

PRESS FACTSHEET

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Reforming skills and education policy for a brighter future

Since 1997 we have been supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina to develop education and training to boost employability, increase access to opportunity and promote social cohesion. Complementing the work of the EU's [External Action Service](#), we bring together ministries and social partners to develop scalable projects.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a **complex and highly decentralised institutional structure**. This makes implementation of reform challenging, but there has been some progress in education. ETF is supporting the implementation of vocational education and training programmes and the development of a qualifications framework, working with a broad range of stakeholders in the country to develop human capital, including Ministries, Higher Education Institutions and Employers organisations. The challenge is to develop the network and boost cooperation between actors **strengthening links between education and business**.

Context¹

High unemployment and an ageing workforce, with only 15% aged between 15 and 24 years, are two major factors impeding growth and progress. The government is seeking to **improve the efficiency and effectiveness of delivery of public services** and state governance. Key priorities are to boost the private sector and encourage exports, creating a business environment conducive to private investment. To do this, existing labour market rigidities need to be addressed, as well as the introduction of a national strategy on making education responsive to labour market needs.

Very high unemployment and low activity rates persist, mostly affecting women, young people and the long-term unemployed and the country suffers from below-potential growth. Weak activation and employment services are coupled with disincentives to work (untargeted social benefits schemes and unsupportive taxation). The share of undeclared work also remains high. Structural reforms are long overdue, but these are impeded by frequent political stalemates. The service sector is the largest in terms of employment and

¹ Source: [ETF Montenegro Country Strategy Paper 2017-20](#)

value generation with 66.2% of gross value added and almost 53% of employment in 2015 and Tourism remains a key driver of growth. The country is one of the least economically integrated in the region, with an export share of 36% of GDP in 2017, down from 98% prior to the 1992–1995 war.

Education and labour policies

Active labour market policies are mostly focused on employment subsidies and not training programmes and as there is no country-wide strategy included on education and skills, this is a priority for the government. The EU is supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina in developing a qualification framework and in improvements in the quality of teaching and learning.

EU support and the ETF

The EU is committed to assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in developing an educated society in line with EU standards. The EU is supporting the country in its efforts to boost employment and employability, supporting national stakeholders in designing, implementing and monitoring reforms in specific areas.

The EU-funded project "Development of Qualifications Framework for Life Long Learning" was launched in May 2016 and is focused on the development of the Qualifications Framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of non-formal education and learning, vocational education and training and education of adults. The project was based on the EU Strategy Europe 2020, in order to contribute to the comparability of the education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina with those in the EU. The project was funded from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA 2012) for a total of €1,442,000, and is supported by the ETF.

As an agency of the EU, the ETF is working in Bosnia and Herzegovina in:

- Supporting labour market efficiency;
- Referencing Bosnia Herzegovina within the European Qualifications Framework;
- Monitoring the progress of vocational education and training initiatives – Torino Process;
- Providing the European Commission as requested with assistance in European Commission reporting and monitoring processes.

In 2018, the ETF has supported the European Commission's work with Bosnia Herzegovina in three ways: thematic comments on progress in education and employment for the annual Innovation and Social policy subcommittee, advice to the EU delegation in Sarajevo on the incorporation of entrepreneurial learning in IPA 2016, and the assessment of BA's responses to chapters 19 (employment) and 26 (education) of the European Commission's questionnaire on BA's application to become a candidate for membership of the European Union.

Success story: Driving competitiveness through digital and entrepreneurial skills

Economic development and competitiveness are important factors in Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards EU membership. And skills play an important role in this. As part of its support to the EU's efforts to help the country develop its education and training systems in line with EU standards, the ETF is working closely with all 13 education authorities across Bosnia and Herzegovina to embed digital and entrepreneurial competences in school curricula.

Digital competences are about more than just being able to use the latest devices and software. They are about using digital technology in a critical, collaborative and creative way. Likewise entrepreneurial competences are about more than the knowledge and skills required to start up one's own business. It is about developing the abilities and attitudes typically associated with entrepreneurship such as creativity, opportunity seeking, risk-taking, leadership and resource management. These are competences in demand worldwide that can significantly enhance employability and drive competitiveness.

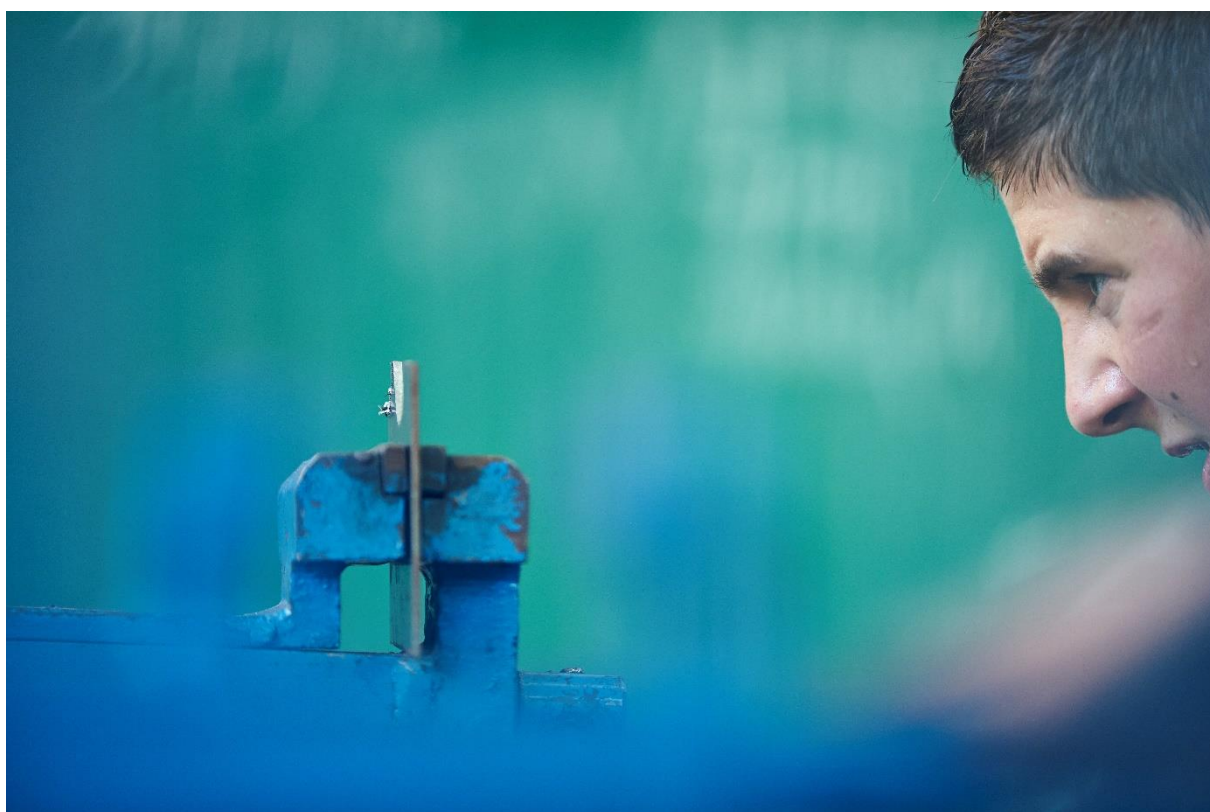
In May 2018, in cooperation with the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the ETF **organised a first roundtable in Sarajevo** at which high level representatives of the country's 13 education authorities, together with stakeholders from education and economic development, met to learn about the EU competence frameworks for entrepreneurial and digital skills (EntreComp and DigiComp) and discuss their implementation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The May roundtable led to the creation of a technical focus group to **develop an action plan** that will be presented to a second policy roundtable that will be held on 11 November 2018 in Sarajevo. The involvement of the education authorities and key stakeholders of the whole country in working together on this strategic topic is an important development for Bosnia Herzegovina on its progress towards membership of the European Union.

The Digital Competences Framework (DigiComp) and the Entrepreneurship Competences Framework (EntreComp) and are practical reference instruments developed by the European Commission to guide the implementation of digital and entrepreneurial skills in education and training programmes. They are widely used in Europe and beyond.

For information:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp/digital-competence-framework>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/entrecomp-entrepreneurship-competence-framework>





For more info and photos, please contact us.

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