

BiH Dayton Project



8th EU-Bosnia and Herzegovina Subcommittee meeting on Innovation, Information Society and Social Policy

October 23, 2024

The EU Delegation to BiH posted the [press release](#) below.

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Brussels

Press and information team of the delegation to BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

Brussels (hybrid), 22 October 2024

The 8th Subcommittee meeting on Innovation, Information Society and Social Policy between the EU and Bosnia and Herzegovina took place on 22 October 2024. Representatives from the European Commission (Commission) and from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) authorities discussed the latest developments in these areas. The meeting was co-chaired by Ms. Heinke Veit (Deputy Head of Unit, Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, European Commission) and by Mr. Adnan Husić (Assistant to the Minister, Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH).

In a constructive and open meeting, the Commission welcomed progress achieved by BiH in some areas and encouraged the country to continue with the necessary reforms in line with EU recommendations. In all sectors, the Commission encouraged BiH to develop a countrywide harmonised approach and to strengthen its administrative capacities and monitoring systems in all sectors, improving inter-institutional coordination among relevant authorities.

In the area of **information society and media**, the Commission congratulated BiH on joining the Digital Europe programme, which will enable legal and natural persons in BiH to apply for EU grants in the field of digitalization. In order to progress in this area, the Commission reiterated the need for BiH to adopt legislation and strategies in line with the EU *acquis*, including the EU AI Act and the EU Directive on security of networks and information systems. BiH also urgently needs to develop a **countrywide cybersecurity strategy** in line with the EU *acquis* and to establish a competent authority for cybersecurity. The Commission reminded BiH of the need for the adoption of a new law on electronic identity and trust services for electronic transactions. As regards audiovisual policy, discussions focused on the need to adopt the Law on Electronic Media and to continue working on establishing a financially sustainable and politically independent Public Broadcasting Service.

On **social policy and employment**, the Commission inquired about progress in the adoption of a **country-wide Employment Strategy** and in strengthening the coordination mechanism on employment policies within the country. It reiterated the need for BiH to improve its monitoring and evaluation procedures for labour market measures and make increase coverage of unemployment and needs-based social benefits. The Commission welcomed the adoption of the gender action plan 2023-2027, while highlighting the need for BiH to align its legislation with the *acquis*. The importance of the provision of timely statistical data on topics such as labour-related migrations, as well as gender-

disaggregated data on employment policies, was also reiterated. The Commission reminded BiH of the opportunity offered by EU technical assistance (Taix) to improve its preparation in view of the screening.

On **education and culture**, the Commission underlined the need for country-wide statistics on education and the importance for BiH to implement the findings of PISA 2018 and TIMSS 2019. It is important that BiH participates in upcoming international tests. BiH needs to ensure equal and non-discriminatory access to education and reduce the gap between urban and rural areas in this regard. The Commission welcomed the holding of the first session of the Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH, stressing the important to increase the coordination among decision-makers in education. The Commission reiterated the need for BiH to develop the national qualification framework and continue the work on the recognition of academic qualifications.

As regards **research and innovation**, the Commission welcomes BiH's successful participation in Horizon Europe, as well as the efforts on the development and implementation of a smart specialisation strategy. BiH is encouraged to strengthen innovation efforts under Pillar III of Horizon Europe. BiH needs to establish a National Research and Education Network and to increase the scoring in the European Innovation Scoreboard 2024, as the gap with the EU is widening. Therefore, continued efforts are needed to enhance innovation capacities and bridge existing gaps with EU counterparts. The Commission also encouraged BiH to finalise and adopt a 2023-2028 strategy and action plan for scientific development.

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