of the judiciary (judges, lawyers, prosecutors, legal aid staff), law-enforcement agencies, government agents before the European Court, civil servants, law faculties, CSOs.

2.3.3 Children's rights

Children are significantly affected by violence in different forms and settings, by the lack of access to justice and participation opportunities, by challenges in technological development (including AI), as well as by poverty, social exclusion and discrimination. Weaknesses in legislation, social and child protection services, education and guardianship increase their vulnerability to human rights violations. Because of limited access to national and international justice and the difficulties experienced in having their voices heard, children's rights and needs are often overlooked. As reiterated in the [Strategy for the Rights of the Child \(2022-2027\)](#), the Council of Europe is committed to ensuring the effective protection of children's rights, such as freedom from violence, equal opportunities and social inclusion, access to and safe use of technologies, child-friendly justice, giving a voice to every child and children's rights in crisis and emergency situations.

Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (the Lanzarote Convention) in 2013. There is, however, no mechanism in place to ensure the implementation of the said convention.

In 2023, the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman received 231 complaints on children's rights, confirming a moderate upward trend and also highlighting the need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen the implementation of child-friendly justice, including for children belonging to minorities, migrant children and children with disabilities. In April 2024, the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman published a special report on underage marriages, concluding that impoverished children, especially in the Roma community, are at higher risk. In its annual report 2024, the European Commission observed that no steps had been taken to develop and adopt a new action plan on protecting the rights of the child to succeed the one for 2015-2018. Since, a new action plan 2025-2029 was developed and presented to the Council for Children of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 12 February 2025, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina furthermore amended the Decision on the Establishment of the Council for Children of Bosnia and Herzegovina to hence involve children and youth in the work of this advisory body, with a view to ensuring better protection of their rights.

While no formal co-operation activities were conducted between 2022 and 2025, the compilation of reports detailing governmental initiatives contributed to raising awareness on the protection of children against sexual abuse and related access to justice.

Possible technical co-operation in this area could be designed taking into consideration the recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee, which call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:³⁹

- introduce a definition of "child sexual abuse material" into its legislative framework, in line with the ["Terminology guidelines for the protection of children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse"](#);
- inform children about the risks of child sexual exploitation and abuse facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICTs) within the broader context of sexuality education;

39. Council of Europe (2023), Lanzarote Committee's implementation report, "Factsheet – Bosnia and Herzegovina".

- make teaching or training on the rights of children and their protection mandatory for persons who have regular contacts with children. Equip such persons with the necessary skills to identify any situation of sexual exploitation and abuse of children, and inform them of the possibility to report to child protection services any situation where there are “reasonable grounds” to believe that a child is a victim;
- ensure that children will not be prosecuted for voluntarily and consensually sharing their own sexual images and/or videos with another child intended solely for their private use. Prosecute the distribution or transmission by children of self-generated sexually explicit images and/or videos of other children only as a last resort, when such images and/or videos qualify as “child pornography” in accordance with Article 20(2) of the Lanzarote Convention. Investigate and prosecute sexual extortion of children involving child self-generated sexual images and/or videos;
- ensure the existence of law enforcement and investigative units, services, or persons specialised in offences against children and sexual offences committed by children against other children, covering the entire territory of the country. Establish a victim identification function within law enforcement focused on combating ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children. Provide specific training on ICT-facilitated sexual offences against children to law-enforcement agents, prosecutors and judges;
- take the necessary legislative or other measures to encourage and support the establishment of information services providing advice to child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse;
- establish jurisdiction over any offence under the Lanzarote Convention committed against a national or a person habitually resident in its territory. Remove the requirement for dual criminality for offences of sexual abuse, child prostitution, the production of “child pornography” and participation of a child in pornographic performances;
- eliminate the requirement that prosecution can only be initiated following a report from the victim or a denunciation by the State of the place where the offence was committed.

Expected outcomes

- Improved legislation, policies and practices to better respect, protect and promote the rights of the child in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant Council of Europe standards.
- Strengthened capacity of criminal justice professionals involved in multidisciplinary responses to child (sexual) abuse.
- Improved access to justice for child victims with judicial processes adapted to the needs of minors.
- Strengthened frameworks and capacities of professionals working in the child-protection system with a particular focus on children belonging to minorities, migrant children and children with disabilities.
- Increased engagement of children in elaborating and implementing policy frameworks and initiatives related to the protection of children’s rights.

Main national partners

Ministries of Justice, Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, legal professionals and other responsible authorities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Brčko District).

2.4 BUILDING TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

The aim of this operational pillar is to build trust in public institutions. Accordingly, it comprises the following sub-programmes:

- independence and efficiency of justice (including through a digitalisation agenda);
- prisons – police – deprivation of liberty.

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the SDGs, especially goal 4 (quality education – target 4.7), goal 10 (reduced inequalities – targets 10.2 and 10.3), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities – target 11.3), goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.6, 16.7 and 16.10) and goal 17 (partnerships for the goals – targets 17.16 and 17.17).

2.4.1 Independence and efficiency of justice

When becoming a Council of Europe member State, Bosnia and Herzegovina committed to continuing reforms to establish a professional and independent judicial and prosecution system and to ensure adequate funding for the judiciary with a view to reinforcing its independence.

As highlighted by the PACE,⁴⁰ sustained efforts are needed to harmonise the four existing legal systems in the country and to ensure consistent application of case law.⁴¹ Judicial efficiency continues to be hampered by lengthy judicial proceedings and the widespread non-enforcement of decisions from general jurisdiction courts. In recent years, disposition times for civil and commercial litigious cases have increased due to a backlog of over 2 million pending court cases, including some 1.7 million cases of unpaid utility bills.⁴²

Resulting from an inclusive consultation process, the new justice sector reform strategy and related action plan are still pending adoption by the Council of Ministers.

In successive opinions, the Venice Commission extensively focused on judicial reform,⁴³ addressing the EU-required draft law on courts and the functioning of the Constitutional Court, while emphasising the need to reform the HJPC. Created in 2004 as a single self-management body for the judiciary for the whole territory, the latter is responsible for shielding the judiciary from political interference and ensuring its professionalism, while contributing to the defragmentation of judicial policy. The functioning of the HJPC has nevertheless raised concern, triggering convergent calls for the adoption of a new comprehensive legal framework aligning with Venice Commission recommendations and strengthening the HJPC's capacity to improve the enforcement of its decisions and perform integrity checks through additional access to information. In the second half of 2024, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina amended the draft law on the HJPC and opened a public consultation process. The amended draft law was subsequently submitted to the Venice Commission for a follow-up opinion. Adopted in March 2025, the latter welcomes increased alignment with European standards while identifying remaining recommendations.⁴⁴

Past assistance by the Council of Europe has nevertheless allowed for good progress in strengthening the efficiency of the justice system in line with CEPEJ standards and tools. The CEPEJ has recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina as a regional reference for its improvements in case management systems and statistical tools, noting the availability of reliable, detailed statistics on case-flow, human resources and case durations. The quality of the justice system was further improved through promoting good cyber-justice practices and tools at the country level, as well as piloting users' satisfaction surveys in specific courts.

40. Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2201 (2018) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina", paragraph 18.

41. As each entity and the Brčko District have their own court systems, Bosnia and Herzegovina has four separate judicial systems with no functional links between them.

42. The European Commission accordingly stressed the need for urgent amendments to entity-level legislation with a view to transferring the enforcement of small and uncontested claims disputes from courts to professional bailiffs, "EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina", p. 31.

43. Venice Commission, CDL-AD(2024)015, Opinion on the method of electing judges to the Constitutional Court; CDL-AD(2024)002, Opinion on certain questions relating to the functioning of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CDL-AD(2023)003, Opinion on the draft law on Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CDL-AD(2024)009, Interim Follow-up Opinion to previous Opinions on the draft law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. The ethnic dimension appears as a leitmotiv in all Venice Commission opinions, which convergently stress the requirement of a judiciary representative of the people, thereby recommending a modification of current references to the constituent peoples.

44. Venice Commission, CDL-AD(2025)004, Follow-up Opinion to previous Opinions on the draft law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council.

Dedicated communication strategies in five pilot courts also enhanced transparency and accountability. Legal professionals' capacities were strengthened through training on CEPEJ tools related to court performance, also improving managerial capacities of court managers. CEPEJ's main partner, the HJPC, benefited from assistance in creating an initial set of judicial data dashboards to visualise courts' performance for the public at large, thereby contributing to transparency of justice institutions. It was furthermore supported in efforts to promote mediation and alternative dispute resolution methods within the judiciary, in line with relevant CEPEJ standards and tools.

Under the Action Plan, the Council of Europe stands ready to consolidate its multifaceted and comprehensive approach to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in conducting judicial reforms in line with recommendations issued by the Venice Commission and CEPEJ standards, mainly focusing on:

- continued support to the work of the HJPC, pilot courts and Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training to improve the efficiency and quality of the justice system in accordance with CEPEJ tools and European best practices;
- ensuring the principle of legal certainty and consistent judicial practice;
- further improving the effectiveness of the judiciary, with particular attention paid to ensuring the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time and to reducing backlog;
- further enhancing the quality of services provided by legal professionals to ensure that decisions are based on accurate, data-driven insights, with particular attention to harmonised judicial practice through information technology (IT) tools and improved implementation of e-files;
- strengthening integrity and restoring public trust in the judiciary.

Expected outcomes

- Strengthened quality and efficiency of the justice system in line with CEPEJ standards and tools (including case management, judicial statistics and judicial data dashboards, time management and reduction of backlog, cyber-justice and court users' satisfaction surveys).
- Extended operational case law departments in selected courts, functioning in line with European best practices.
- Enhanced alignment and consistency in judicial practices through the support for and establishment of case law departments at various court levels.⁴⁵
- Enhanced capacities within the judiciary on functional IT tools to further harmonise judicial practice and compliance with the European Court's judgments.

Main national partners

Ministries of Justice (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), HJPC of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Appellate Court of Brčko District, Supreme Courts (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, National Assembly of Republika Srpska, chief judges, chief prosecutors, judges and prosecutors, court administrators, Bar Associations (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Judicial Commission of Brčko District, law faculties of universities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

45. This involves further support for case law departments established at the level of the highest courts, and support for the establishment of case law departments at selected second-instance courts.

2.4.2 Prisons – police – deprivation of liberty

Following its 2021 visit examining the treatment of persons apprehended and detained by various police agencies at the State, entity and cantonal levels, the CPT raised serious concern about numerous allegations of physical ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty by law-enforcement officials. It also pointed to the little progress observed in the provision of healthcare to remand prisoners, notably in terms of poor medical screening and recording of injuries.

In September 2024, the CPT conducted its 10th periodic visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, evaluating measures taken to implement its previous recommendations, while also examining the treatment of residents in three social care homes in both entities, as well as the situation of foreign nationals deprived of their liberty under the applicable migration legislation.

In the context of the 2022-2025 Action Plan, assistance focused on enhancing the knowledge and skills of police officers regarding the treatment of persons deprived of liberty, introducing police interviewing techniques and developing protocols for policing gatherings. Capacity building of training structures and new operational procedures applied in several police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina paved the way for the further embedding of a human rights approach. Furthermore, assistance was provided with a view to ensuring enhanced treatment and rehabilitation of forensic offenders.

Following the adoption of the amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman in August 2023, designating the latter as the Preventive Mechanism against torture and ill-treatment, assistance was provided to develop a working methodology for conducting visits and assessing conditions in places of deprivation of liberty. In parallel, the Council of Europe actively supported the implementation of an integrated Prison Management Information System (IPMIS) for processing and managing prisoners' data, leading to improved prison operations and oversight, as part of a multidisciplinary approach to the use of prison software.

Following the adoption of a national Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism and its dedicated Action Plan 2021-2026, specific tools, programmes, procedures and training modules were developed for prison staff dealing with the management and rehabilitation of VEPs, also aiming to prevent further radicalisation, both in prisons and after release. Unified tools for VEPs were adopted and successfully applied, particularly in the State prison, where VEPs are currently housed in a centralised manner. The latter is to become a regional centre of excellence, functioning as a hub for addressing radicalisation in prisons and managing VEPs. Furthermore, established prison intelligence units in all prisons have become a valued resource for data collection, analysis and information sharing with law-enforcement agencies, thus facilitating multi-agency work.

Under the Action Plan, additional efforts could be further invested in ensuring human rights-compliant policing and improving law-enforcement practices, institution building and capacity enhancement of the Preventive Mechanism, as well as in further improving conditions for resocialisation and reintegration of forensic patients.

Furthermore, assistance could be provided to strengthen the capacities of the penitentiary services, including prison management, enhance safeguards against ill-treatment, foster rehabilitative environments considering the specifics of vulnerable groups in prison (women, juveniles, etc.), and improve healthcare provision to inmates. Specific attention could be paid to ensure sustainability of measures addressing radicalisation in prisons, and to exploring the feasibility of establishing probation service(s) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the strong interest expressed by the authorities in this respect.

Technical co-operation to be implemented in this area will be designed to address recommendations found by the CPT as well as other international partners,⁴⁶ which call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:⁴⁷

46. A collaborative Council of Europe-EU approach comparing CPT monitoring results with EU progress reports hence allows for a convergent assessment of actions taken to meet expected standards.

47. Council of Europe (2021), "CPT report on Bosnia and Herzegovina".

- advance the prison reform agenda, with particular focus on improving prison management, treatment and rehabilitation efforts for various categories of prisoners, enhancing healthcare provision in prisons, modernisation of staff training, furthering digitalisation efforts in co-operation with other relevant agencies, establishment of probation service(s), including a regulatory framework and institution-building measures, and fostering a proactive culture against ill-treatment both internally and externally;
- modernise police work, including support in aligning current policing practices with international data protection standards, furthering human rights in both initial and in-service training, developing strategies for combating ill-treatment in co-operation with prosecution and police, strengthening police oversight mechanisms, accountability and integrity of law-enforcement professionals;
- improve forensic patient care, expanding expertise available in the forensic hospital Sokolac to other hospitals and institutions accommodating forensic patients, implementing purposeful treatment programmes and pre-release interventions enabling more efficient rehabilitation and resocialisation in co-operation with the local community. Expanding the good practices network proportionately improves human rights-compliant safety and security protocols;
- enhance the capacities of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman, and in particular of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM) in carrying out its mandate and in raising awareness of custodial staff, civil society and ultimately also persons deprived of liberty on its mandate, and assist the preventive mechanism in effectively co-operating with investigating bodies on reporting allegations of ill-treatment;
- ensure sustainability in applying radicalisation preventive measures and policies across Bosnia and Herzegovina's prisons, in utilising VEP-specific tools, programmes and protocols in a harmonised manner, as well as in providing a multi-agency approach to VEPs' rehabilitation during incarceration and their reintegration back into society.

Expected outcomes

- Strengthened safeguards against ill-treatment in prisons, improved regulatory and institutional framework on execution of criminal sanctions, including digital data management and information sharing between institutions, enhanced capacities of staff in management, rehabilitation and provision of healthcare to inmates, taking into account the specifics of vulnerable groups in detention.
- Developed legislative framework and establishment of preconditions for the institutional set-up of probation service(s).
- Better alignment of policing work with international standards, including strategies and practices for combating ill-treatment, effective co-operation between police and prosecution, functioning police oversight mechanisms and greater accountability and integrity of law-enforcement professionals.
- Enhanced forensic patient care and implementation of treatment programmes and pre-release interventions.
- Strengthened capacities and role of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman in its wider ill-treatment prevention mandate.
- Full ownership by authorities of radicalisation prevention tools, VEP-specific management programmes and reintegration protocols, including devised sustainable measures for their multi-agency utilisation in a harmonised manner.

Main national partners

Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of the Interior of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, Ministries of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, Ministry of Health of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska, Intelligence – Security Agency of BiH, SIPA, border police of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Service for Foreigners' Affairs, police of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, court police (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, Brčko District) and Public Health Institute for forensic psychiatry hospital Sokolac, the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation's Prosecutor's Office (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Republic Prosecutor's Office of Republika Srpska, Prosecutor's Office of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.5 UPHOLDING SAFETY, SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF SOCIETY AND PERSONS

The aim of this operational pillar is to ensure the safety, security and integrity of society and individuals. Accordingly, it comprises the following sub-programmes:

- corruption – money laundering – economic crime
- digital challenges: artificial intelligence – cybercrime – data protection
- integrity and governance of sport

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the SDGs, especially goal 3 (good health and well-being – targets 3.6 and 3.9), goal 4 (quality education – target 4.7), goal 5 (gender equality – target 5.2), goal 10 (reduced inequalities – target 10.3), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities – targets 11.1 and 11.2) and goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.1, 16.2, 16.3, 16.4, 16.5 and 16.7).

2.5.1 Corruption – money laundering – economic crime

Between 2012 and 2024, Bosnia and Herzegovina's [score](#) in Transparency International's [Corruption Perceptions Index](#) progressively fell from 42 to 33.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has nevertheless made some progress in combating corruption and money laundering by strengthening its legislative and institutional frameworks. In 2024, the authorities adopted the Law on Preventing the Conflict of Interest in the Institutions at the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Anti-Corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2024-2028, both reflecting longstanding GRECO recommendations and EU requirements. Similarly, the authorities adopted a State-level Law on Preventing Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing in February 2024. Guided by Council of Europe support, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina also adopted an assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing risks associated with virtual assets and virtual asset service providers and a corresponding action plan for 2024-2027. Moreover, a new State-level Anti-Corruption Strategy and its associated action plan 2024-2028 were endorsed, providing the framework for continued efforts. With expertise provided under the 2022-2025 Action Plan, draft amendments were finalised to align the Law on Financing of Political Parties with international standards. In the 2024 local elections, the [Congress](#) noted that the CEC worked proactively to fight electoral corruption, but that more awareness raising was needed on this matter.

This notwithstanding, Bosnia and Herzegovina's compliance with the recommendations in GRECO's Fourth Evaluation Round⁴⁸ on preventing corruption in respect of members of Parliament, judges and prosecutors, and in the Fifth Evaluation Round on preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments, top executive functions and law-enforcement agencies has remained low.

48. See GRECO (2023), "Fourth evaluation round second interim compliance report" and GRECO (2024), "Fourth evaluation round third interim compliance report".

In its “[Fifth evaluation round compliance report](#)” adopted in November 2024, GRECO found that integrity checks are not in place for persons entrusted with top executive functions other than the members of the Council of Ministers. Several issues remain outstanding, such as the introduction of rules on how persons entrusted with top executive functions engage in contacts with lobbyists, measures to make the law-making process more transparent and the provision of adequate financial and human resources to the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption. With regard to law-enforcement agencies, GRECO noted that a formalised mechanism for regular integrity checks, focusing on potential conflicts of interest, needs to be established for all police officers. The authorities are also expected to take additional measures to ensure transparency and public scrutiny of competitions for the appointment of senior management. Additional efforts must be made regarding gender balance, staff rotation and the prevention of conflicts of interest (in service and when leaving the respective law-enforcement agency). The framework for the protection of whistle-blowers needs to be substantially improved.

In its “[Fifth round mutual evaluation report](#)” published in December 2025, the Council of Europe’s anti-money laundering monitoring body, MONEYVAL, urged Bosnia and Herzegovina to improve its measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

The assessment highlights moderate effectiveness in risk understanding, international co-operation, use of intelligence and money laundering/terrorist financing investigations. The evaluation also underscores the need for fundamental improvements in applying UN financial sanctions and in identifying and mitigating terrorist financing risks in the non-profit sector. While money laundering investigations have led to convictions, they only partially align with the country’s risk profile and confiscation efforts require major enhancement. Terrorist financing prosecutions and convictions are assessed as not in line with the country’s risk profile and there are limitations in the understanding of the risks. Sectors such as notaries and other designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs) lag in applying enhanced controls to politically exposed persons. The concept of risk identification and assessment is still nascent among supervisors in most other sectors. Measures to prevent misuse of legal persons remain hindered by insufficient State-level co-ordination. International co-operation is generally good but law-enforcement agencies are not proactive in seeking police co-operation in respect of terrorist financing risks. Based on these results, MONEYVAL decided to apply its enhanced follow-up procedure.

In its 2024 report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Commission has also highlighted gaps in several areas, pointing to an institutional framework that remains incomplete, with unco-ordinated and ineffective corruption prevention bodies.

It notes that the freezing, management and confiscation of criminal assets are not used effectively and that the asset recovery office at the State level has not yet been established or designated. Beneficial ownership registers, with a central access point for the competent authorities, also remain to be established.⁴⁹ While the national Strategy for Combating Organised Crime 2023-2026 is being implemented through action plans, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s capacity to effectively dismantle criminal organisations remains hampered by the lack of harmonised criminal legislation and appropriate institutional co-ordination, including between police and prosecutors’ offices.⁵⁰

Technical co-operation to be implemented in this area will take into consideration the reports and conclusions of relevant Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms and expert advisory bodies⁵¹ and build on the results of support provided under the 2022-2025 Action Plan in order to:

- enhance and standardise the integrity checks and conflict of interest mechanisms for persons with top executive functions, including by establishing robust pre-appointment vetting procedures, ensuring regular substantive integrity checks and improving asset declaration systems;

49. “EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

50. Ibid.

51. “Fifth evaluation round, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments (top executive functions) and law enforcement agencies” and “Fifth round mutual evaluation report, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing measures”.

- supplement the existing Codes of Ethics of SIPA with practical guidance; strengthen the compulsory training on ethics and integrity for new recruits and serving personnel, and ensure regular security checks relating to integrity;
- strengthen the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption's capacities to effectively perform its tasks;
- improve transparency and measures to limit the risk of conflicts of interest at all stages of the professional trajectory of police officers;
- substantially improve the framework for the protection of whistle-blowers;
- improve overall effectiveness of AML/CFT, including by continuing to develop the skills and understanding of DNFBP supervisors in identifying sector-specific risks, co-ordinating supervisory practices and systematically collecting risk data to ensure a consistent and risk-based approach across all sectors;
- enhance deterrence and accountability by strengthening the legislative framework for targeted financial sanctions;
- support policies and processes aimed at prioritising the identification, investigation and prosecution of money laundering offences to ensure that cases align with the country's risk profile and related international co-operation for such offences, associated predicate offences and terrorist financing;
- improve the understanding and interpretation of terrorist financing offences among law enforcement, prosecutors and the judiciary;
- enhance the capacity of competent authorities in financial investigation, prosecution and adjudication of economic crimes and strengthen the legislative and institutional framework for asset recovery;
- carry out risk assessments with the aim to deepen the authorities' understanding of (i) terrorist financing-related threats and vulnerabilities; and (ii) terrorist financing risks related to non-profit organisations;
- carry out a detailed risk-based assessment of non-profit organisations to ensure that potential terrorist financing risks are accurately identified and managed, ultimately leading to more tailored and effective oversight of the sector;
- increase transparency of beneficial ownership, including by supporting the establishment of beneficial ownership registers with adequate, accurate and up-to-date information;
- develop AML/CFT supervisors' understanding of the sectorial and institutional risks in relation to (i) operators of game of chance; (ii) notaries; (iii) real estate agents; (iv) dealers in precious metals and stones; and (v) corporate service providers.

Expected outcomes

- Improved and harmonised legal and policy frameworks on anti-corruption in line with Council of Europe and other international standards and best practices.
- Increased transparency, accountability and public trust in governance through mechanisms that promote integrity, prevent corruption and curb undue influence in public decision making.
- Improved AML/CFT preventive and supervisory measures.
- Increased transparency of beneficial ownership, deterring and preventing misuse of corporate entities for money laundering and terrorist financing.
- Strengthened capacity of authorities to carry out financial investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing offences.
- Enhanced skills and practice of national authorities for effective tracing, recovery and disposal of criminal assets, including their management.
- Strengthened capacities by law enforcement to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers.
- Harmonised legal framework for the implementation of targeted financial sanctions in accordance with the UN Security Council's Resolutions 1267/1989 and 1988 and 1373 and requirements of the relevant Financial Action Task Force recommendations.
- Increased terrorist financing risk understanding and ability to put forward adequate remedial measures to minimise these risks.

Main national partners

Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska, Ministry of the Interior of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, Prosecutors' Offices (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska, and Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina), SIPA/Financial Intelligence Unit, Judicial Commission of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CEC of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and banking sector supervisors (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska), banking sector supervisors authorities, Notary Chamber of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Administration for Inspection Affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska and Finance Directorate of Brčko District, Agency for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption, Commission for the Management of Conflicts of Interest in the Public Administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2.5.2 Digital challenges: artificial intelligence – cybercrime – data protection

Artificial intelligence

On 5 September 2024, the Council of Europe [Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#) was opened for signature. During its 81st session on 12 June 2025, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina endorsed a roadmap paving the way for the country's accession to the said Framework Convention. Under the Action Plan, co-operation could be envisaged upon request in this area, in particular through technical and legal expertise to build the required framework that would enable signature and subsequent ratification of this convention. In addition, capacity building could be carried out on the basis of the [Methodology for the risk and impact assessment of artificial intelligence systems from the point of view of human rights, democracy and the rule of law](#) (HUDERIA methodology). This Council of Europe tool provides guidance and a structured approach to carrying out risk and impact assessments for AI systems. Expected participants include any decision makers from public or private bodies, in particular those persons involved in the introduction of new AI systems or their continued use.

Expected outcomes

- Improved legal framework on AI technologies, with a view to aligning with international good practices and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.
- Strengthened capacities of decision makers among the national and entity authorities and in the private sector to be prepared for and recognise the potential risks of AI technologies affecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through the adoption and implementation of the HUDERIA methodology.

Main national partners

National authorities involved in the development of legal frameworks or regulations governing AI development and deployment under the 2021-2027 Development Strategy, adopted by the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; relevant authorities (federation and entity level) providing AI-driven services; the Personal Data Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bar Associations (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska); and the private sector (e.g. local and multinational internet service providers, companies in the IT industry).

Cybercrime

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a party to the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime (the Budapest Convention) and to its First Additional Protocol, concerning the criminalisation of acts of a racist and xenophobic nature committed through computer systems. It has not yet become a party to the Second Additional Protocol on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence. Despite initial concerns from some institutions regarding the implementation of the Second Additional Protocol, the Ministry of Security and the Prosecution Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina actively advocated for its benefits. By December 2024, all necessary institutional approvals were secured, paving the way for Bosnia and Herzegovina to sign the protocol.

Moreover, the country actively participates in the fourth round of evaluations by the Cybercrime Committee regarding all State parties.

As previously assessed by international experts, domestic legislation is only partly in line with the Budapest Convention, with several gaps remaining to be addressed at the State level. To date, Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a dedicated strategy in place to fight cybercrime. Due to its complex administrative structure, the country has no independent computer emergency response team.

Past capacity-building support provided by the Council of Europe helped to strengthen interagency co-operation and information sharing, also increasing institutional capabilities to co-operate at the international level. Police investigators, prosecutors and specialists increased their awareness of digital trends and threats, including State-sponsored cyberattacks, ransomware resilience, cryptocurrencies and the impact of AI on digital investigations. Domestic legislation was enhanced with the 2021 amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code in the Republika Srpska regarding electronic evidence.

Drawing on the results of past co-operation, the Action Plan could further bolster and sustain the capacities of police and prosecution authorities, co-operating closely with training institutions to systematically incorporate cybercrime-related topics into educational curricula. Special emphasis will also be placed on further compliance with the Budapest Convention and other relevant Council of Europe instruments, including support for anticipated legal reforms to facilitate implementation of the Second Additional Protocol to the Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence.

Expected outcomes

- Improved legislation and policy framework on cybercrime and electronic evidence in full compliance with the Budapest Convention and its Protocols.
- Enhanced implementation by the competent authorities of co-ordinated cybercrime and cybersecurity policies and strategies.
- Further enhanced capacities of authorities to search, seize and confiscate cybercrime proceeds, prevent money laundering on the internet and secure electronic evidence.
- Increased interagency co-operation in order to conduct parallel financial investigations related to cybercrime cases.
- Strengthened measures to encourage information sharing and intelligence exchange mechanisms on cybercrime between the public and private sectors and between criminal justice authorities and cybersecurity institutions/industry.
- Further enhanced capabilities of institutions involved in the fight against cybercrime to co-operate at international level.
- Strengthened capacities of judicial authorities to prosecute and adjudicate on cybercrime offences and assess electronic evidence.

Main national partners

Ministry of Security Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Prosecutors' Offices (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Federal Ministry of the Interior (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of the Interior of Republika Srpska, SIPA, Personal Data Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Financial Intelligence Unit, Financial Intelligence Department, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training in entities, national and sectoral computer emergency response teams/cyber incident response teams, the judiciary, the private sector, internet service providers (local and multinational), banking associations and information security companies).

Data protection

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a Party to the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data. The country has also ratified its amending Protocol as well as the Additional Protocol regarding supervisory authorities and transborder data flows.

At present, Bosnia and Herzegovina's legislation does, however, not appear to be fully compliant with international standards and conventions signed. Current data protection laws also continue to be interpreted in a way that protects private rather than public interest, thus hindering the prevention and repression of corruption.⁵² The Council of Europe stands ready to provide dedicated assistance upon request in this regard.

Expected outcomes

- Improved legal frameworks on data protection and access to information, in line with the ratified Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data.
- Strengthened capacities of the Personal Data Protection Agency for improved delivery of its mission, notably as regards awareness raising.
- Enhanced capacities of administrations and other relevant stakeholders to give access to information while respecting the principles of personal data protection.

Main national partners

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Education and Science (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Personal Data Protection Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, entity courts, law enforcement, Prosecutors' Offices, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Bar Associations (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), civil society, educational staff and other relevant authorities.

2.5.3 Integrity and governance of sport

Sport is a major component of society, bringing people together around values such as respect, equality, notably gender equality, and fairness. It is thus an excellent vector and tool for promoting the Council of Europe's principles and values. Safeguarding the integrity of sport is key to protecting its social and educational role. However, sport faces complex and ever-evolving threats, such as doping, violence at sports events, manipulation of competitions, corruption, human rights violations and breaches of the rule of law, which progressively erode society's confidence. Upholding the integrity of sport requires a strong emphasis on education and implementation of the existing standards, in particular with regard to the protection of whistle-blowers and fair anti-doping disciplinary proceedings.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a Party to the European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events and in particular at Football Matches, as well as to the Anti-Doping Convention and its Additional Protocol. It is also a member of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport.

In this area, technical co-operation under the Action Plan could be designed to support the implementation and ratification of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions and of the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events. It could further aim at strengthening the anti-doping system based on the findings and recommendations of the Monitoring Group evaluation carried out in 2024.

Finally, the promotion and implementation of the European Sports Charter could be ensured through a support and follow-up visit of an Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport team and technical co-operation in the context of the "[Start to Talk](#)" initiative aimed at ensuring a safe sport environment for children.

52. "EC Annual report 2024 – Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Expected outcomes

- Improved policies, legislation and practices to ensure ethical, inclusive, fair and safe sport in line with Council of Europe standards.

Main national partners

Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), anti-doping agencies, entity and cantonal Ministries of Sports, national sports federations, Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina, CSOs.

2.6 ANCHORING DEMOCRATIC VALUES IN EUROPEAN SOCIETIES

The aim of this operational pillar is to anchor democratic values in Bosnia and Herzegovina, comprising the following sub-programmes:

- freedom of expression and information, safety of journalists;
- local democracy;
- elections, democratic governance and dialogue, civil society;
- education (including history education and dealing with the past);
- youth;

These actions will contribute to the implementation by Bosnia and Herzegovina of the SDGs, especially goal 4 (quality education – target 4.7), goal 5 (gender equality – targets 5.1 and 5.5), goal 10 (reduced inequalities – targets 10.2 and 10.3), goal 11 (sustainable cities and communities – target 11.3) and goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions – targets 16.1, 16.3, 16.6 and 16.7).

2.6.1 Freedom of expression and information, safety of journalists

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face significant challenges in the area of freedom of expression and access to information, with delays in updating key elements of its legal and institutional framework. Media freedom has come under increasing pressure, notably with the re-criminalisation of defamation in Republika Srpska in 2023 and the adoption of the Republika Srpska Law on the Special Registry and Transparency of the Work of Non-Profit Organisations in February 2025, despite concerns raised by the [Commissioner](#) and the Venice Commission. In recent years, progress has slowed and responses to new and complex challenges in the digital environment have been limited.

Some important legal reforms, such as the drafting of a law on electronic media and communications at the State level, are advancing slowly, while others, including efforts to establish a viable legal framework for public service media and advertising, have yet to be finalised. Critical issues such as disinformation, online hate speech, safety concerns and data protection require more sustained and co-ordinated attention.

Journalists are often the targets of verbal threats and attacks, and sometimes of physical assaults.⁵³ As a precondition for media freedom, the protection of journalists is paramount. In 2024, the Council of Europe [Safety of Journalists Platform](#) recorded four alerts regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of the four, one did not receive a reply from the authorities, and one is still pending. Additionally, political pressures on the media and journalists – particularly in Republika Srpska – along with a difficult economic environment, characterised by a small media market and a lack of sustainable funding, are further hindering the production and dissemination of high-quality, verified information. These parameters continue to challenge democratic development.

53. Reporters Without Borders, Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the 2025 Reporters Without Borders index for press freedom, the country ranked 86th out of 180 countries, whilst at the end of 2024 and 2023 it was respectively 81st and 64th out of 180.

The work of the Council of Europe to strengthen and protect freedom of expression in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains of crucial importance for democracy. Under the 2022-2025 Action Plan, the Council of Europe has enhanced the capacity of legal professionals, and law-enforcement officials when relevant, to consistently interpret and implement national legislation in line with Article 10 of the Convention, developing their skills and understanding on topics such as defamation, hate speech, the protection of whistle-blowers and SLAPPs.⁵⁴ Additionally, strengthened dialogue between media, the judiciary and law enforcement has enhanced collaboration in reinforcing freedom of expression in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees was empowered to monitor the state of freedom of expression and access to information in the country by establishing a cross-co-ordinating working group.⁵⁵ Through this initiative, the ministry has assumed a leadership role, demonstrated by its co-ordination with the [Council of Europe's Campaign for the Safety of Journalists](#).

Moreover, the capacities of the CRA have been strengthened, enabling it to proactively align with European standards, including the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. This has led to improved minimum protection standards and the co-regulation of harmful online content. The CRA and the wider public also recognise the need for co-ordinated action among governmental and non-governmental actors to combat harmful content effectively.⁵⁶

Support provided under the 2022-2025 Action Plan has also enhanced media literacy and active citizenship skills, promoting free, high-quality and safe journalism among both media actors and the general public, thereby preparing the ground for a potential media literacy strategy.

In August 2023, the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Law on Freedom of Access to Information at the level of institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which introduced a new legal regime of access to official documents and duties of proactive disclosure of information by public authorities. The monitoring bodies of the [Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents](#) (the Tromsø Convention), namely the Access Info Group and the Consultation of the Parties have evaluated this law as being generally in line with the Convention. The Access Info Group's "[Baseline evaluation report](#)"⁵⁷ and the [conclusions and recommendations](#)⁵⁸ of the Consultation of the Parties noted the qualities of the law in question, while identifying certain areas for improvement. Implementation issues persist, notably regarding the independence of the appeals process.⁵⁹ In this context, key concerns include the establishment of the Appeals Board within the Council of Ministers as the second-level authority and the diminished role of the ombudsman. The appointment of the members of the Appeals Board by the Council of Ministers has led to operational challenges and procedural delays, further compounded by inconsistencies in the knowledge levels of both requesters and responders handling information requests. Additionally, the Appeals Board lacks legal jurisdiction over Brčko District, which continues to follow the previous State-level law, creating a legislative gap that necessitates the adoption of a separate law on access to information.

54. Following dedicated training on the matter, the Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on countering the use of strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) was explicitly mentioned by the Constitutional Court in its jurisprudence.

55. This body brings together representatives from 14 institutions, CSOs and independent bodies, fostering a collaborative approach. It has also been designated as the official committee in charge of the Council of Europe Campaign for the Safety of Journalists.

56. European standards, such as the EU Digital Services Act, emphasise a multistakeholder approach, involving regulatory and self-regulatory bodies, civil society, academia and the media.

57. Baseline evaluation report on the implementation of the Tromsø Convention, 16 July 2024.

58. Conclusions and recommendations on the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3 October 2024.

59. In May 2024, the Ministry of Justice introduced a register of requests for access to information.

With regard to the overall media landscape in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 2024 [World Press Freedom Index](#) has pointed to fragmentation not equalling genuine pluralism. While the existence of a reliable public broadcaster appears critical for citizens' access to information, the situation of the national public broadcaster *Radiotelevizija Bosne i Hercegovine* (BHRT) continues to face a risk of financial collapse. In this context, the PACE has insisted on the need for a lasting solution guaranteeing sustainable funding for all three public broadcasters. It has also called for legislation ensuring transparency in the ownership of media outlets.

Consequently, the provision of expertise could support the development of key legal frameworks, including a new law on electronic media. Building on the achievements of previous co-operation, the Council of Europe remains committed to strengthening the capacities of the judiciary, legal professionals, media professionals and CSOs, while supporting the authorities' efforts to enhance media freedom and reinforce the information society landscape.

Technical co-operation to be implemented in this area could be designed to promote freedom of expression and of the media by supporting related legal reforms and by building the capacities of relevant stakeholders to effectively apply European standards in their daily work. It could further foster a safer and more pluralistic media environment, enhancing the protection of journalists while countering disinformation and harmful content, including by advancing media literacy.

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced legislative and policy framework aligned with European standards on freedom of expression, media and access to information.
- Improved institutional capacities and co-ordination mechanisms of the media regulatory authority and other relevant bodies, in line with European standards – including the Digital Services Act and the European Media Freedom Act.
- Improved transparency of media ownership through targeted legal and institutional measures – aiming at greater accountability and media pluralism.
- Improved application of the right to access public information through reinforced legal guarantees and practical implementation measures – including alignment with the Tromsø Convention and recommendations formulated in the related monitoring reports.
- Strengthened responses to disinformation and enhanced media literacy, fostering informed public debate, critical thinking and resilience to information manipulation across society – including through awareness-raising activities targeting the general public.
- Reinforced mechanisms for the safety of journalists, with particular attention to women journalists, including preventive safeguards, effective institutional responses, action against impunity and support in addressing SLAPPs.
- Enhanced knowledge and practical skills of key stakeholders – including public authorities, parliamentarians, the judiciary, law enforcement, regulatory bodies, media professionals and CSOs – to apply relevant European standards on freedom of expression and access to information in their respective fields.

Main local partners

Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Education and Science (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cross-Co-ordinating Working Group/Committee on Safety of Journalists, Centres for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), Ministry of Justice of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Justice of Republika Srpska, Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CRA), Press Council, entity courts, law-enforcement agencies, Bar Associations (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska), School of Political Studies, Prosecutors' Offices, journalist associations, young media professionals, civil society, media actors and other relevant stakeholders.

2.6.2 Local democracy

Having [observed](#) the local elections held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 6 October 2024, the Congress welcomed the technical improvements resulting from the 2024 amendments to the Electoral Law providing for stronger integrity safeguards. Insisting on the need to further consolidate these changes through practical implementation and training, it also noted a low turnout, highlighting the need to further increase public engagement and trust to allow for the country's local democracy to continue progressing.⁶⁰

Past co-operation activities under the Action Plan 2022-2025 successfully focused on embedding deliberative democracy in the city of Mostar by assisting local authorities in holding a first Citizens' Assembly in 2021 and ensuring follow-up of citizens' recommendations, with the ultimate goal of restoring citizens' confidence in public authorities following a 12-year-long electoral impasse. Building on lessons learned, the cities of Mostar and Banja Luka respectively held their second and first citizens' assemblies in 2024, receiving dedicated assistance to further develop deliberative processes, thereby complementing representative democracy in inclusive decision making. Support was also provided to bolster the skills of locally elected representatives on collaborative governance and to strengthen intermunicipal and cross-entity networks between local authorities and their associations. Moreover, the Congress carried out a comprehensive study of human rights practices at local level in Bosnia and Herzegovina, identifying priority areas to develop capacities of local/regional authorities to deliver inclusive policies for the benefit of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged citizens.

Expanding on these achievements, the Action Plan could implement further technical co-operation contributing to the new [Democratic Pact](#) and addressing the [recommendations of the 2019 Congress monitoring report](#) on the application of the European Charter of Local Self-Government,⁶¹ which call on Bosnia and Herzegovina to:

- enshrine the principle of local self-government in its constitution;
- revise legislation to prevent overlapping competencies and uphold the principle of subsidiarity;
- ensure systematic consultation with local authorities on all matters of concern to them;
- provide local authorities with adequate and commensurate financial resources both in law and in practice and promote intermunicipal co-operation;
- revisit the legal provision capping municipal employment in Republika Srpska so that local authorities have more discretion to guarantee efficient municipal administration;
- revise relevant legislation to better reflect the specific situations of Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

Accordingly, support will further aim at strengthening deliberative processes and innovative democracy, improving the quality of local governance through integrity, inclusivity, gender equality, civic participation and human rights-based policy making. It will also continue to foster co-operation among local/regional authorities and between their associations. These efforts will contribute to the improvement of the services delivered by local authorities and ensure that the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina can enjoy an open, human-rights based and participatory local democracy.

60. Congress, Recommendation 530 (2025), "Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina". In the 2024 local elections, the Congress observed the deployment of four pilot projects to introduce new technologies in electoral processes. While some delays and glitches were witnessed, the Congress noted that the changes were introduced with proper testing, noting that interlocutors of the observation mission welcomed the pilot projects as a means to enhance the transparency and credibility of the electoral process. Having also observed the 2022 cantonal elections, the Congress previously recommended reconsidering holding cantonal elections at the same time as national elections and instead organising cantonal and municipal elections together. This would avoid cantonal elections being overshadowed by national polls and contribute to the strengthening of local democracy.

61. Congress, Recommendation 442 (2019), "Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina". The next monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government in Bosnia and Herzegovina is scheduled for 2026.

Expected outcomes

- Strengthened capacities and skills of local/regional authorities to embed collaborative governance, deliberative democracy, citizen and civil society participation in decision making and reforms at local level.
- Improved quality of local governance through developed capacities in public ethics, transparency, accountability, prevention of corruption and open government.
- Enhanced role and capacity of civil society for greater social cohesion and improved civic oversight of the activities of public authorities.
- Strengthened institutional capacities of the two main associations of municipalities and cities to advocate for the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.
- Empowered local/regional authorities to develop co-operation through intermunicipal and inter-entity networks.
- Strengthened capacities of local authorities in fulfilling and protecting human rights at local level.

Main national partners

Relevant ministries in charge of public administration, local self-government and human rights at State, entity and cantonal levels, associations of municipalities and cities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, CSOs.

2.6.3. Elections – democratic governance and dialogue – civil society

Democratic elections are a cornerstone of democracy and decisive for guaranteeing the legitimacy of democratic institutions. Civil participation in decision making is another important element, alongside elections, bolstering good democratic governance at local level by giving a voice to citizens and NGOs.

To help member States implement standards in this area and to ensure that civil participation has a real impact on decision-making processes, the Committee of Ministers has adopted “[Guidelines for civil participation in political decision making](#)”, Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)11](#) on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe, and Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)4](#) on the participation of citizens in local public life. To the same end, the Conference of international NGOs and the Congress adopted the [Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process](#) (revised in 2019).

Building on the commitments of the Reykjavík Declaration and the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, the new Democratic Pact for Europe, to be endorsed in 2026 following a broad and inclusive consultation process, aims at redefining democracy to make it stronger, more adaptable and more inclusive, leveraging existing policies and instruments while proposing new initiatives around three pillars: “learning and practising democracy”, “protecting democracy” and “innovating democracy”, including by ensuring free and fair elections, exploring deliberative and participatory democracy, harnessing new technologies and ensuring meaningful engagement of youth and civil society.

While the PACE welcomed the reform impetus given by the new ruling coalition at State level, it nevertheless deplored that the 2022 general elections were held for the fourth time under a legal and constitutional framework in violation of the Convention, expressing concern about a “lack of progress in some areas crucial for the functioning of democratic institutions”. Both the PACE and the Congress positively assessed amendments to the Electoral Law introduced ahead of the general (2022) and local (2024) elections with a view to ensuring the integrity and transparency of the election process in line with European standards.

While this positive assessment was reflected in the [statement of preliminary finding and conclusions](#) following the 6 October 2024 local elections by the International Election Observation Mission – comprising the Congress, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and the European Parliament – the [final report](#) outlined several recommendations, including some long-standing ones, still remaining to be addressed. Against this backdrop, technical co-operation is to enhance the institutional capacity and professionalisation of the CEC and election administration in general, including with regard to new voting technology, raise awareness among underrepresented groups (including first-time voters) and enhance the monitoring and reporting capacity of the media.

With regard to civil society, observers also noted a partially constrained environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, cautioning against the adoption and enactment in the Republika Srpska of the Law on the Special Registry and Transparency of the Work of Non-Profit Organisations, providing for the classification of CSOs that receive foreign funding as “foreign agents”.

Considering the current context, technical co-operation in the field of elections could aim to:

- improve electoral legislation, including bylaws and practices, in line with European and international standards;
- enhance the professionalism of the CEC by supporting the functioning and development of the CEC Centre for Education;
- increase the CEC’s capacity to enhance its strategic communication, including outside of the election period, and overall awareness, especially for women, minorities, persons with disabilities and first-time voters;
- enhance the capacity of media professionals to report on and monitor electoral processes to ensure transparency and accountability in line with international standards;
- facilitate meaningful and systematic consultations with civil society as part of an inclusive dialogue and an enabling environment for civil society;
- strengthen democratic processes, in particular the openness and transparency of public authorities;
- facilitate the participation of citizens, CSOs and stakeholders in the formulation of policies, action plans and decisions, which will help the authorities to respond to real needs and improve the quality, relevance and impact of services.

Expected outcomes

- Strengthened capacity of the election administration at all levels and professionals to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, fairness and integrity of electoral processes and practices, in line with Council of Europe standards.
- Raised awareness and increased participation in the electoral process of voters, in particular underrepresented and vulnerable groups and first-time voters.
- Enhanced capacities of media, political parties, other electoral stakeholders and voters to properly identify, present and fight disinformation, hate speech, sexism, gender-based violence and other negative phenomena during elections.

Main national partners

CEC, electoral administration, media representatives, representatives of political parties, civil society and other electoral stakeholders.

Confidence-building measures

The Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995 brought an end to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶² However, little progress has been made since in building trust and reconciliation between divided communities. International actors, including Council of Europe monitoring bodies, have consistently noted a high level of tension between different communities. The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, in its Fifth Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in February 2024, noted that in recent years the situation has been more fragile, with the risk of conflict increasing.

62. The Dayton Peace Agreement established an inter-entity line dividing some of the municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina into two, and in some cases into four municipalities. The boundary line also divided common infrastructure as well as the legal system, which is, in most cases, different in Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Advisory Committee also called on authorities at all levels to promote intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding between the different ethnic and religious groups and persons belonging to them.

Council of Europe confidence-building measure activities seek to build trust and foster mutual understanding between members of divided communities to support wider reconciliation and democratisation efforts. Recent activities covered a range of thematic areas such as co-operation between municipalities, support for women public representatives, exchanges between cultural heritage professionals, as well as fostering interethnic dialogue and people-to-people contacts in the framework of the Youth Peace Camp.

The Action Plan intends to build on previously achieved results and focus on the local level, seeking to foster dialogue within and between communities with the objectives of developing locally owned strategies in support of confidence building. Future action could aim at building cross-community support in addressing challenges to reconciliation, including combating hate speech and intolerance, inclusive education, a common approach to shared history and dealing with the past, and appreciation of cultural heritage as a driver of reconciliation. These efforts would be in line with Council of Europe standards and co-ordinated with other Council of Europe activities in the respective areas. Engagement of youth and local authorities would remain critical success factors, alongside the involvement of CSOs and professional groups, notably education professionals, historians/archivists and media representatives as key partners.

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced interethnic dialogue at the local community level.
- Strengthened co-operation among young people from different communities and the establishment of sustainable trust-building networks.

Main national partners

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, local authorities, CSOs, journalists, education professionals and academia, youth representatives.

2.6.4 Education

The Council of Europe considers education, including the right to quality education for all, within a broader human rights context, as a driving force for democratic culture and mutual understanding, combating intolerance and stereotyping, promoting inclusion and equality at all levels, and fostering respect for diversity. Accordingly, the [Reykjavík Principles for Democracy](#) prioritise supporting “the participation of young persons in democratic life and decision-making processes, including through education about human rights and core democratic values, such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability”. The Council of Europe is also developing a new Democratic Pact for Europe, in which education is specifically mentioned as one of the three pillars, serving as a means to learn and practice democracy. The new European Space of Citizenship Education is included as part of the Roadmap to develop this new Democratic pact.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the fragmentation of the education sector, within the existing institutional framework (16 ministers of education) fundamentally affects how education and its content are delivered to pupils across the country. Systematic solutions for ensuring inclusive and non-discriminatory education are not in place. In 2024, ECRI reiterated its urgent call upon the authorities to end all forms of discrimination in education, including the segregation of children based on their ethnicity in “two schools under one roof”, noting their persistence in over 50 cases in cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By contrast, examples of integrated education were showcased in the autonomous Brčko District.

The PACE convergently emphasised Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment, as part of its accession process, to continue reforms to eliminate all aspects of segregation and discrimination in education, while respecting the right to education in the mother tongue as emphasised by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).⁶³

In 2020, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the "[Policy recommendations with a roadmap for improving inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)", which was jointly developed by relevant ministries at State and entity level, as well as by the 10 cantonal Ministries of Education. Past support provided by the Council of Europe subsequently enhanced the capacities of authorities and education stakeholders to implement the document, while closely working with pilot schools to promote democratic culture, in line with the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCD).⁶³

In January 2025, a major milestone occurred when the policy recommendations were included as a reference in the jurisprudence of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The recommendations and the roadmap's ongoing implementation continue to require monitoring, harmonisation of relevant legislation and additional resources.

Building on past achievements, the Action Plan could address the urgent need to prevent the rising incidents of (peer) violence, bullying and cyberbullying in schools as a matter of priority, drawing on similar projects already implemented in the region. This work will contribute to fostering dialogue within society through education.

Technical co-operation could furthermore aim to:

- enhance the quality of education by fostering a democratic culture in the formal education system and addressing discrimination in line with European standards;
- promote democratic culture as a key element of quality education by raising awareness in society;
- take effective measures to foster the integration of society through the education system.

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced capacities of policy makers to monitor the implementation of the "Policy recommendations with a roadmap for improving inclusive education in Bosnia and Herzegovina".
- Reduced violence and bullying within the education system.
- Strengthened safe school environments through the application of evidence-based policy decisions.
- Improved access for young people to quality education for democratic citizenship, based on the new Council of Europe European Space for Citizenship Education.

Main national partners

Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Education and Science (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, Ministry of Scientific and Technological Developments and Higher Education of the Republic of Srpska, the agency for pre-primary, primary and secondary education (APOS), all cantonal Ministries of Education, Department for Education (Government, Brčko District), higher education institutions and agencies, primary and secondary schools, local communities, CSOs.

63. Sources: ECRI 2024 report, PACE report 2024.

Dealing with the past (history teaching, intergenerational dimension)

The rise of divisive narratives and historical revisionism, including denial of genocide and war crimes, represents a concerning development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶⁴ In 2024, both ECRI and the PACE explicitly encouraged the establishment of a multiperspective common core curriculum in history throughout the country, without erasing differences in perceptions and experiences, but by sharing them and allowing all to understand the diversity of points of view. Based on the assumption that understanding the past is essential for building a shared future and fostering European democracies, the dedicated work of the Council of Europe appears highly relevant in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2011\)6](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member states on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching provides guidance on history teaching in post-conflict situations. In her report “[Dealing with the past for a better future: achieving justice, peace and social cohesion in the region of the former Yugoslavia](#)”, former Commissioner Dunja Mijatović also suggested reforms to improve history teaching.⁶⁵ In addition, the PACE considered that Bosnia and Herzegovina would benefit from joining the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe, which could provide useful assistance in this regard. The upcoming report of the Congress on “[Teaching history at regional level](#)” is also relevant in this respect.

Against this backdrop, technical co-operation could aim to:

- promote intergenerational dialogue and public engagement with history; support oral history projects and memory initiatives connecting young people with survivors and historians, and strengthen the role of museums and memorials as educational spaces for reconciliation;
- combat historical revisionism and disinformation by developing fact-checking and digital literacy programmes in schools and out-of-school settings, to counter misinformation and the misuse of history (for example, using the [HISTOLAB Toolkit](#)).

Expected outcomes

- Stronger intergenerational and societal dialogue on history, reinforcing historical awareness and social cohesion through public engagement initiatives at local and regional level.
- Enhanced resilience against historical revisionism and disinformation, with students, educators and media professionals trained to counter manipulation and promote factual history.
- Increased alignment with European standards in history education, facilitating Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into history education co-operation bodies such as the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.

Main national partners

Ministries of Education, association of history teachers, universities, higher education institutions and CSOs.

2.6.5 Youth

As stressed in the Reykjavík Declaration, particularly through the Reykjavík Principles for Democracy, supporting young people's participation in democratic life is essential for a democratic future. This includes education about human rights and core democratic values such as pluralism, inclusion, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability. The Reykjavík Declaration calls for “a youth perspective in the Organisation's intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue”.

64. Commissioner's letter to the Chairwoman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska.

65. On dealing with the past, see also: Commissioner's letter to the Chairwoman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska.

This stance is also reflected in the PACE resolution on strengthening a youth perspective in its work, which encourages the national parliaments of Council of Europe member States to create conditions for the widest possible participation of young people, with particular emphasis on young women.⁶⁶ The Council of Europe's action in the youth sector is guided by a comprehensive Youth Sector Strategy 2030, engaging young people with the Organisation's values, alongside the European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life [currently under revision].

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a member of the Partial Agreement on Youth Mobility through the Youth Card. Both governmental and non-governmental representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina actively participate in the Council of Europe's co-management bodies, namely the European Steering Committee for Youth and the Advisory Council on Youth. However, the country lacks a national youth strategy, as youth policy responsibilities are divided among the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska and the Brčko District. The development of youth policy across these governance levels continues to face significant challenges, including fragmented funding and the absence of comprehensive youth-related statistics.⁶⁷ In recent years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has benefited from youth policy assistance and capacity-building initiatives targeting both governmental and non-governmental representatives. These efforts have strengthened co-operation and partnerships to enhance youth participation and the development of youth policies. In 2024, the Council of Europe supported the professional development of youth sector workers, civil servants responsible for youth policy implementation at national and local levels, and youth-led CSOs delivering services to young people. The Youth Peace Camp also promoted people-to-people contact among young individuals from diverse communities. In February 2025, the Sarajevo Film Festival, in partnership with the Council of Europe, launched the Special Youth Perspectives Award, designed to showcase young people's approaches to current challenges and their vision for the future.

Building on the achievements of past co-operation, policy assistance and technical co-operation under the Action Plan could focus on:

- encouraging policy development involving youth at local and regional levels, promoting their participation in decision-making processes;
- developing and strengthening spaces that empower youth and provide opportunities for social, educational, cultural and sports activities (as illustrated by the cultural and sports centre in Mostar) that transcend ethnic boundaries and promote integration;
- standard-setting with the active engagement of young people, ensuring they have a voice in addressing pressing challenges.

Expected outcomes

- Enhanced mechanisms and tools for the democratic participation of young people at the national level, in line with Council of Europe standards.
- Improved capacity of relevant stakeholders, including youth organisations, to advance youth work policies and practices aimed at removing barriers to youth democratic participation.
- Increased capacity of youth workers to advocate for citizenship and human rights education among young people.
- Increased levels of democratic participation of young people in decision-making processes.
- Improved access for young people, especially those in vulnerable situations, to social rights through co-operation with local authorities.
- Enhanced capacity of youth leaders to act as multipliers, including in dialogue and trust-building initiatives based on human rights education and intercultural learning.

Main national partners

Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of Republika Srpska, youth councils, youth centres, youth CSOs.

66. PACE Resolution 2553, "Strengthening the youth perspective in the work of the Parliamentary Assembly", adopted on 25 June 2024.

67. Regional Co-operation Council report: "Mapping of youth policies and identification of existing support and gaps in financing of youth actions in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

PART III – IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 METHODOLOGY

The overall co-ordination of technical co-operation carried out by the Council of Europe falls within the remit of the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC, which steers programming of and fundraising for co-operation actions while ensuring the proper functioning of Council of Europe offices in the field.

Substantial responsibility for co-operation projects lies with the Council of Europe “major administrative entities” that have the relevant expertise. In accordance with the Organisation’s decentralised implementation of technical assistance and co-operation, the [Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo](#) ensures project implementation in the field. As of 15 April 2025, 35 staff members were working in the office in Sarajevo.

The implementation of Action Plan projects can include, but is not limited to, needs assessments, legislative expertise, capacity building, awareness raising, peer-to-peer reviews and gender analyses. The implementation methodology, in line with the [Council of Europe Project Management Methodology](#) (PMM), reinforces ownership by national stakeholders and ensures the sustainability of the outcomes. The PMM enhances the quality of project implementation in terms of planning and monitoring, cost efficiency and effectiveness. It also allows for improved risk assessment, incorporation of a human rights approach and greater attention to the gender dimension.

HELP will continue to play a significant role in supporting the national capacity of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the Convention and other Council of Europe standards as well as the recommendations of Council of Europe institutions and monitoring mechanisms, in partnership with local institutions and relying on the expertise developed in different areas of the Organisation.

The relevant thematic HELP online courses will be integrated transversally into the capacity-building activities of the Action Plan. In addition, the co-operation developed by the Council of Europe follows a “multi-institutional approach”, which allows different Council of Europe institutions and bodies to reach out to governmental stakeholders, parliaments, civil society, independent governance institutions such as the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina and local and regional authorities. This creates unique leverage for comprehensive, inclusive and successful reforms that lead to stability and sustainable growth in the countries.

The implementation of the Action Plan may be complemented by projects from the CEB. The CEB can cofinance investment projects with a high social value that have been approved by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It already provides assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the form of grants and loans.

3.1.1 Human rights approach

The Council of Europe applies a human rights approach at all levels and stages of its activities, integrating human rights principles into its policies and programmes, empowering rights holders to exercise their rights and strengthening duty bearers to fulfil their human rights obligations and duties in all thematic areas of intervention. Its *acquis*, including Council of Europe legal instruments and institutions, combined with the principles of participation and inclusion, equality and non-discrimination, accountability, and transparency and access to information, bring further added value to the Council of Europe activities. Together with its governmental and non-governmental partners, the Council of Europe integrates human rights principles into the main phases and processes of the management of its programmes and projects (initiating and planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, closing and reporting).

The [Council of Europe Human Rights Approach – Practical Guide for Co-operation Projects](#) aims to enhance the understanding of the realisation of human rights as the ultimate objective of the Council of Europe’s co-operation activities and to apply the core principles to all interventions of the Council of Europe as part of project cycle management and strategic orientation.

As a core component of this human rights approach, the Council of Europe emphasises gender mainstreaming throughout its project activities in line with its [Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#).

The strategy for 2024-2029 highlights the need to ensure that gender equality policies and relevant instruments benefit in particular disadvantaged groups of women but also persons facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination. To this end, and in line with the Reykjavík Declaration, greater emphasis has been placed on an intersectional approach to ensuring an inclusive Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029 for the Council of Europe and ultimately in each of the 46 member States.⁶⁸

The [Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Co-operation Projects](#) provides practical guidance on the implementation of the gender dimension in co-operation activities within the Organisation as well as by national partners and other stakeholders. It assists the Council of Europe in identifying gender-related priorities, key objectives and actions of the Action Plan, supporting the mainstreaming of gender at all stages of projects. This toolkit is complemented by gender mainstreaming training courses provided by the Organisation to all staff working on co-operation activities. The gender mainstreaming approach will be applied to actions in all fields of co-operation. Gender-balanced participation to ensure a broad range of perspectives will be actively encouraged, while recognising that some sectors are gender-imbalanced, particularly at senior levels, which may present limitations. For example, gender equality and women's rights standards will be taken into account when revising national laws and frameworks in the light of European standards. Gender equality will also be included in training activities and programmes. The impact on gender will be analysed in the design, implementation, reporting and evaluation of projects. In addition to gender mainstreaming, specific actions to promote gender equality will be considered. Additionally, an intersectional perspective will be applied to the extent possible to take into account how gender intersects with other identity factors such as ethnicity, disability, socio-economic status, sexual orientation and age.

Prior to and during the implementation of the Action Plan, project teams will rely on the expertise of the regional gender mainstreaming adviser⁶⁹ covering the South-East Europe and Türkiye region. The gender mainstreaming adviser will ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the projects of the Action Plan by promoting the usage of tools such as gender analysis and gender impact assessments and subsequently advise on implementing relevant recommendations to further integrate the gender dimension. The adviser will contribute to developing tools and mechanisms aimed at this purpose and to building the capacities of Council of Europe project staff in the region to facilitate a gender-sensitive approach in the projects of the Action Plan.

As part of its long-standing commitment to putting the child at the centre of its work, the Council of Europe is committed to advancing the protection and promotion of the rights of the child in its member States, in line with its [Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027](#), which was developed within the framework of the programme “Building a Europe for and with children” launched in 2006. The strategy includes, *inter alia*, a focus on the rights of the child in the digital environment, which is reinforced by Recommendation [CM/Rec\(2018\)7](#) of the Committee of Ministers to member States on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment.

Similarly, the Council of Europe promotes the active participation of civil society in project activities in accordance with the “[Guidelines on civil society organisations’ participation in Council of Europe’s co-operation activities](#)”. The online [resource for civil society](#) gives easy access to its handbook entitled “[Working with the Council of Europe: a practical guide for civil society](#)”, which provides in-depth information on the different forms of access, co-operation, input, participation and/or partnership that are possible and relevant for NGOs.

The [Secretary General’s Roadmap on the Council of Europe’s Engagement with Civil Society 2024-2027](#) marks a significant step in the follow-up to the “[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)” and presents “proposals aimed at shaping a policy for meaningful engagement with civil society as a whole, including youth civil society, in all aspects of the intergovernmental work (standard setting, monitoring and co-operation activities)”.

68. Source: Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029.

69. Seconded by Germany.

CSOs will thus continue to play a direct role as key partners in the implementation of Council of Europe projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina through the provision of services, thematic expertise, grant implementation, monitoring of reforms and the preparation of analytical reports, thus contributing to ensuring the protection of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in the country. In this context, the Action Plan furthermore strengthens civic space by promoting structured dialogue between CSOs and public institutions, enhancing participatory governance and supporting CSO capacities in policy advocacy and rights-based service delivery. Through inclusive and intersectional engagement, the Action Plan ensures that civil society contributes to systemic change while benefiting from an improved enabling environment.

The [Council of Europe “Speak Up” policy](#) on reporting wrongdoing and protection from retaliation entered into force on 1 June 2023 and forms part of the Organisation's ethical framework.

The [“Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values”](#) is also committed to strengthening the work on the human rights aspects of the environment and initiating the Reykjavík process of focusing and strengthening the work of the Council of Europe in this field, as laid out in its Appendix V, “The Council of Europe and the environment”. This appendix underlines the “urgency of taking co-ordinated action to protect the environment by countering the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity” and affirms that “human rights and the environment are intertwined and that a clean, healthy and sustainable environment is integral to the full enjoyment of human rights by present and future generations”.

The Reykjavík process is expected to “focus and streamline the Organisation's activities, with a view to promoting co-operation among member States”. It will also “identify the challenges raised by the triple planetary crisis of pollution, climate change and loss of biodiversity for human rights and contribute to the development of common responses thereto, while facilitating the participation of youth in these discussions”. This will be done “by enhancing and co-ordinating the existing Council of Europe activities related to the environment” and “the establishment of a new intergovernmental committee on environment and human rights”.

As a tangible milestone in this process, the [Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment](#) and its related [Action Plan](#) were adopted by the Committee of Ministers at its 134th Ministerial Session in Luxembourg on 13 and 14 May 2025. In parallel, the ministerial session adopted a new [Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Environment through Criminal Law](#).

The Council of Europe's co-operation dimension has the potential to introduce climate and environmental perspectives in areas and among stakeholders that are not traditionally accustomed to considering these issues. In doing so, it can rely on the Council of Europe's binding commitments and treaties directly or indirectly addressing environmental concerns, its well-established working methods that include intergovernmental dialogue and co-operation and its extensive and diverse networks of expertise across Europe. Within this context, the Council of Europe's co-operation dimension aims to make the fight against climate change and environmental degradation an integral and more explicit part of its action. This can be done through: 1) mainstreaming environmental protection and climate change considerations at the level of strategic co-operation documents and projects; 2) conceiving and designing co-operation documents and projects with environment-specific objectives; and 3) improving the working methods and practices of the Council of Europe to be more environmentally sound and climate neutral.

The Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment, backed by an action plan with concrete actions and initiatives and evidenced through successful examples within the Compendium on the Council of Europe's environmental activities, underlines the Organisation's unwavering commitment to addressing pressing environmental challenges. The Council of Europe can provide technical support to member States through co-operation projects building upon the conclusions and findings of the Council of Europe mechanisms.

The Council of Europe has maintained its leading role in developing standards in the digital age to protect human rights both online and offline and in many contexts. With AI being the most compelling technology of our time, the adoption in May 2024 of the [Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law](#), based on Council of Europe and other relevant international standards and with potential global application, was a major achievement of the Organisation. The Framework Convention was opened for signature on 5 September 2024. The Council of Europe recognises the positive impact and opportunities created by new and emerging digital technologies while also recognising the need to mitigate the risk of the negative consequences of their use on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, including new forms of violence against women and vulnerable groups generated and amplified by modern technologies. This first global legally binding instrument aims to ensure that AI respects common standards of human rights, democracy and the rule of law and minimises the risk of undermining them. The treaty and its implementation framework also provide new opportunities for co-operation with States and will be taken into account, as appropriate, throughout the implementation of the Action Plan.

3.1.2 Lessons learned

The EU/Council of Europe Joint Programme Horizontal Facilities – Phase III and the 2022-2025 Action Plan have been evaluated by independent evaluators who found, *inter alia*, that:

- the Action Plan provides a strong strategic framework allowing flexibility in responding to evolving priorities;
- the Action Plan is relevant, demand-driven and aligns with Bosnia and Herzegovina's international commitments and obligations as a Council of Europe member State, with the EU enlargement process and with the national agenda, considering the country's needs and advancing its reforms;
- built on an extensive consultation process, it considers lessons learned during previous Action Plan design and implementation processes;
- the results of the Action Plan have contributed to the institutional capacity of national partners, followed by improvements in legislation and policies in priority areas of co-operation;
- the Action Plan has contributed to more effective co-operation between stakeholders, both at national and local level;
- while the implementation of the Action Plan benefits from good co-ordination with other donors, projects and initiatives, co-ordination efforts could be further improved in areas with many activities funded by different donors to enhance complementarity;
- while gender mainstreaming is present across all projects under the Action Plan, the gender mainstreaming approach should be made more coherent and pragmatic, including clear steps to contribute to gender equality whenever possible;
- the Action Plan is implemented cost-efficiently with overall adequate resources. Multiple measures to reduce costs have been taken whenever project implementation proved challenging with the resources provided.

The present Action Plan also takes into account the lessons learned during the implementation of the 2022-2025 Action Plan, including the following:

- the multifaceted support under the Action Plan is particularly important considering that areas covered are closely intertwined. Internal co-ordination across projects implemented under the Action Plan, including regional interventions, is therefore crucial;
- co-ordination and continuous communication with all relevant donors and organisations implementing programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina is essential to ensure complementarity of actions, facilitate exchanges of good practices and avoid overlaps;
- the regional dimension plays a pivotal role in bolstering co-operation and support among partners and beneficiaries in South-East Europe, allowing for concertation and wider transmission of knowledge and providing a platform for exchange and stronger, aligned support for reforms and progress towards meeting standards;

- encouraging beneficiaries to progressively adopt a proactive role and pairing local experts with international consultants is identified as a good practice, increasing ownership and engagement;
- open communication channels among authorities and partners on issues involving multiagency co-operation allow for additional synergies;
- long-term engagement and follow-up support has proven necessary to assist decentralised legislative processes and implementation efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina's complex governance environment. In this context, institutional capacities are supported sustainably, including through digitalisation processes and the creation of pools of certified trainers;
- some flexibility in the implementation of the Action Plan allows to adapt work plans, find mitigating solutions, respond to evolving priorities and ensure continued relevance;
- the mainstreaming of gender throughout the Action Plan and support provided extensively benefited from the expertise provided by a dedicated gender mainstreaming adviser covering the South-East Europe and Türkiye regions as of 2024.

The flexibility of the previous Action Plan also made it possible to largely adapt work plans and working methods to the Covid-19 pandemic. On the one hand, the pandemic-related restrictions triggered or accelerated innovation in some fields, especially in the area of IT, in particular through hybrid events. Experience gained can, to a certain extent, be transferred to future implementation practice. On the other hand, in respect of some activities, no adequate alternative solutions were found. This concerns especially politically sensitive areas, regional exchanges of best practices, study trips or some training activities.

3.1.3 Risk management and sustainability

Owing to the nature of its mandate, the Council of Europe operates in complex and unstable environments that expose it to risks. The risk analysis of the Action Plan and possible mitigation strategies are identified in Appendix II of the present Action Plan on the basis of the Council of Europe's Risk Management Policy⁷⁰ and Risk Management Guidelines. All projects implemented within the Action Plan have their own risk assessment and mitigation strategies. The risks identified within the co-operation activities feed into the organisational risk register, which is periodically brought to the attention of the Secretary General and the Senior Management Group of the Council of Europe. Internal audit, external audit and the Oversight Advisory Committee will be analysing the results.

The Council of Europe mitigates funding risks through continued fundraising activities with donors, the inclusion of funding for action plans in the Ordinary Budget and through diligent strategic planning and constant communication with all the stakeholders involved in the implementation of the Action Plan.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council of Europe ensured business continuity in the framework of the implementation of the previous Action Plan while respecting national public health measures. Mitigation measures were continuously adapted and implemented by the Council of Europe throughout its co-operation activities, in close co-ordination with the beneficiaries and the donors. The same approach will be applied to the implementation of this Action Plan if circumstances so require.

Complex governance arrangements, in combination with ethnic fragmentation, polarisation of society, political instability, frequent institutional restructuring and outward migration, result in particular risks for long-term sustainable engagement in reform processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. To address these, the Action Plan adopts a multistakeholder and pluralistic approach, ensuring wide consultation and inclusion of relevant stakeholders in all stages of activities.

70. The revised Risk Management Policy was adopted by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 15 December 2023 and came into force immediately. To foster a pragmatic, consistent and transparent approach to risk management at the Council of Europe, this version updates the provisions of the previous policy (adopted in 2016) by: placing risk management in a wider institutional perspective; ensuring complementarity with the other components of the Organisation's governance system (such as internal control, data protection, ethics, crisis management and business continuity); implementing recommendations from the Directorate of Internal Oversight and the Oversight Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe; and clarifying roles and responsibilities throughout the Organisation. By contributing to a greater maturity in managing risks that may affect the Council of Europe, the revised policy will also strengthen the Organisation's governance system.

In parallel to continuous monitoring of political developments, the Action Plan ensures smooth co-operation at the technical level and develops flexible implementation plans to align with the specific context and requirements of each government level.

Finally, the implementation of the Action Plan that follows the PMM aims to reinforce ownership by national stakeholders and to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes by using existing tools such as those developed by the CEPEJ or the HELP training methodology.

3.2 CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Council of Europe has long been committed to promoting the domestic implementation of the SDGs. In addition, the “[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)”, adopted at the 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, calls for increased co-operation and the development of further synergies with the UN, notably when it comes to the implementation of the SDGs. Against this background, the implementation of the Action Plan will sustain the efforts of the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in achieving the following SDGs, especially goals 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11 and 16.

- **Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

Under the Action Plan, the promotion of mental health support, particularly for vulnerable groups like LGBTI persons and migrants, directly contributes to the achievement of target 4.⁷¹ Efforts aiming to combat drug abuse and expand access to quality addiction treatment will directly contribute to the achievement of target 5.⁷² Moreover, tackling the production and distribution of counterfeit medical products and strengthening national legislation in line with European standards protecting human rights in the field of biomedicine will reinforce commitments related to target 8.⁷³ Together, these actions contribute significantly to the broader objective of ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all, as outlined in SDG 3.

- **Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

Initiatives under the Action Plan will pay specific attention to addressing education challenges faced by Roma communities and the elimination of *de facto* segregation by ethnicity, directly relating to target 5.⁷⁴ In addition, efforts supporting inclusive quality education and combating hate speech, discrimination, violence and bullying in educational settings will contribute to the achievement of target 7.⁷⁵ Finally, HELP will continue to support the integration of human rights education into various curricula, promoting lifelong training for legal professionals. Collectively, these measures will meaningfully support the realisation of SDG 4.

- **Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

Several Council of Europe instruments, including the Istanbul Convention, the Lanzarote Convention and the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, underpin efforts to promote gender equality and combat violence against women and girls.

71. Goal 3, target 4: By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being.

72. Goal 3, target 5: Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

73. Goal 3, target 8: Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

74. Goal 4, target 5: By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.

75. Goal 4, target 7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

Technical co-operation under the Action Plan will support the effective implementation of these conventions and strengthen institutional capacities to prevent and respond to gender-based violence and discrimination and address harmful gender stereotypes, thus contributing to SDG 5, particularly targets 1,⁷⁶ 2,⁷⁷ a⁷⁸ and c.⁷⁹ At the same time, the promotion of women's participation in decision making, inclusive democratic processes and leadership will contribute to target 5.⁸⁰ Gender mainstreaming furthermore remains a cross-cutting priority, encompassing the consistent use of sex-disaggregated data and the promotion of gender-balanced participation.

- **Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

Under the Action Plan, the Council of Europe will continue to support the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to combat human trafficking, child exploitation and forced labour and to address related root causes, making a direct contribution to the achievement of target 7.⁸¹ In parallel, initiatives promoting the implementation of the European Social Charter— which guarantees the rights to decent, safe and fairly remunerated work — directly support target 8.⁸²

- **Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries**

The Action Plan's efforts empowering vulnerable groups and reducing inequalities by building institutional capacity to combat discrimination, hate speech and hate crimes will directly support Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards achieving targets 2⁸³ and 3.⁸⁴ Furthermore, assistance aimed at addressing legislative and practical gaps in reception, asylum and detention conditions for migrants appears fully aligned with target 7.⁸⁵ Regional co-operation under the Action Plan similarly addresses barriers to equality while fostering exchanges of good practices and peer learning.

- **Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

Promoting good governance through strengthened local self-government is a key objective of the Action Plan and supports the achievement of target 3.⁸⁶ In this context, the empowerment of national minorities at the municipal level, with particular attention paid to the Roma community, directly contributes to inclusive and cohesive local governance. By encouraging the development of cultural centres and community spaces, the Action Plan furthermore supports target 7.⁸⁷

76. Goal 5, target 1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

77. Goal 5, target 2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

78. Goal 5, target a: Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

79. Goal 5, target c: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

80. Goal 5, target 5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

81. Goal 8, target 7: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms.

82. Goal 8, target 8: Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

83. Goal 10, target 2: By 2023, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race ethnicity, origin, religion or economic and other status.

84. Goal 10, target 3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.

85. Goal 10, target 7: Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.

86. Goal 11, target 3: By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanisation and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

87. Goal 11, target 7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

- **Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

Considering its mandate and the nature of its technical co-operation activities, the Council of Europe will make a meaningful contribution to achieving SDG 16. Indeed, all actions undertaken with Bosnia and Herzegovina will cover a wide range of areas related to many of its targets, including but not limited to the following.

Efforts to prevent and combat violence against children, alongside initiatives to reduce ill-treatment in detention and to build the capacities of law enforcement and health services working with inmates, contribute directly to target 1⁸⁸ on reducing violence and related death rates. In parallel, focused action on helping authorities identify child victims of trafficking and prosecute perpetrators more effectively supports target 2.⁸⁹

The promotion of the rule of law and equal access to justice underpins tangible contributions to target 3.⁹⁰ Through the HELP programme and targeted capacity building for legal professionals, the Action Plan fosters the application of European standards and legal certainty. Efforts to enhance women's access to justice are also embedded within this goal.

Work on countering economic and cybercrime reinforces target 4⁹¹ by promoting the implementation of the Budapest Convention, improving stakeholder co-operation and supporting efforts to trace illicit financial flows and fight organised crime. Complementary actions to prevent and address corruption, in line with GRECO recommendations, contribute to the achievement of target 5.⁹²

The Action Plan invests in strengthening institutional effectiveness, transparency and accountability in line with target 6⁹³ by improving the operational capacity of public, judicial and law-enforcement bodies and ensuring coherent implementation of reforms. Efforts to promote inclusive and participatory governance are closely tied to target 7.⁹⁴ These include advancing local self-governance, encouraging civil participation – especially of women and minorities – and fostering dialogue across government levels and with civil society. Support for aligning electoral legislation with international standards and case law of the European Court further reinforces this aim.

Finally, in support of target 10,⁹⁵ the Action Plan promotes freedom of expression, media freedom and public access to information, while initiatives to tackle discrimination, hate crime and hate speech also contribute to target a,⁹⁶ by bolstering institutional responses to extremism and crime. Support for the development and implementation of non-discriminatory policies contributes to target b,⁹⁷ reinforcing Bosnia and Herzegovina's commitment to justice, inclusion and equality.

88. Goal 16, target 1: Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

89. Goal 16, target 2: End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

90. Goal 16, target 3: Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

91. Goal 16, target 4: By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.

92. Goal 16, target 5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

93. Goal 16, target 6: Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.

94. Goal 16, target 7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

95. Goal 16, target 10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

96. Goal 16, target a: Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

97. Goal 16, target b: Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

3.3 CO-ORDINATION

Co-ordination to ensure efficient use of resources and the relevance of the Council of Europe's actions is performed at different levels and in different forums, including the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe's activities are determined and implemented in such a way as to focus on areas where the Organisation has strong expertise and added value. Joint co-operation with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina is developed on the basis of a thorough analysis of the objectives pursued by other international organisations and partners in the field, and of their activities undertaken and/or planned to achieve these objectives.

To ensure the relevance of its actions, the Council of Europe works in close co-ordination with relevant international partners, notably the EU and in particular the EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Co-ordination is also ensured with other international partners, including the Office of the High Representative, the UN, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (represented in Bosnia and Herzegovina by a Human Rights Adviser attached to the Office of the UN Resident Co-ordinator), the International Organization for Migration, UNESCO, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the OSCE.

Whenever appropriate, co-ordination platforms with other international organisations are set up and joint activities undertaken.

To ensure efficiency and avoid the overlap of activities, the Council of Europe also co-ordinates its work with its member/observer States' diplomatic missions and development agencies active in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.4 FUNDING

The overall financing needs for the Action Plan are estimated at €27 million. Funding amounting to €1.96 million (7% of the estimated needs) has been secured as of 22 September 2025.

Projects within the Action Plan are to be funded from multiple sources. Funding is to be provided from the Ordinary Budget of the Council of Europe, voluntary contributions from donor countries and from the EU/Council of Europe joint programmes such as the Horizontal Facility for the Western Balkans and Turkey.

As a direct result of the "[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)", which recognises the importance of the Council of Europe's co-operation dimension, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe included, for the first time, in its Ordinary Budget 2024-2027, a contribution for the co-operation dimension. Providing a more stable and predictable source of funding for co-operation activities ensures a more effective and efficient implementation of Action Plans. Moreover, this approach ensures that co-operation projects can be designed, implemented and evaluated for their impact over the long term without interruptions. Notably, in its first year, 2026, the present Action Plan will benefit from a strong injection from this contribution to enable a timely and sustained start to its projects.

The co-ordination of the implementation of the Action Plan incurs general management costs amounting to not more than 7% of the Action Plan's direct costs.

In line with the resource mobilisation strategy of the Council of Europe, fundraising efforts under the co-ordination of the DPC are concentrated on the Action Plan as a whole. Action Plan-level funding in particular allows flexibility for allocating funds where they are most needed (such as when addressing emerging co-operation needs) and where they are most likely to contribute to the sustainability of key policy and institutional reforms. The Council of Europe also promotes longer-term framework co-operation agreements and multi-annual contracts with key partners and donors to facilitate strategic and effective partnerships and ensure predictable and flexible funding.

Continued financial support for the present Action Plan will allow the Organisation to build on and create activities that support the principles of the Convention and other legal instruments and Council of Europe standards. The Council of Europe increasingly seeks to deliver on agreed strategic priorities rather than on individual projects and activities.

The structure of the present Action Plan 2026-2029 is aligned with the structure of the Council of Europe Programme and Budget and its two biennial budget cycles in order to increase consistency, complementarity and co-ordination.

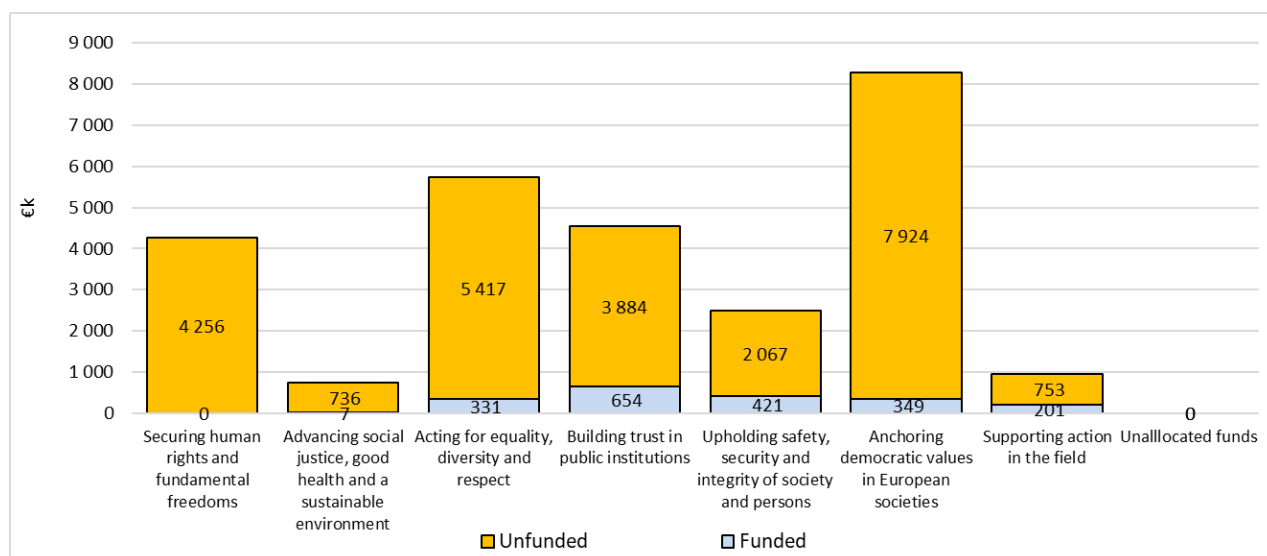


Figure 2: Estimated funding needs per pillar of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2026-2029 as of 22 September 2025 (in thousands of euros)

3.5 GOVERNANCE

The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe assesses the overall results of the implementation of the Action Plan through its Rapporteur Group on Democracy (GR-DEM).

The Council of Europe will provide regular updates on the progress and outcomes of the Action Plan. To this end, the Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC) will submit annual progress reports and a final report to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in line with Governance of Action Plans receiving contributions from the Ordinary Budget.

In addition, the Secretariat of the GR-DEM and DPC, in close co-ordination with the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will organise, as appropriate, information meetings with all interested delegations to the Council of Europe. These meetings will provide an opportunity for exchange and discussion on the progress of the implementation of the Action Plan on one hand and on the outline of its successor Action Plan on the other.

Progress made under the Action Plan will also be jointly assessed by the Council of Europe and the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Action Plan contacts

Directorate of Programme Co-ordination (DPC)
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Tel: + 33 (0)3 90 21 56 54
E-mail to: dpc@coe.int
www.coe.int/programmes

Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo
Zmaja od Bosne 11
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
E-mail to: coe.sarajevo@coe.int
www.coe.int/sarajevo

APPENDIX I: LOGFRAME

2.1 Securing human rights and fundamental freedoms		
Expected outcomes	Indicator(s)	Source and means of verification
Execution of judgements of the European Court of Human Rights		
Enhanced effective execution of the European Court's judgements with respect to Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a focus on general measures requiring legislative and other challenges.	Number of judgments from the European Court involving Bosnia and Herzegovina under the supervision of the Committee of Ministers. Number of leading cases closed by the Committee of Ministers. Level of execution of judgments of the European Court assessed against the following criteria: a) number of judgments executed; b) average time for taking execution measures; c) systemic and/or structural changes resulting from issues identified by the European Court; and d) number of new and/or repetitive cases communicated by the European Court.	Execution Department website Committee of Ministers' Annual report on supervision of execution of ECtHR judgments and decisions
Increased capacity of the government agents to represent the State before the European Court, adequately supervise the measures for the execution of judgements and to implement the Convention standards at the national level	Number of national Action Plans and reports presented by the Government Agents with comprehensive measures for the execution of judgments. Number of co-ordination meetings conducted with execution stakeholders and CSOs.	HUDOC-Exec Database Project-level reports
Effective implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights at national level		
Improved legal and policy frameworks on the promotion and enforcement on human rights.	Number of measures taken to develop comprehensive legal and/or policy frameworks on the promotion and enforcement of human rights compliant with European standards	National legislation websites Project-level reports
Enhanced human rights protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina through constitutional justice, based on: a) the effective enforcement of decisions of the Constitutional Court and better implementation of its overall	Number of legal professionals with increased capacity to claim and to protect individual rights before the	Official statistics Project-level reports

caselaw through judicial dialogue and communication and coordination among national stakeholders; b) increased capacities of legal professionals to claim and protect individual rights before the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and courts of general jurisdiction; and c) strengthened institutional capacities of the Constitutional Court.	Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina and other courts. Number of capacity-building activities and resource materials for judges and legal advisors of the Constitutional Court. Number of refurbished facilities and tools provided to the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Number of Constitutional Court decisions changing status from non-enforced or partially enforced to effectively implemented.	
Strengthened capacity of judicial, prosecutorial and law enforcement authorities, as well as lawyers, to ensure consistent application of the Convention and related Council of Europe standards through comprehensive human rights education among legal professionals; continued digital empowerment of judicial training institutions in this regard	Number of human rights modules introduced in the Centre for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Centre for Judicial and Prosecutorial Training of Republika Srpska and in law faculties. Number of measures put in place to upgrade and modernise the judicial training institutions. Number of certified trainers. Percentage of legal professionals and students in law faculties having participated in Council of Europe human rights capacity-building activities and enhanced their knowledge on the topic.	Project-level reports
Strengthened institutional capacity of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to carry out its mandate effectively, including in its recent capacity as the National Preventive Mechanism against torture and ill-treatment.	Percentage of staff from the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman whose capacities have been enhanced. Percentage of recommendations from the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman implemented by public and private institutions.	Project-level reports

2.2 Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment		
Effective implementation of the European Social Charter		
Harmonised national legislation and practices in the area of social and economic rights with the provisions of the revised European Social Charter (ESC)	Number of provisions in adopted/amended legislation taking into account Council of Europe standards and recommendations on social rights. Number of ESC provisions for which a situation of (non-)conformity is found for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Number of newly accepted provisions of the ESC by Bosnia and Herzegovina	HUDOC-ESC National legislation websites
Enhanced capacity of the State-stakeholders to understand ECSR conclusions and apply them in practice; improved ECSR monitoring process as a result of higher-quality reports prepared by national authorities.	Level of knowledge of the ESC system among state stakeholders and non-state stakeholders, including trade unions, vulnerable groups and the general public. Level of knowledge among trained judges and lawyers on ECSR case law. Number of references to ESC in national judgements and legal claims. Number of conclusions deferred by the ECSR due to a lack of information.	National legislation and case-law Project-level reports
Human rights in biomedicine and health		
Improved national legislation, policies and practices that effectively protect human rights in the fields of biomedicine and health, aligned with European standards and with the principles enshrined in the Oviedo Convention.	Number of provisions in adopted/amended legislation taking into account Council of Europe standards in the fields of biomedicine and health, including the Oviedo Convention. Number of institutions implementing policies in the fields of biomedicine and health based on Council of Europe standards.	Project-level reports
Increased awareness and strengthened capacity of national stakeholders and healthcare professionals to ensure adequate protection of human rights in the biomedical and health fields, including in regard to relevant challenges raised by new scientific and technological developments.	Level of knowledge of the Oviedo Convention, other health-related instruments and emerging challenges by national stakeholders, legal and healthcare professionals.	Project-level reports

Improved legislation and policy frameworks on counterfeit medical products and other similar crimes in full compliance with the MEDICRIME Convention.	Number of provisions in adopted/amended legislative and/or regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring an effective response to pharmaceutical crime taking into account Council of Europe standards included in the MEDICRIME Convention. Level of alignment of adopted provisions with the MEDICRIME Convention. Number of institutions implementing policies in the fight against falsified medical products based on the MEDICRIME Convention.	Project-level reports Council of Europe monitoring/advisory reports
Further enhanced capacities of authorities to search, seize and confiscate MEDICRIME proceeds, to engage in inter-agency co-operation to conduct related financial investigations and to co-operate at international level in the fight against counterfeit medical products.	Number of operations investigated by law-enforcement authorities related to countering fake medical products. Level of knowledge of the MEDICRIME Convention and other similar crimes by national stakeholders, law-enforcement, legal and healthcare professionals. Level of inter-agency co-operation on investigations against counterfeit medical products. Number of co-ordination meetings with international counterparts to tackle medical products-related crimes.	Project-level reports Council of Europe monitoring/advisory reports
Strengthened capacities of judicial authorities to prosecute and adjudicate on MEDICRIME offences.	Level of knowledge of legal professionals on counterfeiting of medicines. Number of trained legal professionals demonstrating enhanced capacity to recognise and prosecute pharmaceutical crime. Number of investigations and prosecutions by judicial and/or law-enforcement authorities into pharmaceutical crime cases. Number of convicted perpetrators for medical products-related crimes.	Project-level reports
Enhanced drug and addiction policies, legislation and practice addressing the risks of drug use and behavioural addictions in line with the Council of Europe's core values.	Number of provisions in adopted/amended legislation and policy frameworks taking into account Council of Europe standards in the area of drug prevention and addiction policies.	National legislation websites Project-level reports

Increased operational co-operation at regional level between police and customs officers working at airports to tackle drug trafficking	Number of measures taken to foster exchanges of information between police and customs officers working at airports to tackle drug trafficking.	Project-level reports
Empowered prison staff, health care professionals and social workers to improve access to quality drug addiction treatment for inmates.	Percentage of trained prison staff, health care professionals and social workers demonstrating increased capacities to provide quality drug addiction treatment for inmates.	Project-level reports
Protection of the environment and human rights		
Improved national legislation and practices on environmental protection, in line with European standards, contributing to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment and related human rights protection, also providing effective legal remedies.	Number of initiatives by Parliament(s) and decision-makers to incorporate environmental factors in legislation and policy frameworks. Presence of standardised methodology to assess environmental policies through human rights frameworks.	National legislation websites Project-level reports
Enhanced national legislative and regulatory framework to prevent, identify and combat environmental crimes.	Number of provisions in adopted/amended legislation and regulatory frameworks taking into account Council of Europe standards and recommendations on combating environmental crimes.	National legislation websites (state-, entity- and district-level) Project-level reports
Enhanced capacities of relevant authorities, legal professionals, CSOs and other stakeholders to ensure a better application of human rights standards related to the environment.	Level of knowledge of CSO representatives, legal professionals and other national stakeholders on the interconnection between human rights and the environment. Level of understanding of European promising practices on the interdependence of human rights and environmental protection and their applicability in the national context. Number of stakeholders reporting increased knowledge of strategic litigation using human rights standards in environmental cases.	Project-level reports
Increased public awareness of the relation between the protection of the environment and human rights among legal professionals and the general public.	Number of awareness raising initiatives by respective partners on environmental protection and environmental justice.	Project-level reports Surveys

Bolstered co-operation between government agencies, companies, industry associations and CSOs on issues related to the environment and protection of human rights.	Level of multi-stakeholder co-operation. Number of co-ordination meetings involving Government agencies, relevant national stakeholders, business companies / associations and civil society organisations.	Project-level reports
2.3 Acting for equality, diversity and respect		
<i>Gender equality, Violence against Women and Domestic Violence</i>		
Strengthened national legislative and normative frameworks to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including in the digital sphere, in line with GREVIO's findings and the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislative and/or regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring an effective response to violence against women, including digital violence. Level of alignment of adopted provisions with the Istanbul Convention.	GREVIO assessments National legislation websites (state-, entity- and district-level) Project-level reports
Strengthened legislative and policy frameworks to ensure systematic risk assessment and management, as well as the issuance of emergency barring orders, restraining orders and protection orders for all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.	Number of preventive and protective measures issued (emergency barring orders, restraining and protection orders) to address and prevent violence against women and domestic violence.	Official statistics Project-level reports
Improved capacity of authorities, justice sector professionals, frontline professionals, and civil society to implement the standards of the Istanbul Convention, effectively removing obstacles to women's access to justice.	Level of knowledge among legal professionals on relevant European standards on women's access to justice. Number of trained legal professionals demonstrating enhanced capacity to recognise and mitigate gender stereotypes within the justice chain. Number of CSO professionals working in the field of social protection for victims of violence against women and domestic violence. Percentage of indictments following a criminal report for domestic violence. Percentage of adults charged with the criminal offence of domestic violence found guilty.	Project-level reports
Improved quality and availability of treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic violence, in accordance with the principles of the Istanbul Convention.	Number of participants in the programmes implemented for perpetrators of domestic violence, who are declaring change in attitudes towards women and the use of violence in general, and gendered violence in particular.	Project-level reports
Regular and systematic collection of administrative data on all forms of violence against women at all stages of the criminal justice process, disaggregated by sex and age of both the victim and the perpetrators, type of violence and the perpetrator-victim relationship, across the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Number of administrative statistics collected in relation to violence against women during the criminal justice process	Official statistics Project-level reports

Human Trafficking		
A strengthened criminal justice response to trafficking in human beings, focusing on the effective investigation and prosecution of offences.	Number of investigations into trafficking in human beings. Number of indictments filed in trafficking cases. Number of successful prosecutions, including conviction rates. Average length of sentences for convicted traffickers.	Official statistics Project-level reports GRETA reports
Improved protection of victims of trafficking in human beings before, during and after proceedings.	Number of potential victims provided with accommodation and assistance in safe houses / shelters. Number of potential victims accessing free legal aid and/or legal representation. Number of victims awarded with compensation in criminal and in civil proceedings. Number of victims having received compensation. Number of victims benefiting from psychological and social support programmes.	Official reports Statistics of CSOs/ victim support service records Project-level reports GRETA reports
Enhanced prevention policies and measures addressing core drivers of trafficking in human beings.	Number of new/revised laws and regulations, policies, or guidelines introduced to tackle trafficking in human beings. Number of awareness raising initiatives or educational programmes launched to reduce vulnerabilities. Number of cross-sectoral initiatives implemented to address systemic risk factors (e.g., poverty, gender inequality, migration vulnerabilities). Percentage of target groups reporting increased awareness of trafficking risks.	Project-level reports GRETA reports Policy and/or operative documents Survey results
A strengthened rights-based approach, focusing on victim identification and referral procedures, and improving access to justice and effective remedies.	Level of knowledge on the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and on a rights-based approach among trained professionals (police, social workers, legal professionals). Number of detected, identified and assisted victims of trafficking (disaggregated by exploitation type, gender and age). Number of formal victim referrals made to support services. Number of victims successfully accessing legal remedies, including compensation claims.	Project-level reports GRETA reports Official reports

Anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion (Roma and Travellers, national minorities, regional or minority languages, LGBTI persons)		
Strengthened institutional capacity of national and local authorities, including equality bodies, law enforcement and the judiciary, to address discrimination, hate speech, racism and intolerance on all grounds and to respect the rights of persons belonging to minorities, in line with Council of Europe standards and best practices.	Level of understanding by national and local authorities of European best practices addressing discrimination, hate speech, racism and intolerance on all grounds, and of their applicability in the national context. Number of measures taken by relevant national authorities to monitor, implement and develop strategic frameworks to respond to discrimination and intolerance [including the strategic framework on “Mapping responses to combating hate speech in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, the National LGBTI Action Plan 2021 – 2024 and the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2025]. Percentage of implemented provisions of the Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 to member States on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity. Number of complaints responded to by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees Number of criminal judgments related to hate speech Score achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Rainbow Europe Index.⁹⁸ Number of official education policies, school/university activities and pedagogical methodologies explicitly promoting anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion among students.	ECRI monitoring reports Project-level reports Reports of CSOs

98. Rainbow Europe – ILGA-Europe’s annual benchmarking tool – is comprised of the Rainbow Map and [Index](#) and national recommendations. ILGA-Europe have produced the Rainbow Index since 2009, using it to illustrate the legal and policy situation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in Europe. The Rainbow Index ranks European countries and territories on their respective legal and policy practices for LGBTI people, from 0-100%.

Improved capacities of national and local authorities to design and implement policies and plans aiming at sustainable social inclusion of disadvantaged communities, including Roma.	Number of local policies and initiatives put in place to improve Roma integration. Number of municipal officials with increased capacity to address the needs of Roma communities.	ECRI monitoring reports Project-level reports
Increased capacity of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees to raise other institutions' awareness of the normative framework on hate speech, and to devise policy responses to curb this phenomenon.	Number of public administration staff with increased capacity to devise and implement policy responses set by the normative framework on hate speech.	Project-level reports
Established policy framework on minority languages in accordance with European standards.	Number of measures taken to develop the policy framework on minority languages in accordance with European standards.	Assessments by the Committee of experts on the ECRML
Empowered Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman to effectively respond to discrimination and intolerance, in line with its mandate as the national equality body.	Number of discrimination and intolerance cases addressed by the Human Rights Ombudsman annually, with outcomes reported.	ECRI monitoring reports Project-level reports Official statistics
Enhanced capacity of police, prosecutors and judges to identify, investigate, prosecute and adjudicate cases of hate crime, including those targeted at LGBTI persons and other vulnerable groups, in line with ECRI country-specific recommendations.	Level of knowledge on identifying, investigating, prosecuting and judging hate crimes targeted at LGBTI persons and other vulnerable groups among police officers, prosecutors and judges.	ECRI monitoring reports Official statistics Project-level reports Reports of CSOs
Increased awareness among non-state stakeholders, including education professionals (in primary, secondary and higher education), youth, religious communities, sport organisations and civil society, of the dangers of hatred, discrimination, stereotypes and related violence in society.	Level of knowledge on discrimination, hatred and related dangers among non-state stakeholders (education professionals, youth, religious communities, sports organisations and civil society representatives). Number of anti-hatred initiatives organised by religious communities, youth and sport organisations.	Project-level reports Surveys
<i>Migrants and refugees</i>		
Enhanced national legislation and policy framework in the field of migration and asylum, in line with relevant European and international standards.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislation and policy frameworks taking into account Council of Europe standards and recommendations on the human rights protection of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers.	National legislation websites (state-, entity- and district-level) Project-level reports
Strengthened protective measures for vulnerable persons in the context of migration and asylum, including by the promotion of family-based care for unaccompanied children.	Number of specific protective services (e.g. legal aid, psychosocial support, specialised shelters, guardianship) provided to vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers. Number of individuals receiving specific protective services. Number of unaccompanied migrant and refugee children place in family-based care annually.	Project-level reports reports statistics CSO Official

Enhanced capacity of relevant authorities to ensure an adequate standard of living and access to dignified reception conditions incentives.	Level of knowledge on human rights, reception conditions and accommodation standards among relevant authorities.	Project-level reports
Enhanced capacity of relevant authorities to develop and implement effective alternatives to immigration detention and to ensure that detention is applied only as a measure of last resort, with appropriate procedural safeguards and in adequate conditions.	Level of knowledge on human rights and immigration detention and alternatives to immigration detention among relevant authorities. Number of alternative measures to immigration detention developed. Number of people subject to alternatives to immigration detention.	Project-level reports
Improved access for migrants, refugees and displaced persons to support services and intercultural inclusion programmes at local level, using a multilevel approach that facilitates collaboration and governance of migrant and integration policies between national and local authorities.	Number of migrants, refugees and displaced persons having access to support services and intercultural inclusion programmes at local level. Level of multi-stakeholder cooperation on migrant inclusion programmes	Project-level reports
<i>Children's rights</i>		
Improved legislation, policies, and practices to better respect, protect and promote the rights of the child, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and relevant Council of Europe standards.	Number of provisions in adopted or amended legislation and/or regulatory frameworks aimed at ensuring better protection of the rights of the child, in line with international standards and with the provisions of the Lanzarote Convention. Developed Guidelines to determine the best interests of the child.	National legislation Lanzarote Committee reports Project-level reports
Strengthened capacity of criminal justice professionals involved in multidisciplinary responses to child (sexual) abuse.	Number of police officers, legal professionals, prosecutors and judges demonstrating enhanced capacities to identify, investigate, prosecute and judge (sexual) child abuse, including in the digital environment. Number of measures put in place for the prevention and protection of children from violence, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, both online and offline.	Project-level reports
Improved access to justice for child victims, with judicial processes adapted to the needs of minors.	Number of trained legal professionals demonstrating enhanced capacity to foster children's access to justice, adapted to their needs. Number of persons working in the day center for accommodation and care of children, facilitating access to rights.	Project-level reports

Strengthened frameworks and capacities of professionals working in the child-protection system, with a particular focus on children belonging to minorities, migrant children and children with disabilities.	Number of professionals in the child-protection system demonstrating enhanced capacity to ensure adequate protection in line with European standards, with a particular focus on children belonging to minorities, migrant children and children with disabilities. Extent to which national stakeholders' preventive measures and responses to violence against children are in line with European standards. Level of awareness and understanding of signs of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Level of knowledge on the practical implementation of the Guidelines to determine the best interests of the child.	Lanzarote Committee reports Project-level reports
Increased engagement of children in elaborating and implementing policy frameworks and initiatives related to the protection of children's rights.	Number of initiatives engaging children in the elaboration and implementation of policy frameworks related to their rights. Extent to which national and local policies encourage children's participation in initiatives related to their rights.	Project-level reports

2.4 Building Trust in Public Institutions		
<i>Independence and efficiency of justice</i>		
Strengthened quality and efficiency of the justice system in line with CEPEJ standards and tools (including case management, judicial statistics and judicial data dashboards, time management and reduction of backlog, cyber-justice and court users' satisfaction surveys).	Number of key CEPEJ indicators on efficiency and tools on efficiency and quality of justice, time management and backlog reduction tools, communication tools, court user satisfaction surveys and cyber-justice tools used by the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC), courts and other judicial institutions. Level of knowledge on CEPEJ tools and methodologies among legal professionals Level of consideration by the justice system of the user satisfaction with the efficiency and quality of services provided.	CEPEJ Evaluation reports HJPC reports Court statistics EU assessment reports Project-level reports Satisfaction surveys Annual reports and training programmes of judicial training institutions
Extended operational case-law departments in selected courts, functioning in line with European best practices.	Percentage of selected courts having a fully operational case-law department.	Project-level reports
Enhanced alignment and consistency in judicial practices through the support for and establishment of case law departments at various court levels.	Number of case-law departments established across various court levels of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Project-level reports
Enhanced capacities within the judiciary on functional IT tools to further harmonise judicial practice and compliance with the European Court's judgments.	Number of IT tools operated by the judiciary to ensure the harmonisation of judicial practice and compliance with European Court judgments.	Project-level reports
<i>Prisons, police, deprivation of liberty</i>		
Strengthened safeguards against ill-treatment in prisons, improved regulatory and institutional framework on execution of criminal sanctions, including digital data management and information sharing between institutions, enhanced capacities of staff in management, rehabilitation and provision of healthcare to inmates, taking into account the specifics of vulnerable groups in detention.	Number of measures and actions taken by relevant authorities to strengthen safeguards against ill-treatment in prisons and improve the institutional framework on execution of criminal sanctions. Number of bylaws, protocols and/or operational procedures revised or developed, including safeguards against ill-treatment and healthcare provision in prisons, aligned with European and international standards. Number of programmes, modules and procedures developed to regulate treatment of vulnerable groups in detention (substance abuse, women, juveniles, physically challenged...)	CPT reports Project-level reports SPACE reports MoJ statistics Reports of other international organisations

	Number of trained staff demonstrating enhanced skills in management, rehabilitation and provision of healthcare to inmates, taking into account the specifics of vulnerable groups in detention. Number of prison facilities with digital data management.	
Developed legislative framework and establishment of preconditions for the institutional set-up of probation service(s).	Developed feasibility study including a framework budget and an assessment on the most viable solution(s) in Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional setting. Number of recommendations issued, and laws/bylaws/policies drafted (pending approval by the Ministries of Justice, in the parliamentary procedure and/or already adopted). Level of alignment of the developed regulatory framework with CoE recommendations and international standards. Number of other measures taken to establish preconditions for the institutional set-up of probation service(s), such as devised training curricula and developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) or operational manuals.	Project-level reports MoJ reports Consultants' reports Reports of other international organisations.
Better alignment of policing work with international standards, including strategies and practices for combatting ill-treatment, effective cooperation between police and prosecution, functioning police oversight mechanisms and greater accountability and integrity of law enforcement professionals.	Number of ill-treatment allegations processed internally and externally by law enforcement professionals, resulting in a decision. Number of protocols developed as part of the methodology to eradicate ill-treatment based on CPT and other international standards and integrated in training programmes or daily policing practices. Number of regulatory and policy documents developed, enabling the establishment and functioning of police oversight mechanisms.	CPT reports Project-level reports MoJ and MoI statistics HJPC reports Parliamentary bodies' reports
Enhanced forensic patient care and implementation of treatment programmes and pre-release interventions.	Number of outgoing forensic offenders/patients who underwent a comprehensive treatment programme, including pre-release interventions Number of forensic facilities applying operational protocols developed earlier for the Forensic Hospital Sokolac, thereby demonstrating shared standards and practices. Number of staff of forensic facilities demonstrating enhanced capacities to carry out therapeutic, reintegration and psychosocial rehabilitation programmes.	CPT reports Project-level reports Consultants' reports Patients' surveys

Strengthened capacities and role of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman in its wider ill-treatment prevention mandate.	Number of CoE and international standards references in the Institution's monitoring reports on the treatment, healthcare and rehabilitation services in the penitentiary system. Number of staff of the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman demonstrating enhanced capacities to monitor and prevent ill-treatment in places of deprivation of liberty. Number of findings and recommendations made in the monitoring reports, calling upon internationally agreed standards Number of assessments in places of deprivation of liberty made annually based on the developed working methodology (visitation matrix).	Project-level reports Annual reports of the Human Rights Ombudsman to the Parliament International monitoring bodies' reports.
Full ownership by authorities of radicalisation prevention tools, VEP-specific management programmes and reintegration protocols, including devised sustainable measures for their multi-agency utilisation in harmonised manner.	Level of adoption, incorporation and application in practices of the developed harmonised VEP specific tools, programmes, training curricula, procedures/protocols in all three administrative jurisdictions. Number of fully operational PIUs ensuring the collection, analysis and sharing of information between prisons and other relevant agencies in the three entity jurisdictions. Established rotation agreement between Ministries of Justice on the hosting and maintenance of the established collaboration platform. Number of P/CVE related initiatives or activities led by local stakeholders through the support of the Center of Excellence.	Project-level reports Reports produced by the MoJs and the Ministry of Security Reports of other international organisations.

2.5 Upholding safety, security and integrity of society and persons		
<i>Corruption, money laundering, economic crime</i>		
Improved and harmonised legal and policy frameworks on anti-corruption in line with Council of Europe and other international standards and best practices.	Number of adopted / amended legislation and policy frameworks that are aligned with Council of Europe standards and best practices in the field of anti-corruption. Percentage of GRECO recommendations implemented by national authorities	GRECO evaluation and compliance reports Project-level reports
Increased transparency, accountability and public trust in governance through mechanisms that promote integrity, prevent corruption and curb undue influence in public decision-making.	Number of tools/mechanisms adopted and/or implemented to ensure integrity, prevent corruption and curb undue influence in public decision-making.	GRECO evaluation and compliance reports Project-level reports
Improved AML/CFT preventive and supervisory measures.	Extent of improvement in risk-based supervision and compliance practices in the financial and DNFBP sectors. Number of trainings organised to enhance capacities of competent authorities to implement risk-based supervision in financial and DNFBP sectors.	MONEYVAL evaluation reports and follow-up reports Project-level reports
Increased transparency of beneficial ownership, deterring and preventing misuse of corporate entities for money laundering and terrorist financing.	Number of measures taken to devise and improve the scope and effectiveness of beneficial ownership registers, in line with Council of Europe standards and recommendations. Number of legal persons and legal arrangements able to provide accurate and updated information on beneficial ownership.	Project-level reports
Strengthened capacity of authorities to carry out financial investigation, prosecution and adjudication of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing offences.	Level of progress in establishing effective, accessible and reliable beneficial ownership registers in line with international standards and good practices. Number of law enforcement professionals, judges and prosecutors demonstrating enhanced capacities to effectively carry out financial investigation and prosecution of corruption, money laundering and terrorist financing cases.	Project-level reports Official statistics
Enhanced skills and practice of national authorities for effective tracing, recovery and disposal of criminal assets, including their management.	Track record of confiscation aligned with the level of criminality and national policies and priorities on anti-corruption.	Project-level reports

Strengthened capacities by law enforcement to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers.	Number of institutional and/or regulatory measures adopted to strengthen whistle-blower protection mechanisms. Number of law enforcement professionals demonstrating enhanced capacities to ensure the protection of whistle-blowers.	GRECO evaluation and compliance reports Project-level reports
Harmonised legal framework for the implementation of targeted financial sanctions in accordance with the UN Security Council's Resolutions 1267/1989 and 1988 and UNSCR 1373 and requirements of the relevant Financial Action Task Force recommendations.	Extent of alignment of legal and institutional frameworks with relevant FATF recommendations, enabling timely and effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions. Number of relevant officials trained on the legal framework and operation procedures for implementing targeted financials sanctions.	
Increased terrorist financing risk understanding and ability to put forward adequate remedial measures to minimise these risks.	Number of officials from relevant institutions / agencies trained on TF risk identification, assessment and mitigation measures.	Project-level reports
Digital challenges : artificial intelligence, cybercrime, data protection		
Improved legal framework on AI technologies, with a view to aligning with international good practices and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislation and policy frameworks aligning with international good practices and Council of Europe standards in the field of artificial intelligence.	Project-level reports National legislation websites
Strengthened capacities of decision-makers among the national and entity authorities and in the private sector to be prepared for and recognise the potential risks of AI technologies affecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy through the adoption and implementation of the HUDERIA methodology.	Number of relevant decision-makers demonstrating enhanced knowledge and capacities to recognise and prepare for potential AI-related risks affecting human rights, the rule of law and democracy, based on the Council of Europe HUDERIA methodology.	Project-level reports
Improved legislation and policy framework on cybercrime and electronic evidence in full compliance with the Budapest Convention and its Protocols.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislation and policy frameworks aligning with Council of Europe standards in the field of cybercrime. Number of draft amendments providing for legislative reforms. Level of alignment with the Budapest Convention and its Protocols.	T-CY reports Project-level reports National legislation websites
Enhanced implementation by the competent authorities of co-ordinated cybercrime and cybersecurity policies and strategies.	Number of measures taken to co-ordinate cybercrime and cybersecurity policies. Number of available Action plans to implement cybercrime and cybersecurity strategies. Number of investigators, prosecutors and judges demonstrating increased capacity to address cybercrime.	Project-level reports
Further enhanced capacities of authorities to search, seize and confiscate cybercrime proceeds, prevent money laundering on the internet and secure electronic evidence.	Number of relevant professionals demonstrating enhanced capacity to effectively search, seize and	Project-level reports

	confiscate cybercrime proceeds, prevent money laundering on the internet and secure electronic evidence.	
Increased inter-agency co-operation in order to conduct parallel financial investigation related to cybercrime cases.	Number of measures introduced to enhance inter-agency co-operation to conduct parallel financial investigation related to cybercrime cases. Number of requests for data sent to service providers, financial institutions and cybersecurity industry. Number of finalised cybercrime investigations accompanied by parallel financial investigations and vice versa. Level of inter-agency co-operation / Number of instances of inter-agency co-operation in the area of fighting cybercrime.	Project-level reports
Strengthened measures to encourage information sharing and intelligence exchange mechanisms on cybercrime between the public and private sectors and between criminal justice authorities and cybersecurity institutions/industry.	Number of measures introduced to enhance sharing of information and intelligence between public and private sectors and between criminal justice authorities and cybersecurity institutions / industry.	Project-level reports
Improved legal frameworks on data protection and access to information, in line with the ratified Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislation in line with Convention 108+ / taking into account Council of Europe standards and recommendations. Level of alignment with the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data (108+)	T-CY reports Project-level reports
Strengthened capacities of the Personal Data Protection Agency for improved delivery of its mission, notably as regards awareness-raising.	Percentage of staff from the Personal Data Protection Agency demonstrating enhanced capacities to deliver the Agency's missions, notably as regards awareness-raising. Number of expert opinions prepared by the Personal Data Protection Agency Number of ex officio procedures carried out by the Personal Data Protection Agency.	Project-level reports, Official statistics
Enhanced capacities of administrations and other relevant stakeholders to give access to information while respecting the principles of personal data protection.	Number of trained staff from relevant administrations and stakeholders demonstrating enhanced capacities to give access to information while respecting the principles of personal data protection.	Project-level reports
<i>Integrity and governance of sport</i>		

Improved policies, legislation and practices to ensure ethical, inclusive, fair and safe sport in line with Council of Europe standards.	Number of provisions in adopted / amended legislation and policy frameworks in line with Council of Europe standards on ethical, inclusive, fair and safe sport. Level of awareness and understanding by relevant national partners and stakeholders of Council of Europe standards on ethical, inclusive, fair, and safe sport, and of their applicability in the national context. Measures introduced to advance towards signature and ratification of the Convention on the Manipulation of Sports Competitions (Macolin Convention) and of the Convention on an Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (Saint-Denis Convention). Level of engagement in EPAS meetings and in the MARS network.	Project-level reports Evaluation reports of the Monitoring Group
---	---	--

2.6 Anchoring democratic values in European Societies		
<i>Freedom of expression and information, safety of journalists</i>		
Enhanced legislative and policy framework aligned with European standards on freedom of expression, media and access to information.	Number of provisions in adopted or amended legislation and policies aligned with relevant European standards on freedom of expression, media, and access to information.	Reports of Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies. National legislation websites. Project-level reports
Improved institutional capacities and coordination mechanisms of the media regulatory authority and other relevant bodies, in line with European standards – including the Digital Services Act and the European Media Freedom Act.	Number of recommendations taken into account by relevant authorities to align policies and practices with European standards on freedom of expression and media regulation	Project-level reports Reports from relevant institutions.
Improved transparency of media ownership through targeted legal and institutional measures – aiming at greater accountability and media pluralism.	Number of measures implemented to enhance the availability, accessibility, and reliability of information on media ownership, contributing to greater transparency and accountability in the media sector.	Project-level reports
Improved application of the right to access public information through reinforced legal guarantees and practical implementation measures – including alignment with the Tromsø Convention and recommendations formulated in the related monitoring reports.	Number of practical measures implemented by public institutions to improve access to information in line with the Tromsø Convention and related recommendations.	Reports of Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies. National legislation websites Project-level reports
Strengthened responses to disinformation and enhanced media literacy, fostering informed public debate, critical thinking, and resilience to information manipulation across society – including through awareness-raising activities targeting the general public.	Number of awareness-raising and media literacy initiatives supported, including campaigns, public events and stakeholder trainings.	Project-level reports
Reinforced mechanisms for the safety of journalists, with particular attention to women journalists, including preventive safeguards, effective institutional responses, action against impunity and support in addressing SLAPPs.	Number of initiatives supported to strengthen the safety of journalists and address SLAPPs, including trainings, multi-stakeholder dialogues, awareness-raising events, and institutional measures – with specific attention to gender sensitive approaches.	Project-level reports Reports from relevant institutions
Enhanced knowledge and practical skills of key stakeholders – including public authorities, parliamentarians, the judiciary, law enforcement, regulatory bodies, media professionals and CSOs - to apply relevant European standards on freedom of expression and access to information in their respective fields.	Number of relevant stakeholders demonstrating increased knowledge and capacity to apply European standards on freedom of expression and access to information in their work.	Project-level reports

Local Democracy		
Expected outcomes	Indicator(s)	Source and means of verification
Strengthened capacities and skills of local/regional authorities to embed collaborative governance, deliberative democracy, citizen and civil society participation in decision-making and reforms at local level.	Number of initiatives led by local and regional elected representatives and public officials to embed collaborative governance, deliberative democracy, citizen and CSO participation in decision-making at local level demonstrating application of newly acquired knowledge and skills Number of dialogue platforms for citizens and public authorities established in (pilot) municipalities and regions. Number of measures (policies, legal measures, participatory initiatives...) adopted to address recommendations emanating from citizen's assemblies and other deliberative fora.	Project-level reports Records of public consultations Reports of local authority activities/ decisions.
Improved quality of local governance through developed capacities in public ethics, transparency, accountability, prevention of corruption and open government.	Percentage of trained local elected representatives and public officials demonstrating enhanced capacities on public ethics, transparency, accountability and open government and their application in practice. Number of public consultations held by participating local authorities. Number of corruption risk assessments or integrity plans implemented at local level.	Congress assessments, Reports of Council of Europe monitoring and advisory bodies, Project-level reports Records of public consultations
Enhanced role and capacity of civil society for greater social cohesion and improved civic oversight of the activities of public authorities.	Number of measures (informative sessions, changes in legal frameworks, policies...) taken to ensure that the regulatory framework for civil participation in municipalities takes into account Council of Europe standards and recommendations regarding the inclusion of CSOs. Level of awareness on participatory decision-making and civil oversight among the CSO representatives. Number of times COSs contribute to oversight of public authority activities.	Project-level reports Records of public consultations

Strengthened institutional capacities of the two main associations of municipalities and cities to advocate for the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government.	Number of measures taken to strengthen the institutional capacities of the associations of municipalities and cities to carry out their mandates and advocate the implementation of the European Charter of Local Self-Government. (policies, capacity development activities, awareness-raising)	Project-level reports
Empowered local/regional authorities to develop co-operation through inter-municipal and inter-entity networks.	Number of peer learning exchanges and inter-entity intermunicipal place-based, transboundary co-operation activities organised	Project-level reports
Strengthened capacities of local authorities in fulfilling and protecting human rights at local level.	Level of knowledge of local elected representatives and public officials on standards and tools to fulfil obligations and protect human rights at local level. Number of measures (policies, local initiatives) taken by local authorities to fulfil and protect human rights at local level.	Project-level reports Minutes of Council meetings Council and association webpages

<i>Elections, democratic governance and dialogue, civil society</i>		
Strengthened capacity of the election administration at all levels, and professionals, to ensure transparency, inclusiveness, fairness and integrity of electoral processes and practices, in line with Council of Europe standards.	Level of knowledge of trained staff of the CEC on international standards pertaining to electoral process. Level of transparency of election processes and dealings with electoral complaints. Number of positive references on the holding of the elections in international observation mission reports from European and international organisations.	International observation mission reports Project-level reports
Raised awareness, and increased participation in the electoral process, of voters, in particular, under-represented and vulnerable groups and first-time voters.	Level of awareness among underrepresented groups, including first-time voters, minorities and women.	International observation mission reports Project-level reports
Enhanced capacities of media, political parties, other electoral stakeholders and voters to properly identify, present and fight disinformation, hate speech, sexism, gender-based violence and other negative phenomena during elections.	Level of knowledge on disinformation, hate speech, sexism, gender-based violence and other negative phenomena during elections among media representatives, political parties and other relevant stakeholders. Percentage of trained media representatives demonstrating enhanced capacities on professional observation of the election process. Number of media reports on hate speech during electoral campaigns.	Project-level reports
<i>Confidence-building measures</i>		
Enhanced inter-ethnic dialogue at the local community level.	Number of events involving local communities in inter-ethnic dialogue Level of co-operation among representatives of local communities in the context of activities involving inter-ethnic dialogue	Project-level reports

Strengthened co-operation among young people from different communities and the establishment of sustainable trust-building networks	Number of activities organised by youth networks from different communities Level of engagement of young people in trust-building activities and networks.	Project-level reports
Education		
Enhanced capacities of policy makers to monitor the implementation of the “ <i>Policy Recommendations with a Roadmap for Improving Inclusive Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina</i> ”	Level of knowledge on monitoring the implementation of the <i>Roadmap for Improving Inclusive Education</i> among policy makers.	Annual report prepared by the Ministry of Civil Affairs for the Council of Ministers Project-level reports
Reduced violence and bullying within the education system	Number of measures and new practices put in place to reduce violence and bullying on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s education system. Percentage of education professionals applying in measures in practice for creating safe learning environments. Level of acceptance among education professionals towards zero tolerance of cyberbullying and other forms on online violence	Project-level reports
Strengthened safe school environments through the application of evidence-based policy decisions.	Number of schools implementing participatory school governance in line with Council of Europe standards and best practices. Level of knowledge on the principle of integrity in education among education professionals and students. Percentage of education professionals applying in practice evidence-based policy decisions to strengthen safe school environments.	Project-level reports
Improved access for young people to quality education for democratic citizenship based on the new CoE European Space for Citizenship Education.	Level of alignment of policies and methodological frameworks with European standards to ensure the provision of quality education for democratic citizenship based on the new European Space for Citizen Education. Number of qualified education professionals in the field of inclusive quality education. Number of young individuals reached by awareness-raising campaigns on quality education as a public good and a basic human right. Level of knowledge on democratic citizenship among young people.	Project-level reports

Dealing with the past		
Stronger intergenerational and societal dialogue on history, reinforcing historical awareness and social cohesion through public engagement initiatives, including at local at regional level.	Number of focused public engagement activities led by supported entities fostering intergenerational and societal dialogue on history. Level of historical awareness	Project-level reports Surveys
Enhanced resilience against historical revisionism and disinformation, with students, educators, and media professionals trained to counter manipulation and promote factual history.	Number of students, educators and media professionals demonstrating enhanced skills to counter manipulation and promote factual history. Level of awareness on disinformation and historical revisionism.	Project-level reports
Increased alignment with European standards in history education, facilitating Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into history education cooperation bodies such as the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe.	Measures taken to increase alignment and engagement with Council of Europe standards and practices in history education, with a view to facilitating Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into the Observatory on History Teaching in Europe (OHTE)	Council of Europe website OHTE meeting reports Project-level reports
Youth		
Enhanced mechanisms and tools for the democratic participation of young people at the national level, in line with Council of Europe standards.	Number of measures (e.g. policy documents, action plans, legislative changes, change of practices) taken to promote democratic participation of young people at national level, in line with Council of Europe standards. Extent to which initiatives by youth organisations promote youth democratic participation in social, cultural, economic and political life.	Project-level reports
Improved capacity of relevant stakeholders, including youth organisations, to advance youth work policies and practices aimed at removing barriers to youth democratic participation.	Level of knowledge on policies and practices aimed at removing barriers to youth democratic participation among relevant stakeholders.	Project-level reports
Increased capacity of youth workers to advocate citizenship and human rights education among young people.	Level of knowledge on advocating citizenship and human rights education for young people among youth workers.	Project-level reports

	Number of initiatives taken by youth workers aimed at promoting democratic citizenship and human rights education for young people.	
Increased levels of democratic participation of young people in decision-making processes.	Level of participation of young people in democratic decisions-making processes.	Project-level reports
Improved access for young people, especially those in vulnerable situations, to social rights through co-operation with local authorities.	Level of knowledge on social rights for young people among local authority representatives. Number of measures (e.g. action plans, strategic documents, change of practices) taken by local authorities to improve vulnerable young people's access to social rights.	Project-level reports
Enhanced capacity of youth leaders to act as multipliers, including in dialogue and trust-building initiatives, based on human rights education and intercultural learning	Level of knowledge on human rights and trust-building initiatives among youth leaders. Number of initiatives taken by youth leaders to foster dialogue and confidence-building.	Project-level reports

APPENDIX II: RISK REGISTER

Context

The implementation of the Action Plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina takes place in a multifaceted and evolving environment. In this context, an integrated, forward-looking approach to risk management and sustainability is essential to preserve the relevance, continuity and long-term impact of co-operation efforts. Many aspects of reform sustainability depend on external factors, including political stability and the political will to reform. Following the 2022 parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the rapid formation of a governing coalition at the State level induced renewed momentum, paving the way for the opening of EU accession negotiations in March 2024 and for some meaningful legislative progress, illustrated by the adoption of the Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest and the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing. However, as highlighted by the European Commission 2024 report, reform efforts subsequently stalled due to political controversies and the 2024 local election campaign. Ethnic fragmentation, political sensitivity and divergences of priorities among the various entities resurfaced and persist. Complex governance arrangements in Bosnia and Herzegovina also induce frequent institutional restructuring and fragmented decision making, in addition to a high turnover of staff in public institutions, potentially undermining the sustainability of capacity-building investments. Consequently, considering potential challenges to its implementation, the Action Plan has been designed with a strong focus on anticipating and mitigating risks to ensure durable achievements embedded in institutional frameworks. Against the backdrop of a volatile national and geopolitical context, it offers a level of flexibility to respond to emerging needs and changing conditions, adopting a multistakeholder and pluralistic approach and aligning with the specific requirements of each government level. It also leverages available resources with a view to ensuring successful implementation of co-operation.

Risks and mitigation strategies will be continuously evaluated, co-ordinated and discussed internally in the Council of Europe and with national authorities. Should the implementation of activities under the Action Plan be prevented or slowed down for any reason, the DPC, in close communication with its Office in Sarajevo, will communicate to all entities of the Council of Europe as well as partners and stakeholders in Bosnia and Herzegovina about the reasons and potential impact and jointly identify ways forward.

Risk description	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation actions
Political related risks			
Increased political instability, changes in governmental priorities, lack of consensus between the entities and political parties in power or lack of genuine political will for reforms may lead to low political support for project implementation and reduced allocation of human and financial resources for reforms.	Likely	Major	Communicate at the highest political level about the importance of applying the standards of the Council of Europe and reiterate the relevance of the Council of Europe monitoring bodies' recommendations. Facilitate contacts and co-operation between supporters of reform within different branches of authority and within civil society, promoting dialogue on the application of the standards. Continue close communication and co-ordination with a broad spectrum of national and international partners, notably the EU, on the Council of Europe's support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession process. Increase the focus on capacity-building activities that are less likely to be affected by political partisanship.
Increased polarisation of society , leading to an unsupportive environment towards reforms and a mixed perception among citizens and CSOs of Bosnia and Herzegovina about the Council of Europe's role and mandate.	Possible	Low	Raise awareness among target groups to sensitise them to the importance of applying the standards of the Organisation. Promote dialogue between authorities and civil society on the application of the standards. Focus on the protection of the rights of vulnerable groups. Discuss mitigation strategies with international partners (EU in particular).
Changes in donor priorities , leading to reduced voluntary contributions in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Possible	Moderate	Maintain regular dialogue and communication with donors on the priorities, challenges and results of the implementation of the Action Plan.

Project and programme delivery related risks			
Financial constraints on the implementation of the Action Plan , resulting in the discontinuation of co-operation in a number of fields, loss of momentum, affecting the pace of implementation and effectiveness of reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the perceived relevance of the Council of Europe.	Possible	Moderate	Ensure effective resource mobilisation efforts in co-ordination with headquarters and the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo. Maintain open communication channels with all existing donors and explore new funding sources. Organise dedicated donor events. Devise a resource allocation strategy taking into account the potential for synergies and overall effectiveness. Continue to address feedback from partners and donors to improve project design, implementation, results-based monitoring and reporting practices, so as to attract and retain donors.
Lack of co-ordination with national and international partners , leading to overlaps, missed synergies, wasted resources and reputational issues.	Possible	Low	Strengthen co-ordination efforts at national level, including through donor-government working groups and thematic working groups to ensure complementary and avoid duplication or mixed messages. Maintain regular co-ordination with the EU and other international organisations at a more technical level, through various donor co-ordination groups, and at bilateral level. Use available Council of Europe discussion forums to promote co-ordination and ensure the relevance of support. Ensure appropriate communication between stakeholders on plans and co-ordinated implementation, as appropriate.
High turnover of governmental and non-governmental staff and other key partner institutions , leading to the loss of know-how, institutional memory and networking contacts as well as disruption in Action Plan implementation.	Possible	Major	Close monitoring of staff changes and swift re-establishment of contacts. Support long-term institutional memory at partner institutions' level and contribute to sustainable knowledge-management practices. Encourage a shared leadership approach to project implementation to enhance beneficiaries' ownership and commitment to results.
Lack of capacities and application of a rights-based approach, notably gender mainstreaming and a gender-sensitive approach among beneficiary institutions and partners , leading to reduced impact of the Action Plan, with gender stereotypes and conservative narratives on gender equality possibly affecting project implementation.	Possible	Moderate	Application of a gender-sensitive approach in all projects and at all stages of the implementation of the Action Plan, with the support of the regional Gender Mainstreaming Adviser. Offer training to project staff, national partners and stakeholders to further increase their knowledge of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the implementation of the Action Plan.

			Ensure gender-sensitive communication in-house and externally, with national partners and stakeholders.
Communication related risk			
Insufficient or ineffective communication , leading to poor knowledge among the main international and national partners, target groups and the general population about the benefits of the reforms and the Council of Europe's contribution to the ongoing reform process and Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU accession agenda.	Low	Major	Ensure every project develops its communication strategy to inform stakeholders and foster interest in the activities of the Council of Europe in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ensure timely and effective communication, reaching out to different target groups with clear messages about the Council of Europe's contribution to reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its impact on the daily lives of its citizens. Ensure the availability of the relevant information in the local language. Increase the pace at which information is exchanged.
Hybrid activities targeting Bosnia and Herzegovina.	Possible	Low	Co-ordinate communication with international organisations and other Council of Europe member States.

APPENDIX III: FINANCIAL TABLE AS OF 22 SEPTEMBER 2025

Pillars	Estimated needs in euros
Securing human rights and fundamental freedoms	4 256 333
Advancing social justice, good health and a sustainable environment	742 658
Acting for equality, diversity and respect	5 747 620
Building trust in public institutions	4 538 250
Upholding safety, security and integrity of society and persons	2 488 257
Anchoring democratic values in European societies	8 272 986
Supporting action in the field	953 896
TOTAL	27 000 000

APPENDIX IV: SOURCES/RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Council of Europe documents

1. Secretary General of the Council of Europe

[Annual report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe 2024 – Our rights, our future](#)
[Report of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe - 2023 – State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law](#)
[Secretary General's Roadmap on the Council of Europe's engagement with civil society 2024-2027](#)

2. Technical co-operation with Bosnia and Herzegovina

[Council of Europe Action Plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025](#)
[Council of Europe Action Plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021](#)
[Final report of the Evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022-2025](#)
[Progress Review and Final Evaluation of the Council of Europe Action Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2021](#)
[Council of Europe Action Plans for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015-2017](#)
[Progress Review Report, March 2015 to May 2017](#)

3. European Court of Human Rights

[European Court of Human Rights case law in relation to Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)
[European Court of Human Rights, Facts and figures by state](#)
[Execution of judgments by Bosnia and Herzegovina, country factsheet](#)
[Press Country Profile Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

4. Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe

[Dealing with the Past for a Better Future, Achieving justice, peace and social cohesion in the region of the former Yugoslavia](#)
[Commissioner's letter to the Chairwoman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska.](#)

5. Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe

[Resolution 2574 \(2024\) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina"](#)
[Resolution 2201 \(2018\) "The honouring of obligations and commitments by Bosnia and Herzegovina"](#)

6. Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

[European Charter of Local Self-Government](#)
[Additional Protocol to the European Charter of Local Self-Government on the right to participate in the affairs of a local authority](#)
[Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of the International Election Observation Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina– Local Elections, 6 October 2024](#)
[Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Recommendation 530 \(2025\)](#)
[Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Recommendation 442 \(2019\)](#)
[Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-making Process](#)

7. Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

[Reykjavík Declaration – United around our values](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2018\)7 on Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment](#)
[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2022\)13 on the impacts of digital technologies on freedom of expression](#)

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)7 of the Committee of Ministers – Guidelines to respect, protect and fulfil the rights of the child in the digital environment

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)11 on principles for media and communication governance

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)1 on media pluralism and transparency of media ownership

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)2 on the roles and responsibilities of internet intermediaries

Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)5 on measures to combat discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity

Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 on intercultural integration

Recommendation Rec(2000)21 on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on participation of citizens in local public life

Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)3 on human rights and business

Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 – the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)6 on protecting youth civil society and young people, and supporting their participation in democratic processes

Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate
Crime

Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on combating hate speech

Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2 on countering the use of Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPS)

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)11 on the need to strengthen the protection and promotion of civil society space in Europe

Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)4 on the participation of citizens in local public life.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2011)6 on intercultural dialogue and the image of the other in history teaching provides guidance on history teaching in post-conflict situations.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)5 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the system of the European Convention on Human Rights in University education and professional training.

Recommendation CM/RecChL(2022)4 on the application of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in respect of Bosnia and Herzegovina

8. Monitoring mechanisms and expert advisory bodies

European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission)

[CDL-AD\(2024\)015, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Opinion on the method of electing judges to the Constitutional Court](#)

[CDL-AD\(2024\)002, Opinion on certain questions relating to the functioning of the Constitutional Court](#)

[CDL-AD\(2023\)003, Opinion on the draft law on Courts of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

[CDL-AD\(2024\)009, Interim follow-up Opinion to previous opinions on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council.](#)

[CDL-AD\(2025\)004 Bosnia and Herzegovina – Follow-up Opinion to previous Opinions on the draft law on the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council.](#)

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)

[ECRI Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sixth Monitoring Cycle.](#)

Advisory Committee on The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. Fifth Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)

[GRETA \(2022\)06 Bosnia and Herzegovina, Third evaluation round.](#)

Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

[Baseline Evaluation Report Bosnia and Herzegovina June 2022](#)

European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR)

[Ad hoc Report on the on the cost-of-living crisis submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina, 05 September 2023.](#)

[Conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights 2023 concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina \(Thematic group Children, families and migrants\)](#)

[Conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights 2022 concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina \(Thematic group Labour rights\)](#)

[Conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights 2021 concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina \(Thematic group Health, social security and social protection\)](#)

[Conclusions of the European Committee of Social Rights 2020 concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina \(Thematic group Employment, training and equal opportunities\)](#)

European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)

[Report to the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the ad hoc visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina carried out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment \(CPT\) from 17 to 27 September 2021](#)

Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

[Fifth Evaluation Round in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Preventing corruption and promoting integrity in central governments \(top executive functions\) and law enforcement agencies.](#)

[Fourth Evaluation Round, Second Interim Compliance Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)

Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism

[Bosnia and Herzegovina - Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism\).](#)

9. Guidelines

[Council of Europe Project Management Methodology](#)
[Council of Europe Human Rights Approach – Practical Guide for Co-operation Projects](#)
[Council of Europe Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit for Co-operation Projects](#)
[Guidelines on civil society organisations participation in Council of Europe's co-operation activities](#)
[Online resource for civil society](#)
[Working with the Council of Europe: a practical guide for civil society](#)
[Guidelines for civil participation in political decision-making](#)
[Gender Equality Strategy 2024-2029](#)
[Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2022-2027](#)
[Council of Europe "Speak Up" policy on reporting wrongdoing and protection from retaliation](#)
[UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)

European Union documents

[Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, Bosnia and Herzegovina Report 2024](#)

National policy documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina ⁹⁹

[Justice Sector Reform Strategy \(2021-2027\)](#)
[Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024 – 2027](#)
[Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Prevention and Combating Terrorism \(2021-2026\)](#)
[Action Plan for improving the state of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex \(LGBTI\) persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2021-2024 \(extended to 2025\).](#)
[Policy Recommendation with a Roadmap for Improving Inclusive Education](#)
[Bosnia and Herzegovina Migration and Asylum Strategy \(2021-2025\)](#)
[Roadmap for Cooperation between the EUAA and Bosnia and Herzegovina \(January 2025 – December 2027\): Strengthening the asylum and reception systems in line with the Common European Asylum System and EU standards](#)
[Strategy for Combating Organized Crime in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023-2026](#)
[Priorities for 2016-2026 Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.](#)

99. Relevant national strategic documents identifying priorities and/or main lines of action have been consulted to ensure the Council of Europe support matches the country's needs and priorities and is coherent with other national initiatives. Any reference, in the current Action Plan, to national legislation, strategies, policies, action plans or any other national document does not represent an endorsement of such documents by the Council of Europe.



**Council of Europe
Directorate of Programme Co-ordination**

Avenue de l'Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
E-mail: dpc@coe.int
www.coe.int/programmes

**Council of Europe
Office in Sarajevo**

Zmaja od Bosne 11
71000 Sarajevo
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel: + 387 33 957 790
Fax: + 387 33 590 447
E-mail: coe.sarajevo@coe.int
www.coe.int/sarajevo

www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.