

CESS BACKGROUND

Bosnia and Herzegovina – Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Democratic Oversight of Security

Since the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has maintained a delicate peace. A complicated, decentralised government system and deeply-entrenched ethnic divisions have hindered democratic development, as well as progress towards the country's European integration ambitions. Security sector oversight tasks are divided among state-, entity-, and canton-level governance systems. This background outlines security sector oversight at the entity level of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), not to be confused with the overarching state level of BiH.

Condition of democratic oversight of security



CULTURE

Party politics and discipline obstructs individual responsibility to hold the executive to account.



CAPACITY

Shortage of skills among elected representatives and lack of support staff available.



COOPERATION

Limited awareness on how and with whom to cooperate in the security sector.

Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (majority Croat and Bosniak) and the Republika Srpska (majority Serb). The Brčko District of BiH has its own status in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both the state-level government and each entity have their own political responsibilities.

The state-level government is responsible for policy areas such as foreign policy, international obligations, and immigration, while the entities are responsible for most of their own internal affairs, such as education and health care.

The Federation is divided into 10 cantons, each with their own government. All cantons together consist of 79 municipalities.



Map: Wikipedia

Parliamentary oversight in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is conducted by the following institutions. The Federation has a bicameral assembly:



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
(LOWER HOUSE)**

- CONSISTS OF 98 SEATS
- 4-YEAR MANDATE
- MAY BE DISSOLVED BY THE PRESIDENT



**HOUSE OF PEOPLES
(UPPER HOUSE)**

- CONSISTS OF 80 SEATS: 23 CROAT, 23 BOSNIAK, 23 SERB; 11 OTHER (MINORITIES)
- 4-YEAR MANDATE
- MAY BE DISSOLVED BY THE PRESIDENT



Security Committee House of Representatives

- 11 members
- Meets about 4 times a year

Is tasked with:

- Giving opinions and proposals to the House of Representatives
- Proposing measures for organising, managing, and developing the security of the Federation
- Considering issues of combating terrorism, inter-cantonal crime, illicit drug trade, and organised crime
- Considering questions about the acquisition, possession, and carrying of weapons
- Reviewing drafts and proposals of laws and other general acts regulating the security of the Federation and providing opinion and proposals to the House of Representatives



Security Committee of the House of Peoples

- 7 members
- Meets rarely, 1-2 times per mandate

Is tasked with:

- Proposing measures for the organisation, management, and development of security in the Federation
- Considering issues related to the suppression of terrorism, inter-cantonal crime, drug trafficking, and organised crime
- Considering issues related to the procurement, possession, and carrying of weapons
- Considering drafts and proposals for laws and other general acts regulating the area of security in the Federation and providing opinions and proposals to the House of Peoples
- Conducting preparatory work when the House of Peoples decides to conduct an investigation



Independent Board

- 7 members
- 4-year mandate

Is tasked with:

- Appointing the director and deputy director

of the Federal Police Administration

- Monitoring the work of the police leadership

The Human Rights Ombudsmen handle complaints and investigate human rights violations committed by any organ of BiH, its entities and the Brčko District of BiH. The three ombudspersons (Bosniak, Croat and Serb) have offices in Banja Luka (main seat of the institution), Brčko District, Mostar, Sarajevo and a field office in Livno.

- 6-year mandate, appointed by the Parliamentary Assembly
- Reports to the PA of BiH as well as to entity parliaments and the Assembly of the Brčko District.



Audit Office of the Institutions in FBiH

The Audit Office is independent and:

- Headed by the auditor general, with a mandate of seven years
- Divided into different sectors and departments related to specific issues and institutions
- The Audit Office of FBiH seeks to improve the system of financial management and control, and contribute to greater accountability and transparency in the public sector.



Civil Society



- There are 25,646 registered associations and foundations in BiH. Only a few of these work within the field of security.
- Many organisations are active on a national scale; others focus on a specific entity, canton or municipality.
- Civil society and academia can critically scrutinize the executive and should therefore be considered a stakeholder in democratic security sector oversight.

Increasing committee and individual oversight activity over party discipline.

2

Performing oversight within the constraints of the current governance system.

1

Building capacity among elected representatives.

3

About BIHOS

BIHOS seeks to strengthen democratic governance and inclusive oversight of the security sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the state, entity, and canton levels. It does so by:

- Investing in *capacities* through providing tools, skills, and techniques to oversight actors.
- Fostering *cooperation* among parliaments, civil society organisations, and other oversight actors.
- Promoting a *culture* of oversight that is critical and constructive.

BIHOS consists of a capacity-building component (training courses, peer-to-peer consultations, training-of-trainers, fellowship programme, and study visits) and a research component (expert labs, policy-oriented analysis, regular publications). The project is implemented by CESS from the Netherlands, in cooperation with the Centre for Security Studies (CSS), and the European Defendology Center (EDC) from BiH. BIHOS is funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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