

## Project Summary

### Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy (MIL)

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<b>Project title</b>	Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy
<b>Project area</b>	Bosnia and Herzegovina
<b>Budget</b>	681,869.16 Euro
<b>Funding</b>	Voluntary contribution from Norway and Luxembourg
<b>Implementation</b>	Division for Co-operation on Freedom of Expression Information Society Department- DG I
<b>Duration</b>	1 September 2020 – 31 August 2022 (24 months)

## I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The technological developments, the raise of on-line media and other internet platforms has increasingly facilitated access to a growing range of information from diverse sources. This has created new opportunities of communication and of participation into the public debate. The ongoing evolution continues to raise concerns as regards media pluralism. Internet intermediaries have acquired increasing control over the flow, availability, findability and accessibility of information and other online content. This presents risks on the way how it may affect the variety of media sources that individuals interact with and might make these individuals to select or to be exposed mainly to information that confirms their own views and opinions. This is further reinforced by exchanges through on-line channels with other like-minded individuals (a phenomenon sometimes referred to as a “filter bubble” or “echo chamber”).

Selective exposure to media content and the resulting limitations on its use can generate fragmentation and a more polarised society. Such personalised selection and presentation of media content are of a particular concern if the individual users are not aware of these processes or do not understand them.

According to the relevant and recent research (references below) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are no systematic education programs on media, information, news or digital literacy in the country (apart of few). Some sporadic initiatives from some NGOs (supported by international donors) are using non-formal education methods and are supported by a limited number of experts in the field. However, there is no strategic approach to the development of Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While in Republika Srpska there is an Educational Strategy that targets the development of Media and Information Literacy, at other levels of the government (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, individual cantons, or state level), there is no policy documents as such. A Position Paper on Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows and arguments that there is need for a unified strategic approach on development of Media and Information Literacy:

*"The only meaningful approach is one that involves the development of a national strategy on media and information literacy, in which the main implementors of activities will be identified,*

*their obligations, the principles of cooperation between different actors, the financial resources necessary for the implementation of the planned activities, as well as the deadlines for fulfilling the activities. While it is not realistic to expect that all levels of government in Bosnia and Herzegovina will approach with the same enthusiasm the fulfilment of the strategic goals envisaged by this document, its value will not be significantly reduced because it will offer guidelines for both the state level institutions and the lower levels of government."*<sup>1</sup>

During the last years those few and sporadic initiatives aimed at the development of media and information literacy are becoming more visible, however, there is no tangible result yet. Therefore, a Project aiming to work towards a strategic approach and involve all important stakeholders in the process has become clearly a need in the country.

A relevant initiative to the above mentioned one, is the web platform ([medijskapismenost.ba](http://medijskapismenost.ba)) created by the Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CRA), as an independent and overall information source on media and information literacy. The CRA's goal through this portal is to have the web portal operational by the end of 2020, and to continue developing and generating relevant information and educational content on media and information literacy. Moreover, an informal group of individual experts in the field of media and information literacy has been established in Bosnia and Herzegovina to promote the exchange of ideas and experiences at state level. The informal network brings together different profile professionals, (academia, media, civil service and Communications Regulatory Agency).

A Council of Europe project on "Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy" will support the on-going efforts and ensure the sustainability of already in place engagements, especially by providing an expertise and support to the policy design and enrichment of the process of Media and Information Literacy Strategy. The Project will target those groups whose enhanced media skills could contribute to improving the democratic debates and processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina: such as university students, NGOs and citizens in general.

A baseline study on all relevant aspects pertaining media and information literacy will be developed and concluded at the end of the project's inception phase. Such information will serve as the basis of the fine tuning and design of activities and interventions through this project.

## II. OUTLOOK/STUDIES

Recent relevant papers and studies on Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina has served as primary information in the design of the Project "Media and Information Literacy: for human rights and more democracy"

Studies	Position Paper "National Media and Information Literacy Policies and Strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina: A TIME FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH" <sup>2</sup>	A study on media literacy policy and strategy in local language <sup>3</sup>	Media Literacy in the Family and Recommendations for Implementation of Projects on Promotion of Media Literacy in the Family in Bosnia and Herzegovina <sup>4</sup>
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2018	2018	2019

<sup>1</sup> Position Paper on National Media and Information Literacy Policies and Strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina: MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY: A TIME FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH; [https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BH\\_MIL\\_Position-Paper\\_ENG-1.pdf](https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BH_MIL_Position-Paper_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Position Paper on National Media and Information Literacy Policies and Strategies in Bosnia and Herzegovina: MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY: A TIME FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH; [https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BH\\_MIL\\_Position-Paper\\_ENG-1.pdf](https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/BH_MIL_Position-Paper_ENG-1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> A study on media literacy policy and strategy in local language: Pregledna studija o politikama i strategijama medijske i informacijske pismenosti u Bosni i Hercegovini; [https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PreglednaStudija\\_MIP\\_BHS.pdf](https://fpn.unsa.ba/b/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PreglednaStudija_MIP_BHS.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Media Literacy in the Family and Recommendations for Implementation of Projects on Promotion of Media Literacy in the Family in Bosnia and Herzegovina; [https://media.ba/sites/default/files/media\\_literacy\\_in\\_the\\_family\\_2.pdf](https://media.ba/sites/default/files/media_literacy_in_the_family_2.pdf)

### III. OBJECTIVE, COMPONENT OPUTPUTS AND EXPECTED RESULTST

The following activity results are expected to be achieved within the framework of this project:

<b>Project objective (Impact)</b>	<b>Strengthen media and information literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina through an increased capacity to access, understand and critically use the information in media.</b>
<b>Component 1</b>	Institutional and policy framework for regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation aimed at improving performance of and trust in the media in line with European standards.
Partner / Beneficiary institution[s]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Relevant Ministries</li> <li>▪ Media Centre</li> <li>▪ University of Sarajevo</li> <li>▪ Civil Society Organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Informal group of media literacy professionals</li> <li>▪ Internet Governance Forum</li> </ul>
Result 1.1	The development and the support to adoption of the Strategy of Media and Information Literacy for Bosnia and Herzegovina is provided through expertise and guidance in line with European standards.
Result 1.2	Relevant representatives from policy-making institutions (Ministries at all levels), media professionals, media regulation and education acquire new skills on Media and Information Literacy in line with the Strategy for Media and Information Literacy in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Result 1.3	Formal establishment and structural support of Media Literacy Professionals Group (MLPG) enables the group to follow a strategic and sustainable approach.
<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Enhancement of media literacy and active citizenship skills for University students and professors, policy makers, media actors and citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.</b>
Partner/ Beneficiary institution[s]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communication Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Media Outlets and Platforms</li> <li>▪ Civil Society Organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Publics of Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Public Officials</li> <li>▪ Journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> <li>▪ Students of Bosnia and Herzegovina</li> </ul>
Result 2.1	Good quality media and information literacy content is supported in view to becoming available for different groups (policy-makers, university students, educators in formal and non-formal educational processes, civil society organisations and other media literacy stakeholders); and the skills of the respective groups are enhanced in terms of awareness and understanding of Media and Information Literacy.
Result 2.2	Students, professionals and policy makers have regular access to a high quality analytical and educational media content provided through media outlets and watchdog platforms and online academic training.
Result 2.3	Awareness is raised among the general public on the importance of understanding the media (including in the digital environment) and the related issues at stake (information disorder, online safety, artificial intelligence, and hate speech).

#### IV. PROPOSED PARTNERS/BENEFICIARIES

The following stakeholders will be project partners/target beneficiary institutions:

- Communication Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Relevant Ministries
- Media Centre
- University of Sarajevo
- Media Outlets and Platforms
- Civil Society Organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Publics of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Informal group of media literacy professionals
- Internet Governance Forum
- Public Officials
- Journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Students of Bosnia and Herzegovina

#### V. PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Council of Europe's project team will be composed of one Senior Project Officer (SPO) and one Project Assistant (PA) both based in Sarajevo; and a Project Officer in Strasbourg, France. The team based in Sarajevo will be at the premises of the Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo and will work directly with the beneficiaries while being supported and guided by both Council of Europe field and headquarters presence, namely Office of Directorate General of Programmes (ODGP) and Directorate General of Human Rights and Rule of Law (DG I).

Overall project management and supervision will be ensured by the Division for Co-operation on Freedom of Expression at the Information Society Department – DG I of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. The Project Officer in Strasbourg will oversee the project's implementation and ensure daily follow up of actions and provide support and coordination between the field and headquarters.

Workplan and Calendar of Activities detailing all project actions, engagement of international and national consultants/experts and of responsible government institutions will be available following the inception phase. The Council of Europe will ensure the active participation of local professional skills where available, and a suitable mix of European and local experts in all project activities. All local and international experts/consultants are to be independent and free from conflicts of interests.

#### VI. CONTACT

Strasbourg	Sarajevo
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