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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND
DEVELOPMENT

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



The Director-General



Secretary General

Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025 **Country Level Implementation Plan – CLIP Bosnia and Herzegovina**

1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country

International human rights standards are embedded in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and legislation. The BiH Gender Equality Law specifically addresses gender equality in all spheres of social life and regulates equal representation of at least 40 percent of the less represented sex across public sector bodies in BiH. The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination in BiH defines direct and indirect discrimination on all grounds, including gender and sexual orientation. This law also regulates the system of protection from discrimination in all spheres of life. Comprehensive gender equality policy is in place in BiH as evidenced by the three consecutive Gender Action Plans (GAP) adopted by the BiH Council of Ministers. The current GAP covers the period 2018-2022 and its goal is to guide governmental institutions and other organizations in mainstreaming gender equality principles in their work in accordance with the Gender Equality Law. The institutional framework for gender equality in BiH is in place and it consists of the BiH Agency for Gender Equality, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) Gender Centre and the Republika Srpska (RS) Gender Centre, as the key gender institutional mechanisms placed within the executive. In the legislative branch, the most important gender institutional mechanisms are the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, Committees for Gender Equality/Equal Opportunity in the entity parliaments and the Brcko District (BD) Assembly, and the gender equality commissions in cantonal and municipal assemblies/councils.

BiH adopted legislation that incriminates violence against women and stipulates protection of victims. Policies for implementation of the Istanbul Convention have also been adopted. However, the protection of victims of gender-based violence (GBV) has not been enforced in a harmonized manner due to different regulatory social protection and legal aid solutions in individual jurisdictions. Specialized protection services are provided by shelters for victims across the country, but the public funding of NGO-run shelters is not consistent. Non-governmental organizations report a considerable increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic based on the number of requests for assistance placed through SOS telephone lines and an increase in demand for specialist services. There are considerable differences in activity and employment among women and men in BiH, whereby women's employment rate is considerably lower than men's, which particularly affects marginalized groups. Women's lower employment and activity rates are direct consequences of women's assumed roles of the primary family carers of children and elderly. Regulation concerning parental leave and benefits is in place but not equal for all, depending on jurisdiction and public/private sector. Gender pay gap has been reported in BiH with estimates that women earn around 78% to 85% of men's salary for equal work. Although legislation prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex, women working in the private sector are particularly vulnerable to discrimination. However, very few discrimination claims are received by responsible bodies.

Health care is in principle available to all without discrimination on any grounds. However, there are differences in access to public health care among jurisdictions due to different financial and institutional arrangements. The implementation of policies for sexual and reproductive health and

rights (SRHR) has not been consistently measured and there are no conclusive findings on the state of sexual and reproductive health of women and men. Comprehensive sexuality education is not systemically introduced in the education system in BiH. Individual analyses indicate that textbooks and teaching materials used in formal education of youth in BiH contain biased content and are often gender exclusive.

BiH adopted important legal standards for equal participation of women and men in decision-making and leadership which are in line with international human rights agreements. Gender quota in the BiH Election Law had a positive initial impact on the participation of women in parliaments in BiH. Still, despite the fact that more than 40% of political candidates at election are women, the percentage of women elected into the BiH Parliamentary Assembly's House of Representative is 21.4%, 28.5% in the FBiH Parliament's House of Representatives, and 21.6% in the RS People's Assembly. The percentage of women in cantonal assemblies ranges from 13% in Canton 10 to 47% in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and is 31% on average. The executive is generally male-dominated, while this is not the case in the BiH judiciary. BiH adopted three consecutive action plans for implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on "Women, Peace and Security", with the latest covering the period 2018-2022. Participation of women in police, army and peacekeeping missions has increased to some extent, but women remain largely underrepresented. There is a comprehensive institutional, legislative and policy framework for implementation of anti-trafficking policies but implementation is still lacking. Legislation was adopted to regulate the status and protection of victims of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), but this legislation differs among jurisdictions and survivors are not adequately protected. The country's Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) strategy attaches significance to the influence of the use of arms in cases of domestic violence. The Environmental Strategy and Action Plan for BiH until 2030 (ESAP 2030+) is currently being drafted, taking into account gender equality considerations, and gender institutional mechanisms are taking part in this process. Girls' and women's interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) differs across sub-areas. There is gender balance among researchers at higher education institutions, although there is gender gap in favour of men when it comes to research management. Still, there is no evidence of STEM and digitalization having been considered consistently as potential for women's economic empowerment in formal policies and practices.

This country-level implementation plan (CLIP) is developed based on findings of the BiH Gender Country Profile (GCP) and in consultation with gender institutional mechanisms, civil society organizations, Member States including Member States Mission in BiH (EUFOR ALTHEA Mission) and international actors. GCP and CLIP were developed with technical support provided through the EU-funded Gender Equality Facility (GEF) project.

2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives

The overall objective of EU action for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) in BiH is reflected in the Priority No. 9 as defined by the European Commission 2019 Opinion on BiH's application for EU membership: **"Strengthen the protection of the rights of all citizens, notably by ensuring the implementation of the legislation on non-discrimination and on gender equality."** In BiH, the EU will address thematic objectives of GAP III by providing financial and political support. Direct support will be provided to the gender institutional mechanisms. Civil society will be included in consultation for IPA programming, implementation through EDIHR, joint advocacy efforts through policy dialogue, and monitoring through shadow reporting on BiH's commitments to international standards in the area of gender equality. Below are the areas to be addressed by the EU in the next period including specific thematic objectives and country specific priorities:

Selected "areas of engagement"	"Specific thematic objectives" to pursue through dialogues and actions	Country specific priorities to be pursued through dialogue and actions
Ensuring freedom from	Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are better protected from all forms	- Harmonization of legislation in country and with the Istanbul Convention and effective implementation of

all forms of GBV	of gender-based violence in the public and private spheres, in the work place and online through legislation and effective enforcement	legislation related to the prevention of GBV, in particular, domestic violence - Establishment of departments specialized for GBV response in police and public sector and embedding of training for professionals in GBV response
	Women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, who experience gender-based violence have increased access to essential services	- Harmonization of legislation and its effective implementation in provision of health care, social protection, legal aid and other services to GBV survivors in all their diversity - Effective and harmonized implementation of public funding for shelters
Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women	Increased access for women, in all their diversity, to decent work, including women's transition to the formal economy and coverage by non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection systems	- Implementation of measures to reduce gender pay gap - Development of regulation for recognition of unpaid household work and work in agriculture - Support to vulnerable groups' access to education, health, social services and economic empowerment opportunities
	Improved policy, legal framework and access to care services enabling equal division of domestic and care work between women and men	- Harmonization of maternity, paternity and family law across the country
	Increased access for women in all their diversity to financial services and products, and productive resources	- Integration of women's economic empowerment into country's economic policy and implementation of specific measures
	Improved access for women in all their diversity to managerial and leadership roles in social and economic sectors and fora	
	Women in all their diversity have improved access to entrepreneurship opportunities, including social entrepreneurship, alternative livelihoods and strengthened participation in the green and circular economy	- Support to sustainable economic empowerment of women through overcoming occupational segregation by exploring options in STEM and digitalization as well as green and circular economy
	Improved regulatory framework for ensuring equal access to universal and public quality preventive, curative and rehabilitative physical and mental health care services for women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, including in crisis situations	- Support to conducting comprehensive health surveys for identification of disease prevalence among women and men, in all their diversity, and addressing of issues by relevant policies and practices
	Public health systems have sufficient and sustained financing to address the health needs of women and girls in all their diversity	
Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)	Improved access for every individual to sexual and reproductive health care and services, including family planning services, information and education on sexual and reproductive rights	- Support women's and men's SRHR in general settings and in crisis, as well as introduction of comprehensive sexuality education in schools
Promoting equal participation and leadership	Enabling conditions created for equal participation of women, men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, in decision-making	Actions to increase participation of women in politics and public life by: - supporting affirmative measures - building leadership skills - promoting the role of women in decision-making and EU integration processes through outreach, and - increasing visibility of female candidates, including women from marginalized groups
	Equitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours promoting equal participation and leadership fostered at community and individual levels – through civic education, media, education and culture at all levels	- Comprehensive embedding of gender equality contents in teaching curricula and harmonization of curricula and textbooks with gender equality principles - Support to gender transformative actions in GBV prevention, sharing of family duties, political participation, and media

Integrating the Women, Peace and Security Agenda	EU uses all available fora to actively promote gender equality and the full implementation of the WPS agenda	- Consistent implementation of the EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina G7/WPS Partnership Roadmap - Promotion of coordination among WPS partners to ensure maintenance of focus on the WPS Agenda • Support to establishment of mechanisms of redress for victims of wartime sexual violence
Other country-specific areas of engagement		• Effective implementation of the Gender Equality Law and the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination and development of next Gender Action Plan • Conduct gender impact assessment of policy and legislative processes • Support to and promotion of parliamentary committees for gender equality • Support to establishment of mechanisms for data collection

3. Targeted action(s) supporting gender equality and women's empowerment

GAP III aims at increasing the number and effectiveness of actions having gender equality as principal objective¹ with a target of a least one G2 action implemented in each country by 2025. The following are the larger planned and ongoing G2 actions in BiH: - Gender Equality Facility (GEF), funded through IPA II, is implemented by UN Women in partnership with the BiH Gender Institutional Mechanism and Directorate for European Integration aiming at strengthening of effective implementation of domestic and international legal frameworks concerning gender equality and women's rights. GEF, which was launched in October 2020, supports harmonization with the EU gender equality acquis in BiH's pre-accession process and integration of gender equality perspective in the programming of IPA assistance.

- EU4HR service contract is to be signed by mid-August 2021 aiming at strengthening capacities of institutional mechanisms, namely the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the Agency for Gender Equality, and the Ombudsman BiH, to uphold anti-discrimination and human rights, improve protection of victims of all forms of discrimination, and strengthen the monitoring and reporting system.

- BiH also benefits from the regional programme "*Implementing norms, changing minds*" which has been implemented by UN Women and has recently been extended until July 2023, with funding of over 800,000 EUR for BiH. The programme focuses on: building the capacity of service providers (police, justice, social protection, health, shelters); improving organizational capacities of shelters/safe spaces and building CSOs' advocacy capacities to obtain resources needed and to qualify as "essential" and/or guarantee the continuity of specialist services during crises at local and national levels. Other six G2 actions are EIDHR actions, supporting CSOs with funds ranging from 150,000 EUR to 475,000 for periods ranging from 24 to 36 months and addressing the following thematic areas: Ensuring freedom from all forms of GBV, Promoting equal participation and leadership, and Integrating the women, peace and security agenda.

4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment

The EU Delegation and Member States will continue in the following period to: advocate and support consistent support of the Istanbul Convention; prioritize integration of the issue of women's economic empowerment and gender responsive budgeting in BiH's economic policy; focus on political dialogue for increased participation of women in politics and public life implementation of the special measure set out in the gender equality law of having at least 40% of representation of each gender in legislative,

¹ Defined as G2 actions in line with OECD gender marker [G2](#). These actions should aim at achieving a long-lasting change tackling harmful gender norms and stereotypes, by implementing a comprehensive and gender-transformative approach.

executive and judicial authorities at all levels); pursue implementation of the Roadmap of cooperation defining joint actions with gender institutional mechanisms following selection of BiH as partner country in the Women, Peace and Security agenda at the Summit of G7 foreign ministers in 2018; organise dialogues based on the intersectionality approach.

5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

EU office in BiH puts special emphasis on the visibility of its programmes and projects and achievements. The overall objective is to raise general awareness about the programming and activities, achievements, and potential impact in the region and at country level in the context of EU candidacy and pre-accession processes and to demonstrate the role of EU and other joint donors in the relevant area. The following activities will be maintained during 2021-2025 period: - The EU Office continues to integrate gender issues in all programmes and projects as a cross cutting issue; - Communication campaigns within EU funded projects to advocate for gender equality and raise awareness of the issue with decision makers and the public to bridge the gap between attitudes and change in practice; - Including EU Office management in campaigns against gender based violence via video messages; - Promoting success stories about women's entrepreneurship, which provide examples for others to follow. A particular focus will be on the position of women during the COVID 19 pandemic in terms of increased domestic violence and lack of employment opportunities; - Teaming up with international organisations and local CSOs in outreach events in raising awareness and behavioural change that define gender norms and relationships; - Continuation of small-scale campaigns on social media to promote women who are making difference in society i.e. [#GenderFriday](#); The EU office will team up with the UN Agency, local CSOs and Member States in the campaign '16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children' (16 Days Campaign) which takes place annually from 25 November (International Day of No Violence against Women) to 10 December (International Human Rights Day; Cross sectoral partnership with the agencies that are specialised in gender issues and organisation of joint events to synchronise the messaging to accelerate progress on gender equality; - The Office will host annual meetings on gender equality and women's empowerment in BiH with the aim of taking stock of progress made in gender mainstreaming and implementation of EU requirements, as well as coordination of external assistance and consultation of future needs with gender institutional mechanisms, CSOs and international actors in BiH; -Sharing and further promotion of the HQ campaigns and initiatives using available tools and channels to multiply the messages.

6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

GAP III implementation is supported by GEF through direct support to the BiH Gender Institutional Mechanism and Directorate for European Integration in ensuring alignment with EU directives, implementation of legislation and IPA gender mainstreaming. The contract will last for two years and based on its result and need, the second phase will be considered. The allocation to GEF I amounts to 0.5M EUR. Further, the service contract of 1M EUR is planned for the next two years focusing on the effective implementation of the Anti-discrimination and Gender Equality laws in BiH.

The EU support in BiH can be summarized in the following quote of its HoD/EUSR, Mr. Johann Sattler: *"Gender equality and women's empowerment is a powerful aspect of positive social, economic and political change that is arising from inclusive societies. To achieve prosperity on all fronts, a society must endorse gender equality and women's empowerment as a fundamental element of equal rights. In BiH, the EU wants to see women's leadership at the forefront of gender equality discussions. Equality needs to be enshrined in every pore of this country, endorsed and promoted by everyone"*.

Date: 30 July 2021

Signature by Head of Delegation/European Union Special Representative:

Johann Sattler [e-signed]