

KEY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT – BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA 2023

This paper was prepared by Jan Peter Ganter de Otero, ETF, in December 2023.

The contents are the sole responsibility of the ETF and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU institutions.

© European Training Foundation, 2023

Reproduction is authorised, provided the source is acknowledged.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has faced a complex governance structure since the Dayton Peace Agreement, dividing the nation into two entities and a self-governing district, each with separate responsibilities in education, training, and employment. The recent inauguration of a new tripartite presidency and the country attaining EU candidate status in 2022 mark significant milestones. However, various challenges, including demographic issues, economic concerns and the impact of Russia's war against Ukraine underscore the need for comprehensive policy developments in these areas.

Demographic challenges in BiH, such as a declining population and significant youth emigration, pose a serious threat to human capital development. The aging workforce adds further complexity to the education and labour market landscape.

Economically, BiH experienced growth in 2022, particularly in sectors like Accommodation and Food Services, Administrative and Support Services, and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation. Nevertheless, weak productivity and a substantial informal sector remain obstacles to sustained economic progress. Inflationary pressures caused by external conflicts have affected vulnerable populations, emphasising the importance of social policies to alleviate the impact of rising prices.

The education system in BiH is characterised by a complex governance structure, involving multiple institutions overseeing its development. Efforts to enhance vocational education and training (VET) aim to bolster competitiveness and attractiveness, with strategic documents and policy roundtables guiding priorities in this area. While public expenditure on formal education accounts for 4.3% of GDP, there are concerns about the quality of education, particularly evident in international assessments like the 2018 PISA study, where most 15-year-olds had low achievement in key subjects. Consistency in taking part in such assessments and the need for nationwide approaches to improve education quality are pressing issues.

The labour market in BiH is a mixed picture, with some signs of recovery post-Covid-19. Nonetheless, challenges around unemployment, particularly among young people and women, persist. Disparities based on educational attainment are evident, with higher education levels offering better employment prospects.

Employment policy governance in BiH is characterised by multiple layers of responsibility in need of improved coordination. Focusing on comprehensive employment strategies and implementing the Youth Guarantee are essential steps to addressing unemployment and fostering economic growth.

In conclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina face multifaceted challenges in education, training, and employment. Aligning education with labour market needs, enhancing educational quality, addressing digital skills gaps, and mitigating unemployment and inactivity are crucial policy areas. Additionally, improved data collection and analysis in education and the labour market are vital for evidence-based policymaking. As the country navigates its path towards European integration, these policy developments will be instrumental in shaping its future prosperity and stability.

Based on the analysis of recent developments in BiH, the main points for further policy action include:

- Promote initiatives that encourage young people to stay in BiH by providing attractive VET that aligns with labour market demands.
- Improve youth transition to work and align youth employment support programmes with the EU's 'Youth Guarantee' scheme to enhance youth job and skills development opportunities, including the development and implementation of the Youth Guarantee implementation plan.
- Invest in the quality and relevance of VET to make it more attractive to students and employers and establish a state-wide VET quality assurance system based on EQAVET. Collaborate with industry

stakeholders to design curricula that address the specific needs of the labour market, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for employment.

- Expand opportunities for adult learners to acquire new skills and adapt to changing job requirements, contributing to a more flexible and resilient workforce.
- Improve data collection and analysis related to education and the labour market. This will provide policymakers with accurate information for evidence-based decision-making and help monitor progress towards VET goals.
- Participate again in international assessments such as PISA and PIRLS to assess the quality of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina accurately.
- Establish a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of VET policies and courses. Regularly assess outcomes, including employment rates of VET graduates, to identify areas for improvement.
- Prioritise resource allocation for VET, emphasising modern facilities and materials and exploring joint ventures for funding. Additionally, invest in digital infrastructure and provide comprehensive digital skills training for both students and educators to enhance the integration of technology in education.
- Ensure that VET is inclusive and promotes gender equality, offering equal opportunities to all individuals regardless of their background, gender, or ethnicity.
- Strengthen careers guidance in schools and VET institutions to help students make informed choices about their education and career paths.
- Encourage the adoption and implementation of the Baseline Qualifications Framework, aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), to improve qualification recognition.
- Develop mechanisms for recognising prior learning to facilitate career progression and validate skills acquired outside of formal education.
- Consider finalising an application to become a member of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) to promote apprenticeships.
- Address the issue of high PES counsellor (job centre staff) caseloads by hiring more staff or implementing technology-driven solutions. Facilitate data exchange and cooperation between PES bodies to provide more coordinated and effective services to jobseekers.

1. KEY POLITICAL, DEMOGRAPHIC, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Political developments

Since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement 25 years ago, which marked the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country has been navigating a complex governance framework that has posed ongoing challenges. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a federal republic made up of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the Republika Srpska (RS) and a self-governing district, Brčko. The Federation comprises 10 cantons. Responsibility for education and employment is spread across 13 ministries and a number of executive agencies. At a national level, education and employment developments are coordinated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

On 16 November 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina inaugurated its new tripartite presidency. The three elected representatives are Bosniak Denis Bećirović and Bosnian-Croat Željko Komšić, from the Social Democratic Party and Democratic Front, and Željka Cvijanović from the Bosnian-Serb party Alliance of Independent Social Democrats. It also marks the first time a woman has been elected to the country's top office.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also achieved a significant milestone by receiving EU candidate status in December 2022. This was seen as a substantial step towards the country's aspirations for European Union membership. A survey conducted by the Directorate for European Integration (DEI) revealed that 73.3% of respondents expressed support for BiH's entry into the EU. However, this support experienced a marginal decrease of 4.1% compared to the previous year's survey. Notably, a majority of respondents from the Federation of BiH strongly backed joining the EU, with 86% in favour. Meanwhile, 50.6% of respondents from Republika Srpska and 71.5% from the Brčko District of BiH supported EU integration.

BiH's journey towards EU membership has faced challenges since its application in 2016. The region has been grappling with the impact of enlargement fatigue that has slowed down EU integration efforts across the Western Balkans. The European Commission has outlined 14 key priorities that the country must address to make progress on its EU accession path. These priorities encompass a range of political, economic and social reforms that are essential to advance integration. However, according to the most recent Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023 Report (European Commission 2023), granting candidate status resulted in limited progress key priorities set out in the Opinion on membership. Positive developments at state level were in stark contrast to negative developments within Republika Srpska, which undermined the country as a whole.

Demographics

The demographics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) are a complex tableau. As of 2022, the estimated total population stands at around 3.23 million, based on the 2013 census. The country is characterised by a diverse ethnic makeup, with three major ethnic communities: Bosniaks, constituting approximately 50% of the population, Croats making up around 15%, and Serbs accounting for about 30%. This ethnic distribution is also reflected in the governance structure, where the Bosniak and Croat communities form the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the Serb community is concentrated in Republika Srpska.

However, BiH faces demographic challenges, including a natural decrease in population and significant emigration of young people, particularly to EU Member States. This trend poses challenges to the country's human capital development, which is crucial for fostering economic growth and competitiveness. The Labour Force Survey of 2022 (BHAS 2023a) reveals a shift in age distribution within the labour force. The 25-49 age group accounts for 65.5% of the total labour force, followed by the 50-64 age group (25.8%). Significantly, the 15-24 age group constitutes only 7.5%, reflecting a

significant reduction on previous years, which has implications for education planning and new labour market entrants.

In terms of population growth, the number of live births recorded in 2022, a decrease of 2.16% compared to the previous year. Additionally, the trend of emigration among young people is on the rise, with nearly 47% of young people expressing a desire to leave the country for better opportunities elsewhere. The emigration trend to EU Member States has been steadily increasing over the years, with a significant rise in first residence permits granted to BiH nationals in the EU, peaking at 56 363 in 2019. However, the numbers decreased to 35.158 in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Ongoing emigration has significant implications for the country's labour market and the makeup of the overall workforce.

Key economic developments

Over the past decade, Bosnia and Herzegovina has witnessed a notable expansion in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), reflecting a positive trajectory in its economic development. In 2010, the country's GDP was USD 17.18 billion, and by 2022, this figure had surged to USD 24.53 billion (according to World Bank data). This substantial growth of approximately 42.8% over a ten-year period highlights the resilience and dynamism of Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy.

In 2022, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) experienced continued economic growth, although at a slower pace to the previous year. According to data from the Bosnia and Herzegovina Agency for Statistics (BHAS), the country's GDP for 2022 reached a nominal value of KM 45 505 million. This represented a nominal increase of 16.2% from 2021, with a real increase of 4.1% (BHAS, 2023b). In terms of economic activities, notable nominal increases in gross value added were recorded in sectors like Accommodation and Food Service (33.4%), Administrative and Support Service (31.9%), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (31.3%).

According to data from the OECD (2021), Services play a significant role in BiH's economy, accounting for 55.7% of GDP and 50.3% of employment, with the wholesale and retail trade sectors being dominant. The industrial sector contributes 23.9% to GDP and is a source of employment for 31.7% of the workforce, with manufacturing being a key component. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing constitute 5.6% of GDP but employ 18% of the workforce, suggesting potential for increased agricultural productivity. Informal employment is prevalent in the country, influenced by relatively high labour costs.

Despite these developments, BiH faces challenges related to weak productivity in all sectors. Labour productivity, measured as output per worker, remains significantly lower than the EU average across the board. Although efforts have been made to increase formal employment and labour market regulations, the informal sector continues to have a significant impact, estimated to contribute up to one-third of GDP. This highlights the need to enhance productivity, formalise employment and address the informal economy to foster sustained economic growth and competitiveness.

Key social issues

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has had significant repercussions on Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy, leading to elevated energy, transport and food prices. This inflationary pressure has broader implications, particularly for vulnerable and less affluent segments of the population. The rising prices of essential goods, particularly food and energy, tend to disproportionately affect individuals with lower incomes. This is because people with limited financial means allocate a larger proportion of their budgets towards these basic necessities, leaving them more exposed to the negative effects of price hikes. Consequently, these economic pressures further exacerbate the challenges faced by the less fortunate and can contribute to a higher level of financial strain.

Given the ongoing conflict's potential to intensify price pressures, the inflation rate for 2022 was 4.8% (World Bank, n.d.). There is a need for social policies and support mechanisms that can buffer the

impact of inflation on the most vulnerable, providing essential relief to those disproportionately affected by these economic shifts.

2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

2.1 Trends and challenges

Education strategy and the legal framework for education

Bosnia and Herzegovina has a complex governance arrangement for education, comprising 14 institutions responsible for overseeing education developments (13 ministries and a state-level education agency), decentralised in two entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both of which have an education ministry. The Federation further comprises 10 cantons, each with an education ministry. Education affairs in a third administrative area – Brčko District – are overseen by a dedicated education department. The Ministry of Civil Affairs, at the state level, sets out the basic principles of how to coordinate education work, consolidating planning for the various authorities and defining international strategy.

In 2021, the Ministry of Civil Affairs has released a document titled 'Improvement of Quality and Relevance of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Light of the EU Riga Conclusions (for the period 2021-2030)' (MoCA & OeAD, 2021). This document, developed in collaboration with Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (OeAD) and international experts, focuses on enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of vocational education and training in the country between 2021 and 2030. The plan encompasses short-term (2021-2023), medium-term (2024-2026), and long-term (2026-2030) priorities, along with assigned responsibilities for each objective.

To further address education strategy, a series of policy roundtables were conducted from February to May 2022 with the support of OeAD, involving 118 stakeholders. These discussions aimed to establish development priorities within vocational education and training systems across the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's five cantons and the Republic of Srpska. These consultations led to action plans for six vocational education and training systems. Additionally, an annual vocational education conference provides a platform for stakeholders to connect with peers both domestically and internationally, facilitating the exchange of experiences and the showcasing of best practices.

The Government of Republika Srpska recently passed several essential strategic documents on education. The Adult Education Strategy for 2021-2023 covers lifelong learning, consisting of the first strategic document to systematically approach developing and improving adult education. Subsequently, a new Law on Adult Education in the RS was adopted in December 2021, while a new Law on Basic Education was adopted in August 2022. Additionally, Republika Srpska ushered in the Strategy for The Development of Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education for the period 2022-2030 in December 2021.

Education expenditure

Over the course of t 2020 to 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed a discernible upward trend in expenditure on formal education. Specifically, total spending increased from KM 1.476 billion in 2020 to KM 1.634 billion in 2021. However, despite this increase, there was a slight decrease in the proportion of education expenditure relative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP), dropping from 4.3% in 2020 to 4.2% in 2021.

The detailed breakdown of total public and private expenditure, along with foreign funds, for educational institutions provides further insights. In 2020, the aggregate amount was KM 1.574 billion, rising to KM 1.776 billion in 2021. While the total amount increased, the percentage of GDP allocated to educational expenditure saw a marginal decline from 4.6% in 2020 to 4.5% in 2021.

Examining the composition of total expenditure, a noteworthy shift is observed. Public funds remained the primary source, accounting for 91.4% in 2020 and decreasing slightly to 89.5% in 2021.

Conversely, private expenditure on education increased from 8.2% in 2020 to 9.4% in 2021. Additionally, there was a significant rise in the contribution of foreign funds from 0.4% in 2020 to 1.1% in 2021, signifying a growing role of non-domestic financial support in the education sector.

The distribution of funds across different levels of education also underwent changes. Expenditure on preschool education increased its share from 5.0% in 2020 to 7.0% in 2021. Meanwhile, primary education experienced a slight reduction in its share from 49.6% to 47.8%. Secondary education maintained a relatively stable share, hovering around 23-24%. Higher education saw an increase in its share from 21.6% in 2020 to 22.3% in 2021.

Access, participation and early school leaving

The following data points collectively indicate positive trends in terms of increased participation, reduced early school leaving, and improved educational attainment across the different educational levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see statistics annex).

- The share of Vocational Education and Training (VET) students at the upper secondary level (ISCED 3) increased from 74.2% in 2015 to 78.4% in 2021, reflecting a growing interest in practical and skills-based education.
- Early school leaving, a crucial concern for education systems, saw significant improvement. The percentage of early school leavers aged 18-24 decreased from 5.6% in 2015 to 3.6% in 2022, showing the country's efforts to retain students in the education system are working.
- Educational attainment across the population aged 15 and above also demonstrated positive trends. The proportion of individuals with low educational attainment decreased from 39.5% in 2015 to 29.6% in 2022. Conversely, those with medium educational attainment increased from 51.1% in 2015 to 57.4% in 2022. Similarly, individuals with high educational attainment rose from 9.5% in 2015 to 13% in 2022.
- Participation in formal education for the age group 15-29 experienced a slight decrease from 44.9% in 2015 to 42.9% in 2021, reflecting potential challenges in attracting young adults into education. However, completion of upper secondary education among individuals aged 20-24 remained consistently high, standing at 93.9% in 2021.
- Adult participation in lifelong learning has worsened, reaching only 1.8% in 2022 (from 2.1% in 2021), with slightly higher participation among women.

PISA results

Bosnia and Herzegovina's performance in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assessment of 2018 revealed serious concerns about the quality of education in the country. The data highlighted that more than half of 15-year-olds had low achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics, in stark contrast to the European Union's lower bound of a fifth of students (OECD, n.d). This PISA assessment reveals deficiencies in primary education that carry forward into secondary education, ultimately impacting student outcomes (APOS0, 2019). The data suggested a trend where underperforming students from primary education are directed towards vocational streams, which further exacerbates their disadvantage due to the notably lower quality of teaching and learning in vocational education compared to general secondary education.

The country did not take part in the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) or the 2022 PISA assessments. This lack of participation highlighted issues in coordinating processes related to international assessment studies, pointing to a need for significant improvement in this area.

Additionally, there has been limited clear action taken by the country to address the findings from the 2018 PISA and 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). While some cantons have initiated curriculum reforms based on students' learning outcomes to enhance quality in

line with the recommendations of the 2018 PISA and 2019 TIMSS assessments, there is still no comprehensive nationwide approach to address these concerns.

Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs)

Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to grapple with significant challenges surrounding its young people's engagement in employment, education, or training (NEETs). In 2022, the NEET rate for individuals aged 15 to 29 decreased to 23.5% %, reflecting that, despite improved numbers since 2020, a notable proportion of young people is not actively participating in these critical pathways (see statistics annex). When broken down by gender, the NEET rate for men was 19.8%, while for women, it was 27.4%. An examination of NEET categories (unemployed or inactive) indicates that like in many other countries, young women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are at higher risk of dropping out from the labour market. By education profile, young people with medium education attainment (ISCED 3-4) are more exposed to joblessness risks, reflecting structural issues of labour supply and demand, as well as with the relevance of upper secondary education, including VET, to the labour market.

There are multiple factors contributing to the challenges faced by young people in the labour market. Graduates often struggle to transition effectively from education to employment due to insufficient employability skills and a disconnect between their acquired skills and the demands of the job market. The lack of appropriate career guidance exacerbates these issues, and the fragmented nature of guidance policies further compounds the problem. Effective coordination of careers guidance efforts remains a challenge (ETF, 2022). Additionally, unfavourable working conditions characterised by informal working, low wages, inadequate workplace safety and limited mentorship or coaching further dissuade young individuals from entering productive employment.

These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive policy initiatives that address not only employability skills and education-to-work transitions but also the broader labour market environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By aligning education courses with the demands of the job market, enhancing careers guidance and improving working conditions, the country can better support its young population in securing meaningful employment, education and training.

Strategic and legal framework for initial VET and adult learning

Given the decentralised governance, education legislation is addressed at three levels: a) state-level (framework legislation); b) entity level (Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina); and c) cantonal level, including for Brčko District. Vocational education is addressed within general education.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has overseen five framework education laws. More specifically for VET, the 2003 Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education defines the principles, levels and structure of secondary education. The 2008 Framework Law on Secondary VET addresses: a) the role of company and union representatives and the demands of the economy; b) the autonomy vocational schools have to respond to local economic needs; c) the potential for schools to form partnerships whilst retaining their autonomous legal status; and d) diversification of the training offered to new target groups (e.g. adults) and the potential for schools to generate income. The VET framework legislation has been passed or adapted into local legislation in Republika Srpska, seven cantons of the Federation, and in the Brčko District (ETF, 2020).

VET governance and financing arrangements

At the state level, the Ministry of Civil Affairs that coordinates education areas that are common to the two political entities and Brčko. The Ministry has no policy or legislative decision-making powers. It puts forward legislation and a state-wide strategy to the BiH Council of Ministers. A Conference of Education Ministers then provides a forum for exchange on issues common to all education authorities. The Conference of Education Ministers is an important instrument of governance; however, it meets irregularly.

Most of the education budget is used to pay staff salaries, with little funding available for technology, equipment and other resources. According to the OECD (2022), 'this disproportionately impacts VET institutions, which generally have higher costs in these areas than do general education institutions. In fact, lack of equipment and materials, along with the lack of practical training, is considered the most significant constraint to VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina' (p. 146). The VET system still strongly relies on financial support from international donors such as the EU or GIZ.

Qualifications, validation and recognition

Bosnia and Herzegovina's approach to qualifications, validation, and recognition is governed by the Baseline Qualifications Framework, adopted by the Council of Ministers in March 2011. Despite its existence, this framework has not been widely adopted by training providers, employers, or learners. Nonetheless, newly developed VET and higher education qualifications are based on learning outcomes and standards. The Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary, and Secondary Education of BiH is responsible for coordinating occupational standards, with recent efforts focused on standards for agricultural technicians.

An intersectoral committee, led by the Ministry of Civil Affairs, oversees the implementation of the Baseline Qualifications Framework. The committee was reestablished in 2023 with representatives from the different entities. A significant step for Bosnia and Herzegovina involves aligning the framework with the principles and criteria of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). While certifying non-formal learning is part of the framework's action plan, current implementation remains limited.

Challenges persist in the higher education sector, where there is no fully functional system for accrediting institutions and curriculums. Harmonising legislation across governmental levels, aligning with framework laws on education, and ensuring schools follow a common-core curriculum based on learning outcomes are essential steps for progress. The country is advised to extend and update the action plan for the national qualification framework (NQF) and establish an inter-sectoral commission for NQF. Additionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to establish a workable system for (re-)accrediting higher education institutions and curriculums, and work toward aligning the national qualification framework with the European Qualifications Framework. Furthermore, the absence of a mechanism for recognising and certifying prior learning poses a further challenge to the improving qualifications in the country.

Quality assurance

While there is a legal framework for data collection and systematisation in place, the education system lacks a systematic mechanism to measure and monitor the quality of educational inputs, outputs and outcomes. This deficiency hinders effective policymaking based on data-driven insights. Aligning legislation at all levels with framework laws on education is essential to address these gaps. The absence of common standards for the different education levels or for teacher training, as well as the lack of a systematic approach to applying the common-core curriculum based on learning outcomes, further compounds the quality challenges in the education system. Addressing these issues, improving teacher training, and ensuring a consistent approach to following the curriculum are vital for enhancing the overall quality of education.

In the last few years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken steps towards establishing a quality assurance system for vocational education and training (VET), based on the European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET) framework. It developed a VET Quality Assurance Manual as part of this work, covering various aspects including quality assurance standards, self-evaluation and external evaluation manuals for institutions, systemic evaluation, external evaluator training standards and guidelines on the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). However, despite these advancements, there is a need for further progress to institutionalise and fully implement this quality assurance framework. The document 'Improvement of Quality and Relevance of VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Light of Riga Conclusions (for the period 2021-2030)' highlights the

significance of quality assurance in VET and emphasises the need for legal approval and a legal basis for the state-wide framework. Staff development measures are also essential to address the practical implementation of quality assurance in VET.

Work-based learning arrangements

Work-based learning (WBL) arrangements in Bosnia and Herzegovina take several forms. One common approach involves alternate learning at both school and businesses. This entails students spending one to three days per week in practical training at companies throughout the school year and the rights and obligations of the school and the companies are specified in a contract. Another form of WBL occurs within school premises, where students utilise workshops, laboratories, kitchens, or virtual companies that mimic real-life situations to develop practical skills. Additionally, WBL takes place during summer and winter holidays, with students spending a specified period of time at a company for intensive training.

According to the recent ETF Torino Process report on Bosnia and Herzegovina (ETF, 2023), WBL is a priority for the country, however implementation has varied across regions. For example, in the Gorazde canton, formal agreements between schools and companies ensure that education aligns with labour market needs. Noteworthy developments include the increase in practical training hours in IVET subjects and the introduction of experimental curricula with a stepping up of practical work hours in Republika Srpska. Efforts are being directed toward improving the practical aspect of VET education and fostering collaboration with industry partners, evidenced by the coordination with chambers of commerce and protected crafts and employer associations.

The importance of enhancing work-based learning is used in the document 'Improvement of Quality and Relevance of VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Light of Riga Conclusions (for the period 2021-2030)'. It states that the main priorities for work-based learning revolve around promoting its attractiveness for both companies and students. Recognising the challenge of aligning educational content with job requirements the emphasis is on utilising the workplace as a conducive learning environment are key. Close collaboration between schools and companies is essential, along with the need for a strong partner relationship to facilitate effective work-based learning. Involving the business sector, including employers and employer associations, in vocational education and training (VET) policymaking is crucial to understand and implement work-based learning formats. Additionally, tripartite advisory committees would ensure well-structured and efficient dialogue between the education and employment sectors. Pre-requisites and support mechanisms, such as mentorship and insurance, were pointed out as necessary to ensure the quality and relevance of work-based learning. Coordinating work between local communities, educational institutions and businesses is also highlighted to identify the labour market needs and implement policies that respond swiftly to economic requirements. The document also plays up the importance of cost-sharing arrangements, where companies bear responsibility for supervising and training of students during practical training, a sign of a shared commitment to creating a qualified workforce as the foundation for economic growth.

Participating in the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA) is seen as a means to enhance cooperation between schools, training centres, universities and businesses, thereby fostering a culture of WBL.

Digital education and skills

The emphasis on digital education and skills policies has grown significantly in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the country does face challenges in this domain. For example, according to data from the Survey on the usage of information and communication technologies (ICT) in 2022, 38.7% of households do not have computer access (share of households with incomes over KM 1 000 is only 33.4%), 23.9% of households do not have internet access, and only 50.1% of people with primary or lower secondary education use the internet. (BHAS 2023c).

Moreover, PISA 2018 data indicates limited access to computers in Bosnian schools, with slightly over 0.3 computers per pupil, compared to an average of over 0.8 in OECD countries. Although around 70% of schools are connected to the internet in Bosnia and Herzegovina, internet access for school computers is still notably lower compared to OECD countries.

Regarding teachers' digital skills and usage, PISA 2018 data also reveals that teachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina use digital devices and instructional materials less frequently compared to both the OECD average and other Western Balkan countries. Collaborative learning opportunities within school-based teacher groups are not consistently available, and it is reported that teachers' capacity to support teaching and learning is underutilised.

Despite these challenges, efforts are being made to address the digital divide and enhance digital education. The Ministry of Civil Affairs has been focusing on building digital applications for learning. However, the data reveals the need for continued investments in digital infrastructure, teacher training, and collaborative learning spaces to improve the integration of digital tools in education and to bridge the digital skills gaps among both students and educators.

Statistics on education and training

Key sources of education statistics are the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the Agency for Pre-Primary, Primary and Secondary Education (APOSO). The first aim is to provide reliable and internationally comparable statistical data on several areas of interest, such as economics, demographics and social aspects, the environment and natural resources. APOSO is responsible for setting learning standards, evaluating learning achievements, developing common-core curricula in pre-primary, primary and secondary education and further work on learning standards and evaluating education quality as defined by special laws and other regulations.

Much work has been done through various projects and partnerships to enhance the quality and reliability of education statistics. For instance, the Twinning project 'Further Support to the Reform of Statistics System in BiH', funded by the European Union, aims to transition the statistical system towards using administrative data sources to align with European standards. This project involves collaboration between key statistical institutions and partner countries, aiming to improve the accuracy and readability of education-related data.

UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture's Sarajevo office has supported collaborations between statistical agencies and education authorities. This support aims to enhance the reliability and quality of statistical data for secondary and higher education, particularly concerning the International Standard Classification of Education. This involves reviewing and improving education classifications in statistics and data quality, thus catering to domestic and international reporting requirements set by organisations like the OECD and Eurostat.

3. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYMENT

3.1 Trends and challenges

Labour market characteristics

The labour market characteristics in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mixed picture, with some signs of economic recovery following the COVID-19 crisis, but challenges remaining in terms of unemployment and employment rates (see statistics annex).

Employment Rate by Educational Attainment (age group 15+): The employment rate varies significantly based on educational attainment. In 2022, the employment rates were as follows:

- Low educational attainment: 11.4% (compared to 15.7% in 2019)
- Medium educational attainment: 48.9% (compared to 44.6% in 2019)
- High educational attainment: 67.3% (compared to 59.3% in 2019)

Employment by Sector: The distribution of employment across sectors also provides insights into the labour market:

- Agriculture sector: 7.3% (compared to 18% in 2019)
- Industry sector: 34.6% (compared to 31.7% in 2019)
- Services sector: 58.2% (compared to 50.3% in 2019)

Vulnerable employment decreased from 9.1% in 2021 to 8.7% in 2022, while self-employment decreased from 14.9% in 2021 to 13.1% in 2022.

Despite GDP growth of over 10% since 2020 and 7.1% in 2021, the recovery hasn't led to a substantial increase in jobs. The overall unemployment rate for individuals aged 15 and above decreased slightly from 15.9% in 2019 and 2020 to 15.4% in 2022 (after it peaked at 17.4% in 2021). The unemployment rate for women in Bosnia and Herzegovina decreased from 22% in 2021 to 19.8% in 2022, although it still remains higher than the 2019 rate of 19%. The unemployment rate for individuals aged 15-24 experienced a decrease from 38.3% in 2021 to 35.1% in 2022, indicating a slight improvement in youth unemployment.

After unemployment, the next biggest challenge in BiH is the significant level of inactivity – more than a third of the population aged 20 to 64 remains outside the labour force, neither being employed or actively searching for a job. More worrying is the rate of inactivity among women aged 20-64 of over 50% in 2022 (BHAS).

It is worth noting that the employment and unemployment data highlight disparities based on factors like educational attainment and gender. While there are positive signs of reduced unemployment rates, particularly among women and young people, the overall employment situation still poses challenges. The data suggest that improving educational opportunities and aligning skills with labour market needs could play a significant role in addressing unemployment and fostering economic growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Statistics on the labour market and employment

The Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Federal Institute of Statistics (responsible for collecting statistics in the cantons) and the Institute of Statistics of Republika Srpska undertake annual labour force surveys. The survey follows the International Labour Organization (ILO) definitions and methods, as well as the requirements of the European Statistical Office (Eurostat), which ensures data can be compared internationally.

Furthermore, the state-level Labour and Employment Agency collects and summarises administrative employment statistics on a monthly basis from the various competent authorities. More sophisticated data analyses, including ad-hoc surveys (e.g. skills forecasts) are provided mainly through internationally financed technical assistance projects.

3.2 Employment policy and institutional settings

Strategy and legal framework in employment policy

BiH faces challenges in aligning employment policies across its various levels of governance. Being able to adopt comprehensive employment strategies, implement the Youth Guarantee, and improve the capacity of public employment services remain key areas of focus for the country.

The governance of employment policy involves multiple levels of responsibility, with primary policy competence resting with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republika Srpska and Brčko District. The Ministry of Civil Affairs provides overall coordination at the state level. Public institutions at various levels support employment developments, reflecting the complex governance structure from state to entity down to local levels.

Republika Srpska adopted an employment strategy for the period 2021-2027 in November 2021, which includes several elements of the Youth Guarantee. However, the Federation's draft strategy for the same period is yet to be passed by the FBiH House of Peoples. A lack of consensus on employment strategies state-wide poses challenges in areas like the integrated skills monitoring framework and aligning youth employment support with the EU's Youth Guarantee scheme.

While some progress has been made in social policy and employment, significant challenges remain in the areas of employment, social inclusion, poverty reduction, and coordination among responsible bodies across the country. In the coming period, BiH is urged to: (1) develop and adopt regional and countrywide employment strategies to provide a policy framework with sufficient capacity for implementation and monitoring; (2) develop a Youth Guarantee implementation plan in line with the EU model and guidance to support youth employment initiatives, and; (3) introduce a uniform minimum level of maternity leave benefits and protection throughout the country.

Initiatives to boost employment

According to the Regional Cooperation Council (2022), Public Employment Services (PES), including the PES FBiH (Federation of BiH), PES RS (Republika Srpska), and PES BD (Brčko District), offer various services to jobseekers and employers. These services encompass registration, profiling, segmentation, and developing Individual Action Plans (IAPs) for jobseekers. Different levels of data are used for profiling across the various PESs, resulting in varying methods of segmentation based on jobseekers' proximity to the labour market.

The PES FBiH provides services such as vocational counselling, career guidance and work permits for jobseekers. Employment incentives, start-up incentives, direct job creation, and various training courses constitute the range of Active Labor Market Policies (ALMPs) offered by the PES FBiH. PES RS also provides similar services and ALMPs, with some differences such as predefined characteristics for profiling and a clear segmentation of jobseekers based on their labour market proximity. The PES RS is preparing to implement the Youth Guarantee. The PES BD also offers careers counselling and guidance for younger jobseekers. ALMPs provided by the PES BD include various training courses, start-up incentives, employment incentives and externally run training courses.

According to the State Employment Agency of BiH, in 2022⁽¹⁾ there were 354 323 people registered as jobseekers across the regional Public Employment Services, of which 205 870 were women and over 200 000 had medium-level education attainment. The total number of jobseekers in counselling services has grown strongly over the years and reached 121 014 in 2022. Job matching service directing jobseekers to employers includes persons referred to employers via mediation services, advertisements published in employment offices or via advertisements from different sources. 46 390 people were referred to employers in 2022 (27 299 male and 19,091 female). Other labour market services in 2022 included developing individual employment plans for 68 537 jobseekers, taking part in information seminars (4 779), job search clubs (39) and other workshops (1 603). Overall, the growing numbers of unemployed people benefiting from labour market services reveal an improvement in PES outreach and service delivery by the three main Bosnia and Herzegovina administrations.

For the past few years, there has been a steady decline in take up for training: from 1 096 in 2019 to 290 in 2022. This category includes data from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The opposite trend is seen for start-ups incentives, which grew from 2 913 beneficiaries in 2019 to 4 063 in 2022. Employment incentives targeted 12 082 people in 2022, increasing from 2021 but below the pre-Covid 19 number of 17 610 in 2019.

In 2022, 32.4% of the registered unemployed transitioned from unemployment into employment, slightly up on 2020 but below the pre-Covid 19 crisis level of 35.8% (2019). As a trend, the percentage of women gaining jobs is much lower –28.7% of women versus 37.5% of men in 2022. By level of educational attainment, the percentage of registered unemployed who made the leap from unemployment into employment in 2022 is the highest for people with higher education (74.8%) and lowest for those with a low level (12.9%).

The total number of vacancies according to PESs in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska was 57 069 in 2022, a growing number since 2020, but still below the number of vacancies prior to the Covid-19 crisis (over 62 000 in 2019).

Initiatives to increase the public employment service capacity

In recent developments, PESs have expanded their channels of service provision by bringing in online portals, like the eOffice, which offer a variety of PES services for jobseekers and employers.

In the PES FBiH, noteworthy achievements include the introduction of ISO standards, the drawing up of a risk register, and a new specialised research unit. However, the high caseload of PES counsellors remains a significant challenge, affecting the quality of support they are able to provide to jobseekers. This issue of high caseloads is not unique to PES FBiH and is true across other PES entities in BiH as well. The PES RS has focused on standardising its processes and enhancing its analytical capacities, as well as developing IT infrastructure and implementing automated matching systems. Although progress has been made in these areas, challenges around data availability, data quality, and staff resistance to process standardisation still need to be addressed. In the PES BD, achievements include the successful implementation of digital services and the establishment of strong relationships with regional employers, leading to events like job fairs. Despite these strengths, limited numbers of specialised staff for employer collaboration work remains a constraint.

Efforts to establish data exchanges between PESs in BiH are ongoing. This would improve coordination and collaboration in delivering effective services to jobseekers.

For further information please contact Jan Peter Ganter de Otero, European Training Foundation, email: jan-peter.ganter-de-otero@etf.europa.eu.

⁽¹⁾ Data source for this and subsequent paragraphs of this sub-chapter is ETF ALMP data collection 2023, based on figures reported by ETF Partner Countries Public Employment Services or data collected from public sources (PES activity reports, published statistics, etc.).

STATISTICS ANNEX – BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

This Annex includes annual data from 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 or the last available year.

	Indicator	2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022	
1	Total Population (in thousands) ⁽¹⁾	3811.1	3524.3	3360.7	3318.4	3270.9	3233.5	
2	Relative size of youth population (age group 15-24 and denominator age 15-64, %) ^{(1) C}	19.6	18.2	17.2	16.9	16.5	16.1	
3	GDP growth rate (%)	0.9	4.3	2.9	-3.0	7.4	3.9	
4	Gross value added by sector (%)	Agriculture	6.8	6.0	5.5	5.9	5.0	4.7
		Industry	22.5	21.7	23.2	23.8	24.8	25.2
		Services	55.5	54.9	54.6	54.7	53.9	53.7
5	Public expenditure on education (as % of GDP)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
6	Public expenditure on education (as % of total public expenditure)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
7	Adult Literacy (%) ^C	98.1 ⁽⁵⁾	96.9 ⁽⁶⁾	M.D.	M.D.	98.1	M.D.	
8	Educational attainment of total population (aged 15+) (%)	Low ⁽²⁾	42.6	39.5	36.4	30.9	29.7	29.6
		Medium ⁽³⁾	52.2	51.1	54.1	56.6	57.4	57.4
		High ⁽⁴⁾	5.2	9.5	9.6	12.4	12.9	13.0
9	Early leavers from education and training (aged 18-24) (%)	Total	7.9	5.2	3.8 ⁽⁹⁾	4.7	4.7	3.6
		Male	7.7	4.8	4.0 ⁽⁹⁾	4.8 ⁽⁹⁾	4.9 ⁽⁹⁾	3.9 ⁽⁹⁾
		Female	8.1	5.6	3.5 ⁽⁹⁾	4.6 ⁽⁹⁾	4.4 ⁽⁹⁾	3.3 ⁽⁹⁾
10	NET enrolment rates in secondary education (ISCED level 2-3) (%)	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	M.D.	
11	Share of VET students in upper secondary education (ISCED level 3) (%)	74.5	74.2	77.2	78.0	78.4	M.D.	
12	Low achievement in reading, mathematics and science – PISA (%)	Reading	N.A.	N.A.	53.7 ⁽⁷⁾	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Mathematics	N.A.	N.A.	57.6 ⁽⁷⁾	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
		Science	N.A.	N.A.	56.8 ⁽⁷⁾	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
13	Activity rate (aged 15-89) (%)	Total	44.6	44.4	42.7	47.8	48.0 ^{(8)C}	47.6
		Male	56.7	55.4	52.3	59.4	59.7 ^{(8)C}	59.6
		Female	33.2	33.8	33.3	36.9	36.8 ^{(8)C}	36.1

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022
14	Inactivity rate (aged 15-89) (%)	Total	55.4	55.6	57.3	52.2	52.0 ^{(8)C}	52.4
		Male	43.3	44.6	47.7	40.6	40.3 ^{(8)C}	40.4
		Female	66.8	66.2	66.7	63.1	63.2 ^{(8)C}	63.9
15	Employment rate (aged 15-89) (%)	Total	32.5	32.0	35.6	40.1	39.6 ^{(8)C}	40.2
		Male	43.2	41.0	44.7	50.9	51.1 ^{(8)C}	52.1
		Female	23.7	23.3	26.9	29.9	28.7 ^{(8)C}	28.9
16	Employment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Low ⁽²⁾	15.4	14.4	15.7	15.2	12.4 ^{(8)(10)C}	11.4
		Medium ⁽³⁾	42.5	40.3	44.6	47.8	47.8 ^{(8)(10)C}	48.9
		High ⁽⁴⁾	60.9	59.3	59.3	66.8	66.2 ^{(8)(10)C}	67.3
17	Employment by sector (%)	Agriculture	19.7	17.9	18.0	12.0	9.5 ^{(8)(10)C}	7.3
		Industry	31.0	29.5	31.7	33.4	33.5 ^{(8)(10)C}	34.6
		Services	49.3	52.6	50.3	54.7	57.0 ^{(8)(10)C}	58.2
18	Incidence of self-employment (%)		26.5	24.2	24.9	18.4	14.9 ^{(8)(10)C}	13.1
19	Incidence of vulnerable employment (%)		21.6	20.2	19.1	12.7	9.1	8.7
20	Unemployment rate (aged 15-74) (%)	Total	27.2	27.9	15.9	15.9	17.4 ^{(8)C}	15.4
		Male	25.6	25.9	13.8	14.2	14.4 ^{(8)C}	12.6
		Female	29.9	30.9	19.0	18.6	22.0 ^{(8)C}	19.8
21	Unemployment rate by educational attainment (aged 15+) (%)	Low ⁽²⁾	28.0	27.3	14.1	18.3	24.8 ^{(8)(10)C}	25.0
		Medium ⁽³⁾	29.3	30.0	16.9	16.5	17.9 ^{(8)(10)C}	15.4
		High ⁽⁴⁾	15.6	18.4	12.0	12.0	12.0 ^{(8)(10)C}	10.8
22	Unemployment rate (aged 15-24) (%)	Total	57.5	62.3	33.8	36.6	38.3 ^{(8)C}	35.1
		Male	55.1	59.5	31.3	32.5	35.0 ^{(8)C}	31.2
		Female	61.3	67.3	37.9	42.8	44.5 ^{(8)C}	42.1
23	Proportion of people aged 15–29 not in employment,	Total	33.2	32.8	25	25.9	25.1	23.5
		Male	30.6	32.4	22.6	22	21.6	19.8

	Indicator		2010	2015	2019	2020	2021	2022
	education or training (NEETs) (%)	Female	36	33.3	27.9	30.1	28.8	27.4
24	Participation in training/lifelong learning (% aged 25-64)	Total	2.8	2.3	1.8	3.3	2.1	1.8
		Male	2.9	2.1	1.7 ⁽⁹⁾	3.2	2.0	1.6
		Female	2.6	2.4	1.9 ⁽⁹⁾	3.3	2.1	2.0
25	Human Development Index		0.725	0.761	0.783	0.781	0.780	M.D.

Last update: 19/07/2023

Sources:

Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7: The World Bank, World Development Indicators database

Indicators 7, 10, 11: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Indicators 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24: BHAS, LFS

Indicator 12: OECD PISA 2018 Results (Volume I) Annex B1

Indicator 25: UNDP

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Estimation.

⁽²⁾ Low – ISCED 0-2 (2010-2020), Primary school and below (2021)

⁽³⁾ Medium - ISCED 3-4 (2010-2020), Secondary school and specialisation (2021)

⁽⁴⁾ High - ISCED 5-8 (2010-2020), College, university, masters, and doctoral degrees (2021)

⁽⁵⁾ applies to 2011

⁽⁶⁾ applies to 2013

⁽⁷⁾ applies to 2018

⁽⁸⁾ ETF calculations based on BHAS/LFS data

⁽⁹⁾ Unreliable

⁽¹⁰⁾ age 15+ refers to age group 15-89

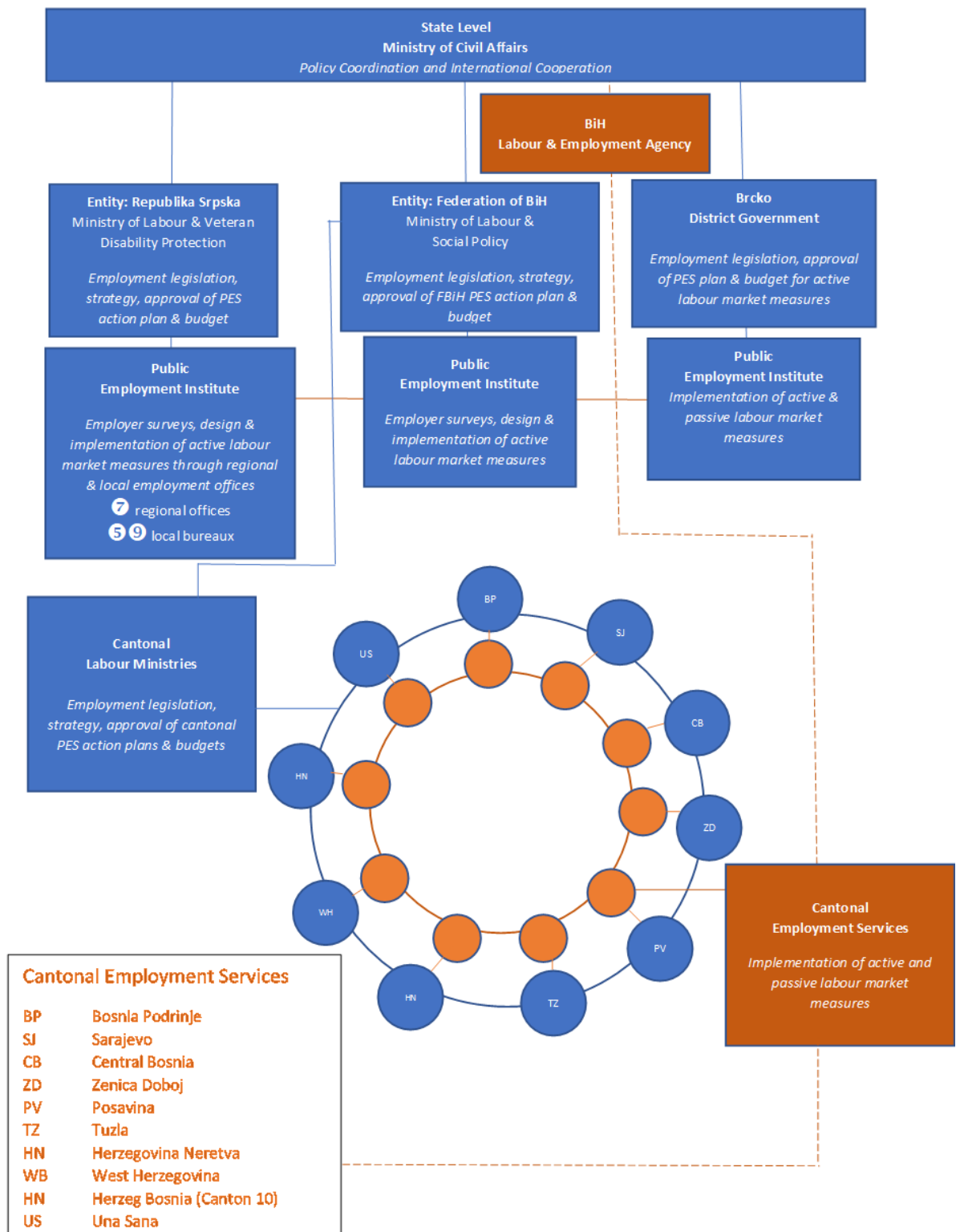
Legend:

C= ETF calculations

N.A. = Not Applicable

M.D. = Missing Data

Organisation chart of the employment institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina



KEY DONOR PROJECTS IN EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Recent and on-going support for developing employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina include:

- European Commission, ILO and ETF technical support to develop the Youth Guarantee implementation plan in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2021 – ongoing).
- European Commission (2020-2023): developing employment policy and strategy in Brčko, entity and state levels with capacity building of the public employment service network.
- European Commission (2020-2023): education for employment project focusing on pre-service teacher training, careers guidance and quality assurance in higher education.
- EU Technical Assistance for VET Education in BiH (2023-2026): The project aims to improve how the education sector responds to labour market needs and enhance the quality of Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, specifically targeting Qualification Framework levels 2-5.
- EU Support to Improved Quality of VET Education (2023-2026). The project aims to improve how the education sector responds to labour market needs. Key outputs include designing and bringing in new occupational and qualification standards, updating VET teacher training courses on digital training content creation, and integrating entrepreneurship and self-employment training.
- The Sustainable Economic Development and Employment Promotion Project led by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH (July 2023 – June 2026). The project aims to improve employment in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on digital and green economic transformations. Co-funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) for Strengthening Vocational Education and Training (SVET).
- The Regional Cooperation Facility (RCF) (2020 – 2027), organised by KfW Development Bank and WB6 Chamber Investment Forum. The project objective is to increase youth employability and enhance companies' competitiveness in the Western Balkan 6 through cooperative training projects. RCF is financed through the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development and co-financed by the Swiss Government.
- The 'Improvement of the Quality and Relevance of VET in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2021-2030' project run by OeAD, and MoEs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project aims to implement a strategic document based on Riga recommendations. Develop action plans in collaboration with development partners, focusing on vocational education and training system priorities.
- New law on VET in the Westherzegowina canton (2023-2024): Backed by OeAD, the ministry of education in Westherzegowina started to develop a new law on VET in the canton in 2023, which has been fully supported by the canton's government.
- The Enhancing the Quality of In-Company Learning: (OeAD) (2022-2024) project aims to improve the quality of vocational education and training by strengthening the role of vocational practice coordinators. Priorities include needs-based roles, standardised procedures, skills development and quality assurance mechanisms.
- Strengthening Vocational Education and Training (SVET) - Phase 2: (OeAD) (July 2023-2026). Objective: Enhance employability by improving the Technical Vocational Education and Training System (TVET) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Focus on on-the-job practical training and collaboration between employers, TVET schools and education authorities.
- Strengthening TVET Systems. Organisation: GOPA Worldwide Consultants GmbH. Duration: Inception Phase (Dec 2023-Nov 2024), Full project (Dec 2024-Nov 2028). Objective: Improve TVET governance to enable relevant actors to lead the changes for a dual-oriented TVET system in a coordinated manner. Confidence and know-how to implement evidence-based policy changes for financially sound TVET systems.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS) (2022). [Demography and Social Statistics. Financial Education Statistics, Year 2020](#). Last accessed 17 January 2023.
- Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS) (2023a). [Demography and Social Statistic. Labour Force Survey, IV quarter year 2022](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023.
- Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS) (2023b). [Gross Domestic Product of Bosnia and Herzegovina 2022. Production Approach, First Results](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023
- Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS) (2023c). [Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2022](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023
- APOSO, [Pisa 2018 report for Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Last accessed 16 November 2021.
- ETF (2020). [Bosnia and Herzegovina, Education, Training and Employment Developments 2020](#).
- ETF (2022). [A review of national career development support systems in the Western Balkans](#). Last accessed 17 January 2023.
- ETF (2023). [Torino Process System Monitoring Report: Bosnia and Herzegovina \(2023\)](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023.
- European Commission,. [Bosnia and Herzegovina 2023 Report](#). Last accessed on 22 November 2023:
- Ministry of Civil Affairs and OeAD,. [Improvement of Quality and Relevance of Vocational Education and Training in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Light of Riga Conclusions for the period 2021-2030](#).
- OECD (2021), *Bosnia and Herzegovina profile*, '[Competitiveness in South East Europe 2021: A Policy Outlook](#)', OECD Publishing, Paris.
- OECD (2022), [Multi-dimensional Review of the Western Balkans: From Analysis to Action](#), OECD Development Pathways, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- World Bank (N.D). [Bosnia and Herzegovina](#). Last accessed on 6 September 2023:
- Regional Cooperation Council (2022). [PES Bench-learning Report Public Employment Services](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023
- OECD (N.D) (2018). [Education GPS: Bosnia and Herzegovina. Student performance Pisa 2018](#). Last accessed 6 September 2023.