



Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees  
Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons,  
Readmission and Housing Policy

# **Information brochure**

## **on ensuring the rights and obligations of refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Sarajevo, December 2023



BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA  
Ministarstvo za ljudska prava i izbjeglice  
Bosne i Hercegovine



БОСНА И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНА  
Министарство за људска права и избјеглице  
Босне и Херцеговине



In cooperation with



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees

# Information brochure

## on ensuring the rights and obligations of refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina

This publication is printed within the project “Ensured socio and economic inclusion for refugee population in need of international protection in BiH”, supported by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and implemented by Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in BiH. The content and findings presented in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position of the UNHCR.

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# 1. PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE INFORMATION BROCHURE

This information brochure aims to provide access to the information important for exercising the legally recognized rights of the **following categories of foreigners in Bosnia and Herzegovina** for the whole duration of their recognized status in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH):

- **foreigners with recognized refugee status under a final decision by the Ministry of Security of BiH;**
- **foreigners with recognized subsidiary protection status under a final decision by the Ministry of Security of BiH.**

If you fall into any of the above categories of foreigners in BiH, please read this brochure carefully because it will be useful to you in accessing the statutory rights and exemptions during your permitted stay in BiH or in the process of your inclusion-integration into BiH society!

## 2. ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND EXEMPTIONS

### 2.1. A precondition for exercising rights and exemptions

The first step and precondition for accessing all the prescribed rights and exemptions is the **refugee or subsidiary protection status recognized by the Ministry of Security of BiH** and a **valid refugee or subsidiary protection card-ID**. The card-ID serves as an identification card in the procedures before the competent authorities and enables access to rights.

### 2.2. Access to rights

If your refugee status is recognized or you are a foreigner under subsidiary protection in BiH, you can access the **statutory rights based on the refugee or subsidiary protection card-ID issued by the Ministry of Security of BiH**.

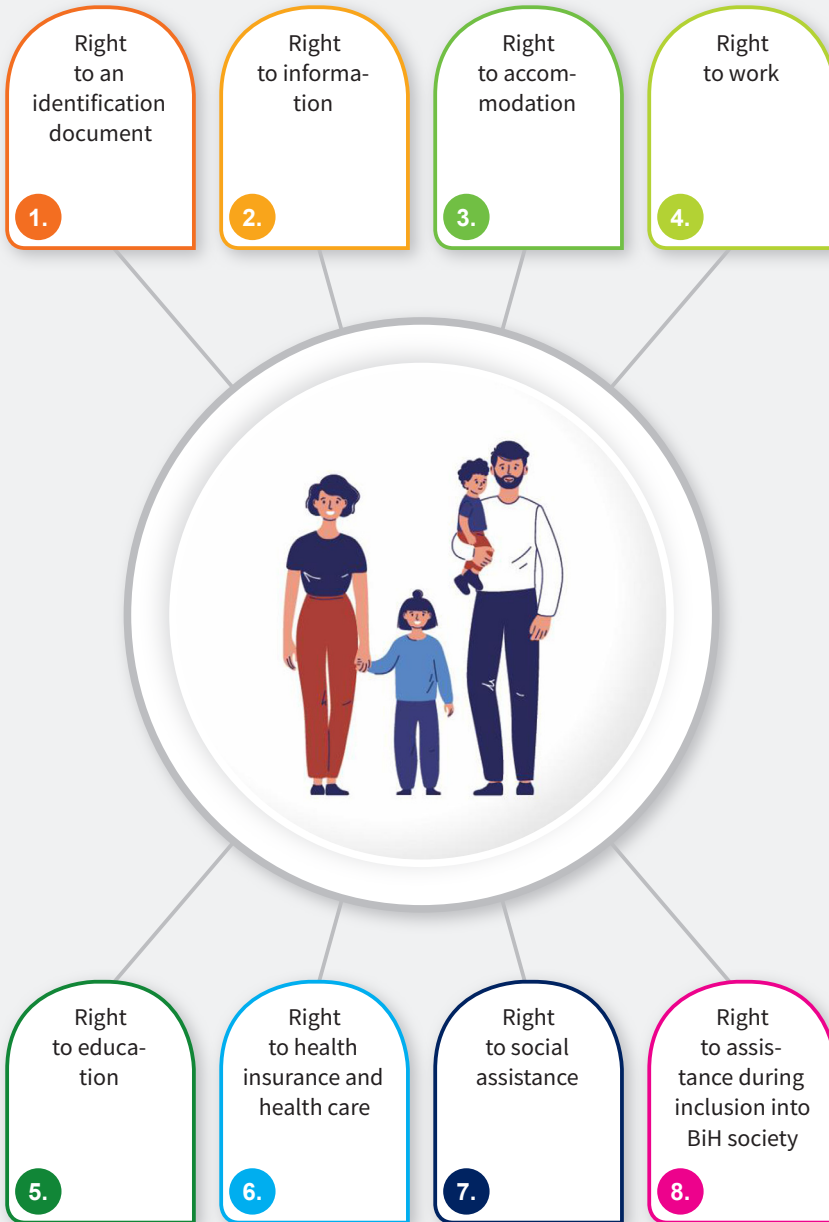
**Access to the following rights** is ensured for you in BiH:

1. **Right to an identification document;**
2. **Right to information;**
3. **Right to accommodation;**
4. **Right to work;**
5. **Right to education;**
6. **Right to health insurance;**
7. **Right to social assistance;**
8. **Right to assistance in inclusion into BiH society.**

Besides the rights above, upon own request and **under the legally prescribed conditions**, a **refugee is entitled to family reunion**, i.e. reunion with the family members outside of BiH, and is also **entitled to a travel document**, while a **foreigner under subsidiary protection is entitled to maintaining family unity**.

**Members of the families of foreigners with recognized refugee status who have gained the right to family reunion in the legally prescribed procedure are entitled to accommodation, health insurance, education, and work. Members of the families of foreigners with recognized subsidiary protection status who have gained the right to family reunion are entitled to accommodation and education.**

## RIGHTS



## 2.3. Access to the right to assistance/exemptions during inclusion into BiH society

Besides the earlier listed rights, foreigners whose refugee or subsidiary protection status is recognized in the legally prescribed procedure and their family members who have legally gained the right to family reunion or maintaining family unity are entitled to the following exemptions to help their inclusion into BiH society:

1. Learning official languages in BiH;
2. Learning about and familiarizing with the cultural background in BiH;
3. Assistance in the procedure for recognizing public and other required documents from the country of origin in BiH;
4. Assistance in the translation, verification, and equivalence of the required educational and status documents from the country of origin for easier inclusion into BiH society;
5. Legal aid;
6. Psychosocial support;
7. Assistance in access to social housing;
8. Support in vocational training programs and additional training and retraining programs related to the qualifications earned in the country of origin;
9. Assistance in the inclusion of children in preschool activities;
10. Access to information important for easier inclusion into BiH society through an information brochure and other forms of information about the available rights and exemptions.



## RIGHT TO ASSISTANCE-EXEMPTIONS DURING INCLUSION INTO BIH SOCIETY

1.

Learning official languages in BiH

2.

Learning about and familiarizing with the cultural background in BiH

3.

Assistance in the procedure for recognizing public and other required documents from the country of origin in BiH

4.

Assistance in the translation, verification, and equivalence of the required educational and status documents from the country of origin for easier inclusion into BiH society

5.

Legal aid

6.

Psychosocial support

7.

Assistance in access to social housing

8.

Support in vocational training programs and additional training and retraining programs related to the qualifications earned in the country of origin

9.

Assistance in the inclusion of children in preschool activities

10.

Access to information important for easier inclusion into BiH society through an information brochure and other forms of information about the available rights and exemptions

## 2.4. Obligations

For the duration of the refugee or subsidiary protection status, you are obligated to:

- respect public order in BiH, laws and regulations in BiH, and comply with the decisions of the competent authorities in BiH;
- request the replacement of the refugee or subsidiary protection card;
- report possible loss of the card;
- report the change of residence address;
- report all changes affecting the exercise and scope of the granted rights;
- notify the Ministry of Security of BiH if you are going to spend more than six months out of BiH continuously.

### How to access the rights and exemptions?

Some of the rights and exemptions may be granted to the family members of foreigners with recognized refugee or subsidiary protection status who have accessed the right to family reunion or maintaining family unity under the Law on Asylum.

You may access the listed and described rights and exemptions in this brochure according to your individual needs and only upon your request in person.



## 2.5. Access to right to accommodation

Bosnia and Herzegovina has provided accommodation for persons under international protection in the **Refugee and Shelter Center "Salakovac" in Mostar** (hereinafter: center) managed by the **Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH** (hereinafter: the MHRR).

The application for accommodation in the center is to be submitted to the MHRR in person or through an agent.

If the BiH minister for human rights and refugees approves it, you will be placed in the center in accordance with its available capacity.

Your accommodation in the center may last up to two years, with the possibility of a one-year extension and even more than once upon proposal of the Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons, Readmission and Housing Policy and after consultations with the psychosocial support team and UNHCR.

As an exception, the stay in the center may be extended more than once and last not more than five years.

During your stay in the center, you may use other prescribed rights and exemptions (health insurance, education, food, transportation to educational and educational institutions).

Under the signed cooperation protocols and upon request of an NGO specialized in providing psychosocial and legal assistance, the MHRR may allow the NGO to enter the RSC "Salakovac" to provide such support to a center user provided that the user requests such support. Psychosocial support will be ensured in close cooperation and work with the locally competent center for social work and medical institutions.

## ACCESS TO RIGHT TO ACCOMMODATION

1.

Request for accommodation to the MHRR in person or through an agent

2.

Request is reviewed by the MHRR's Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons, Readmission and Housing Policy.

3.

Decision is made by the MHRR's minister.



With the minister's approval, the beneficiary is placed in the center.

## 2.6. Access to right to work

**You are entitled to work for the duration of your refugee or subsidiary protection status, and this right also belongs to your family members in the case of family reunion.**

With the international protection status, you are not permitted to enter a job in the executive, judicial, and legislative authorities, and also the institutions in which BiH citizenship is a requirement for employment.

**With the refugee or subsidiary protection status, you are entitled to registration in the records of unemployed persons in the competent employment institution under the same conditions as BiH citizens.** Gaining the unemployment status gives you the same rights and obligations as BiH citizens.

The competent employment institution is determined according to your place of temporary/permanent residence.

### 2.6.1. Documents for registering with the competent employment institution

For your registration with the competent employment institution, you have to submit the following documents:

- 1) An identification document (a valid refugee or subsidiary protection card);
- 2) Registration certificate for your place of temporary/permanent residence;
- 3) The form RSFL (Foreigners' registration in the tax authority system) or other appropriate form;
- 4) Proof of education level or qualifications;
- 5) A signed statement under the applicable legislation in BiH.

### 2.6.2. Diploma recognition

During your registration with the competent employment institution, along with the diploma from the country of origin or your previous stay, you also have to submit a **legal document officially recognizing the diploma's validity.**

The procedure for recognizing diplomas earned in the country of origin or previous stay is conducted as prescribed in the legislation regulating the field of recognizing foreign qualifications in BiH.

For the purpose of employment, the following institutions recognize higher education qualifications earned outside of BiH: in the Republic of Srpska, it is the Committee for Information and Recognition of Higher Education Documents; in the Federation of BiH, higher education institutions and cantonal ministries (depending on the canton); and in the Brcko District of BiH, it is the Committee for Recognition of Higher Education Documents.

### 2.6.3. Data on years of service

If there is no work record book, the competent institution for pension and disability insurance or the competent tax department (according to the place of temporary/permanent residence) issues the data on the years of service and paid pensionable years of service earned by refugees and persons under subsidiary protection in BiH.

### 2.6.4. Employment without the mediation of the competent employment institution

Refugees and persons under subsidiary protection may freely and without the mediation of competent institutions seek a job, sign employment contracts, and self-employ.

### 2.6.5. Identification documents for signing an employment contract

During the signing of an employment contract, a valid **refugee or subsidiary protection card is used** as an identification document. **Only the information on the card is acceptable.**

These identification documents are also used for paying contributions arising from work to the competent funds.

**You do not need a work permit** to start a job or self-employment with the refugee or subsidiary protection status. You may access all the rights under the same conditions as BiH citizens.

**The MHRR stops paying your health insurance contribution on the date of your entering a job or starting self-employment.**

**Within 15 days from the date of signing an employment contract, you have to notify the MHRR about it and attach a copy of the contract.** The MHRR will immediately deregister you with competent health and social insurance services.

If you become unemployed, you have the same unemployment rights as BiH citizens.

**If your employment contract is terminated** without having health insurance on another basis in BiH, **the MHRR will pay your health insurance contributions provided that you officially notify the MHRR or your agent.**

**The competent authorities that enable persons with recognized refugee or subsidiary protection status to access the open market are:**

- 1) Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH;
- 2) competent entity ministries;
- 3) competent departments in the Brcko District of BiH;
- 4) entity employment bureaus;

- 5) Employment Bureau of the Brcko District of BiH;
- 6) cantonal employment bureaus in the Federation of BiH;
- 7) entity institutions for pension and disability insurance;
- 8) municipal departments in charge of labor.

It is clear from the above that entering a job always means **signing an appropriate employment contract**, so we suggest that you always request such a contract from your employer upon entering a job in order to protect your legal and other certainty. Any other work engagement is considered undeclared work, which is punishable under the applicable law.

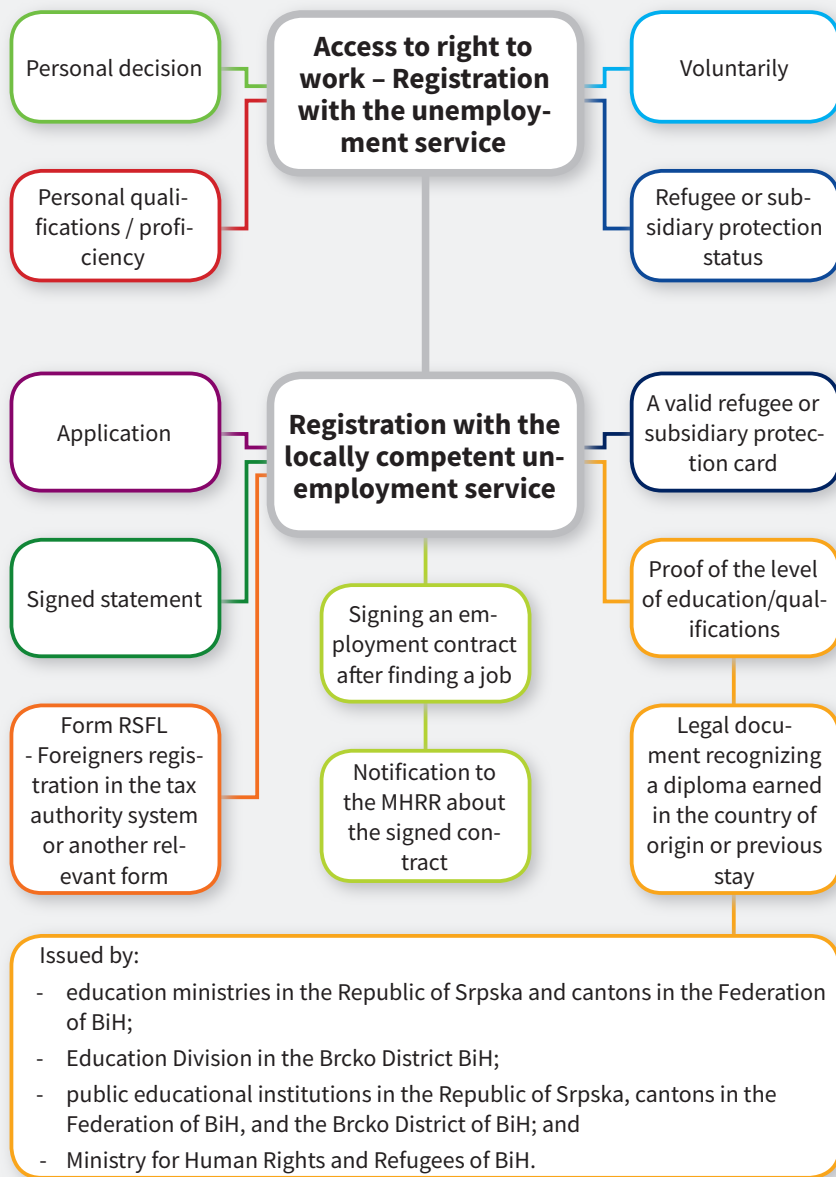
### **2.6.6. Driver's license**

In order to increase your chances for employment, we certainly encourage you to obtain a driver's license to operate a motorized vehicle in BiH.

To operate a motorized vehicle, you first need to attend theoretical and practical lessons conducted by licensed driving schools registered in the place of your permanent/temporary residence. You have to submit the same documents as BiH citizens do except the personal ID card instead of which you should attach a copy of your refugee or subsidiary protection card.

Upon submitting the application with completed documentation, the competent department of the ministry of interior in the municipality of your permanent/temporary residence will issue you a driver's license.

## ACCESS TO RIGHT TO WORK



## 2.7. Access to right to education

### 2.7.1. Education levels

Persons under international protection are guaranteed access to right to education **under the same conditions as BiH citizens**. The education levels are preschool upbringing and education, elementary, high school, and higher education.

### 2.7.2. Persons entitled to education

Persons entitled to education are **foreigners with recognized refugee or subsidiary protection status and family members of recognized refugees who gained the right to family reunion under the applicable legislation**.

Preschool, elementary, and high school education are **free of charge** in public educational institutions u BiH.

### 2.7.3. Preschool upbringing and education

#### 2.7.3.1. The way of accessing the right to preschool upbringing and education

**From the age of six months until starting school, children have the right to preschool upbringing and education, which is mandatory in the year before the first elementary school year** under the applicable legislation on preschool upbringing and education in BiH.

The mandatory preschool education is free of charge!

For enrollment in a preschool institution, children's legal guardians have to present the documents required for the children's enrollment in such institutions.

**If a child's legal guardian is unable to obtain the child's birth certificate for preschool enrollment, the preschool institution will enroll the child based on a valid refugee or subsidiary protection card.**

A preschool institution has to treat such children during their preschool upbringing and education like BiH children with regard to their rights and obligations.

Depending on the possibilities, the MHRR secures funds for accommodating the children in public preschool upbringing and educational institutions.

Depending on the financial possibilities, the MHRR secures funds for assessing individual needs and helping refugees and persons under subsidiary protection for their education in special upbringing and educational institutions if it is not possible to provide them with an appropriate education in regular schools.



## 2.8. Elementary education

### 2.8.1. The way of accessing the right to elementary education

As a rule, children aged 6 to 15, entitled to education in BiH, are guaranteed the right to elementary education, which is mandatory under the applicable legislation governing elementary education in BiH.

**Parents who do not send their children to elementary school are criminally responsible!**

During enrollment in elementary school, refugees and persons under subsidiary protection or their legal guardians have to present the required documents. **If they are unable to obtain the child's birth certificate to enroll the child in elementary grade 1, the school will enroll the child based on a valid refugee or subsidiary protection card, which replaces the birth certificate.**

### 2.8.2. Enrollment in lower and higher elementary grades

If a child entitled to education in BiH is to be enrolled in a lower or higher elementary grade except for elementary grade 1 but is not able to prove the level of earlier completed education under the applicable legislation governing this field in BiH, then the competent authorities will determine their level of knowledge, based on which such child will be enrolled in a lower or higher grade under the already established procedure.

## 2.9. High school education

### 2.9.1. The way of accessing the right to high school education

During enrollment in high school, children entitled to education based on the refugee or subsidiary protection status or their legal guardians have to present the required documents. If they are unable to obtain the child's birth certificate for the purpose of high school enrollment, **the school will enroll the child based on the refugee or subsidiary protection card, which replaces the birth certificate.**

### 2.9.2. Enrollment in high school grades

If a child entitled to education in BiH is to be enrolled in high school based on the refugee or subsidiary protection status but is not able to prove the level of earlier completed education under the applicable legislation governing this field in BiH, then the competent authorities will determine their level of knowledge to decide on the high school grade for enrollment under the already established procedure.

### 2.9.3. Right to education of children with disabilities

Based on the refugee or subsidiary protection status, children and youth with disabilities gain education in regular schools under the curriculums adapted to their individual needs. An **individual program, adapted to their abilities and capabilities, will be made for every such child with mandatory defectology and speech therapy assessment of their condition.**

If it is not possible to provide an appropriate education in regular schools, children and youth with serious difficulties and disabilities in development can be educated fully or partially in special upbringing and educational institutions.

The MHRR's regulation on integration exemptions regulates the way of paying costs of education in special upbringing and educational institutions when it is not possible to provide an appropriate education in regular schools.

## 2.10. Higher education and diploma recognition

### 2.10.1. Right to higher education

Persons with refugee or subsidiary protection status are entitled to higher education in BiH under the same conditions as BiH citizens.

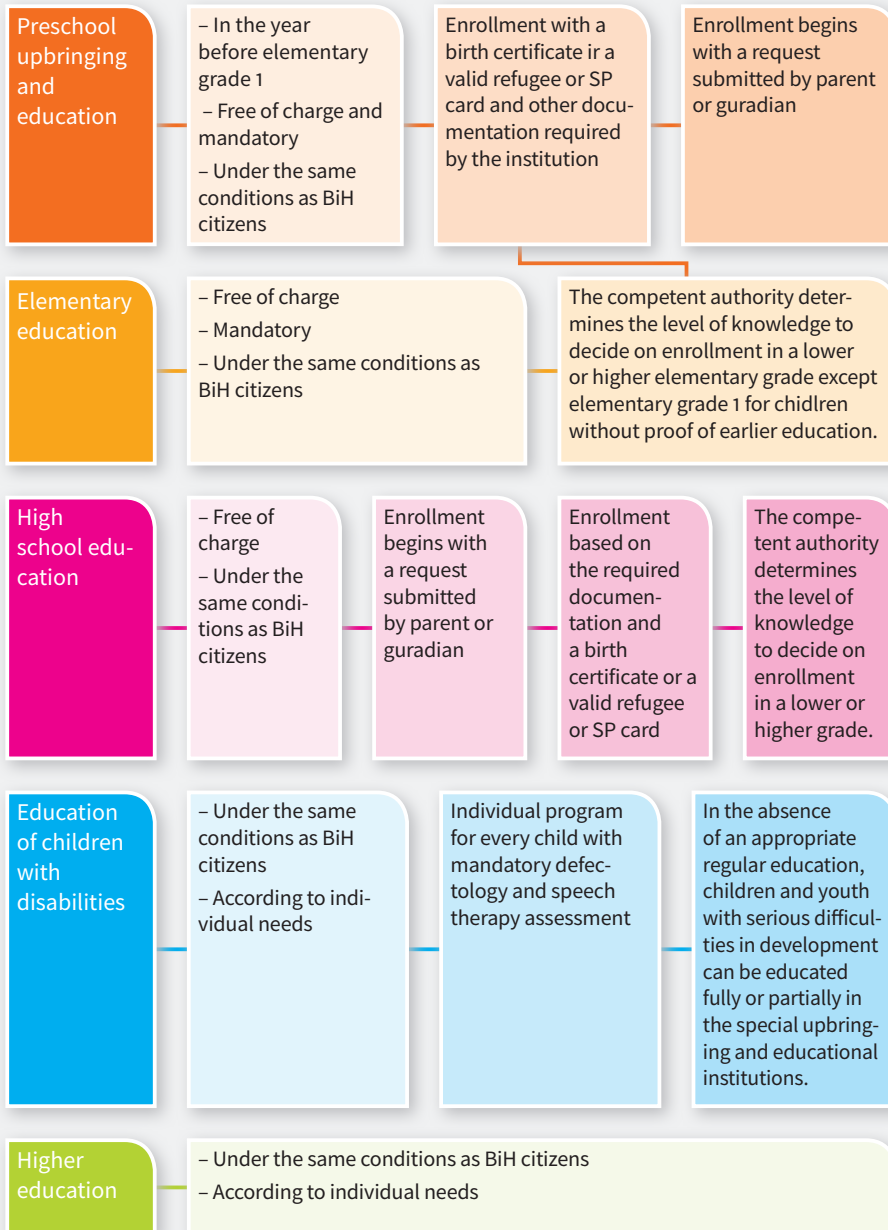
### 2.10.2. Diploma recognition

The MHRR ensures the payment of costs for recognizing diplomas earned in the country of origin or previous stay in the amount set in the legislation governing the recognition of foreign qualifications in BiH and **gives special approval for the compensation of the relevant costs to the person in question.**

The following authorities are competent for deciding on access to right to education for refugees and persons under subsidiary protection in BiH:

- education ministries in the Republic of Srpska and cantons in the Federation of BiH;
- Education Division in the Brcko District BiH;
- public educational institutions in the Republic of Srpska, cantons in the Federation of BiH, and the Brcko District of BiH; and
- Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH.

## ACCESS TO RIGHT TO EDUCATION



## 2.11. Access to right to health insurance

**As long as your refugee or subsidiary protection status is recognized, you and your family members who have gained the right to family reunion under the applicable legislation in BiH are entitled to health insurance.**

Family members of the health insurance holder have the right to mandatory health insurance on this basis, provided that they do not exercise this right on another basis in BiH.

**If you have gained the right to work, social protection, or another right as the basis for mandatory health insurance, you may access your rights to health insurance and health care as set out in the applicable BiH legislation on health care and health insurance.**

**If you are unemployed, you may access the right to mandatory health insurance as set out in the applicable legislation on health insurance inasmuch as these regulations are not contrary to the Law on Asylum and regulations in that field.**

### 2.11.1. Registration for mandatory health insurance and procedure

If you have not otherwise gained health insurance in BiH, you should **contact the MHRR** in person or through your agent and mandatorily submit:

- A copy of the refugee or subsidiary protection card;
- A copy of the certificate of temporary/permanent residence, issued by the Service for Foreigners Affairs;
- A copy of the power of attorney if you have a legal representative;
- The form POR-504, signed and filled in with basic information (you can find the form on the web page of the Tax Authority of the Federation of BiH or the Tax Authority of the Republic of Srpska).

Upon your request, the MHRR will contact the competent tax authority depending on your temporary/permanent residence, and you will be assigned a non-resident identification number based on which you will be registered in the tax system in BiH. Underage family members are registered in the same way. Separate insurance is provided to persons older than 15 who do not attend regular school.

Once you receive a non-resident identification number, the MHRR will register you with the competent tax authority using the form JS 3120 – Registration under certain circumstances, and the tax authority will send the registration to the competent health insurance department in BiH.

When the registration processing is finished, you will be notified and then you need to take a certificate of your insurance at the health insurance department or an electronic health card after it is printed.

Figure: Design of some health cards in BiH



With the health card or the certificate, you can have your medical record opened with a family medicine doctor in the health center in your place of temporary/permanent residence.

In this procedure, you are gaining the right to health care in public medical institutions in BiH (health centers, hospitals, maternity hospitals, dental services, pharmacies, etc.) in your place of temporary/permanent residence like BiH citizens.

If you find a job or some circumstances in your health insurance change, you have to notify the MHRR to ensure the continuation of health insurance on another basis, such as work, etc.

### 2.11.2. Deregistration of mandatory health insurance

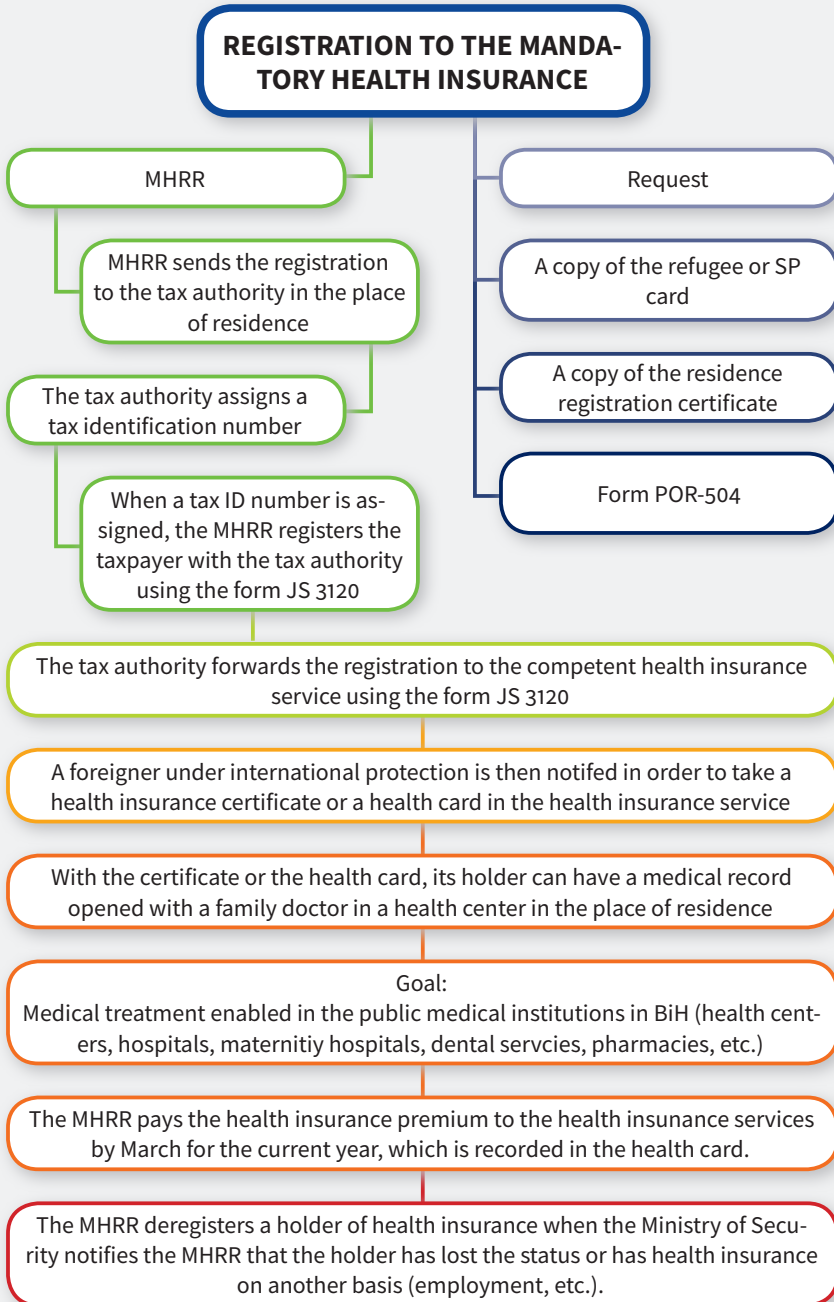
Using the prescribed form, the MHRR deregisters holders of mandatory health insurance, those whose status is terminated under a final decision by the Ministry of Security of BiH, and those who have met the conditions for mandatory health insurance on some other basis.

### 2.11.3. Payment of the health insurance premium

The MHRR is the entity obligated to pay the health insurance premium, which is paid for you to the health insurance services at the latest by March for the current year. For refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection, the premium is paid according to their place of temporary/permanent residence in BiH. Currently, the services in question are in Una-Sana Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Tuzla Canton, and Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.

The premium is recorded in the electronic or printed health card, which enables you to use health care without costs.

## ACCESS TO RIGHT TO HEALTH INSURANCE



## 2.12. Access to right to social assistance

You may access the right to social assistance for the duration of your status.

### Social assistance

**Social assistance means social protection and protection of families with children / protection of children of persons under international protection in BiH.**

**The statutory rights from the field of social protection are:**

- a) financial assistance (permanent);
- b) financial compensation (allowance) for a carer;
- c) one-off financial assistance;
- d) assistance for making children and youth independent in life and work;
- e) accommodation in the social protection institutions;
- f) in-home care and assistance;
- g) other financial assistance.

**The rights from the protection of families with children / children's protection are:**

- a) children's allowance;
- b) salary compensation to a new working mother while she is absent from work because of pregnancy, childbirth, and child care / salary compensation during maternity leave;
- c) financial assistance to an unemployed mother / maternity allowance;
- d) one-off childbirth grant.

### 2.12.1.1. Financial basis for determining the amount of assistance

The financial basis for determining the amount of assistance based on statutory rights is the **average net salary in BiH according to the latest data published by the Statistics Agency of BiH.**

### 2.12.1.2. Scope of rights from social assistance

**The scope of rights from social assistance is determined as follows:**

- a) Financial assistance (permanent) in the amount of 20% of the financial basis for the livelihood of a single family member, increased by 10% of the basis for every next household member. The total amount of this assistance cannot exceed 50% of the basis.
- b) Financial compensation (allowance) for a carer in the amount of 20% of the basis;
- c) One-off financial assistance in the amount of up to 30% of the basis, which may be paid not more than three times a year;

- d) Assistance for making children and youth independent in life and work is determined according to the amount of the established economic costs of daily stay and accommodation.
- e) Accommodation in the social protection institutions and pocket allowance in the amount of 100% of the price established under the applicable regulations in the place of temporary/permanent residence.

#### **2.12.1.3. Other financial assistance**

Other financial assistance is a **limited financial assistance given monthly to persons with refugee or subsidiary protection status**.

The limited financial assistance amounts to 15% of the financial basis for the livelihood of a single family member, increased by 1.5% of the basis for every next family member. The total amount of this assistance cannot exceed 20% of the basis.

The competent authority issues a procedural decision determining the amount and duration of the right to limited financial assistance for every beneficiary of this right.

Persons with refugee or subsidiary protection status cannot use limited financial assistance if they earn income from work.

#### **2.12.1.4. Scope of rights from the protection of families with children / children's protection**

**The scope of rights from the protection of families with children / children's protection is determined as follows:**

- a) Children's allowance in the amount of 2% of the financial basis without exceeding 10% of the basis;
- b) Salary compensation to a new working mother while she is absent from work because of pregnancy, childbirth, and child care / salary compensation during maternity leave in the amount of 20% of the basis;
- c) Financial assistance to an unemployed new mother / maternity allowance in the amount of 10% of the basis;
- d) One-off childbirth grant in the amount of 20% of the basis.

#### **2.12.1.5. Conditions for accessing the rights**

You may access the rights and obligations based on social protection and protection of families with children / children's protection **under the conditions set out in the applicable legislation according to your place of temporary/permanent residence**.

**The procedural decision on the right to accommodation in the social protection institutions is issued with the MHRR's previous written approval.**



If you are placed in the Refugee and Shelter Center “Salakovac” in Mostar, which is under the MHRR’s authority, you cannot be a beneficiary of the right to social assistance or the rights from the protection of families with children / children’s protection.

#### **2.12.1.6. Obligations of beneficiaries of social assistance**

Any change affecting the access to and scope of the right, particularly the change of your place and address of temporary/permanent residence, has to be reported by a beneficiary of social assistance to the MHRR and the competent social protection service in the place of temporary/permanent residence within 15 days from the date of change.

#### **2.12.1.7. Authorities conducting the procedure**

Competent centers for social work and social protection services in your place of temporary/permanent residence decide on the rights based on social assistance and protection in the first instance.

#### **2.12.1.8. Procedure**

Social protection affairs are within the authority of the center for social work and social protection services according to your place of temporary/permanent residence, and the competent ministries.

The procedure for gaining the rights from the Law on Asylum is initiated in person by a person in need or their legal representative, guardian, or ex officio.

The appeal against a procedural decision by the first-instance authority in the Federation of BiH is dealt with by the cantonal ministry for social protection affairs in the second instance. In the Republic of Srpska, the second instance authority is the minister competent for social protection affairs in the RS Government.

#### **2.12.1.9. Initiating the procedure for determining the right to social protection / protection of families with children**

The procedure for determining the right to social assistance is initiated in person or upon request of a legal representative or an appointed guardian.

To initiate the procedure, you have to **obtain the following documents**:

- 1) A certified copy of an identification document;
- 2) A certified copy of registration/deregistration of the place of temporary/permanent residence;
- 3) A certified copy of the statement on the number of family members or a relevant certificate from the town section administration;
- 4) A certificate that adult family members are registered as unemployed.

#### **2.12.1.10. Duration of rights**

The granted rights to social assistance belong to you from the first day of the next month from the month of application until the end of the month in which the conditions for accessing the rights exist.

The rights cease when the refugee or subsidiary protection status is terminated upon receipt of a final decision by the Ministry of Security of BiH on terminating the status or when the conditions for accessing the statutory rights are no longer met, in which the MHRR has to notify the competent first-instance authority thereof.

#### **2.12.1.11. Notification**

After the conducted procedure for accessing the right to social assistance, the competent authority sends the MHRR a final decision on whether the right is granted.

#### **2.12.1.12. Funding and payments**

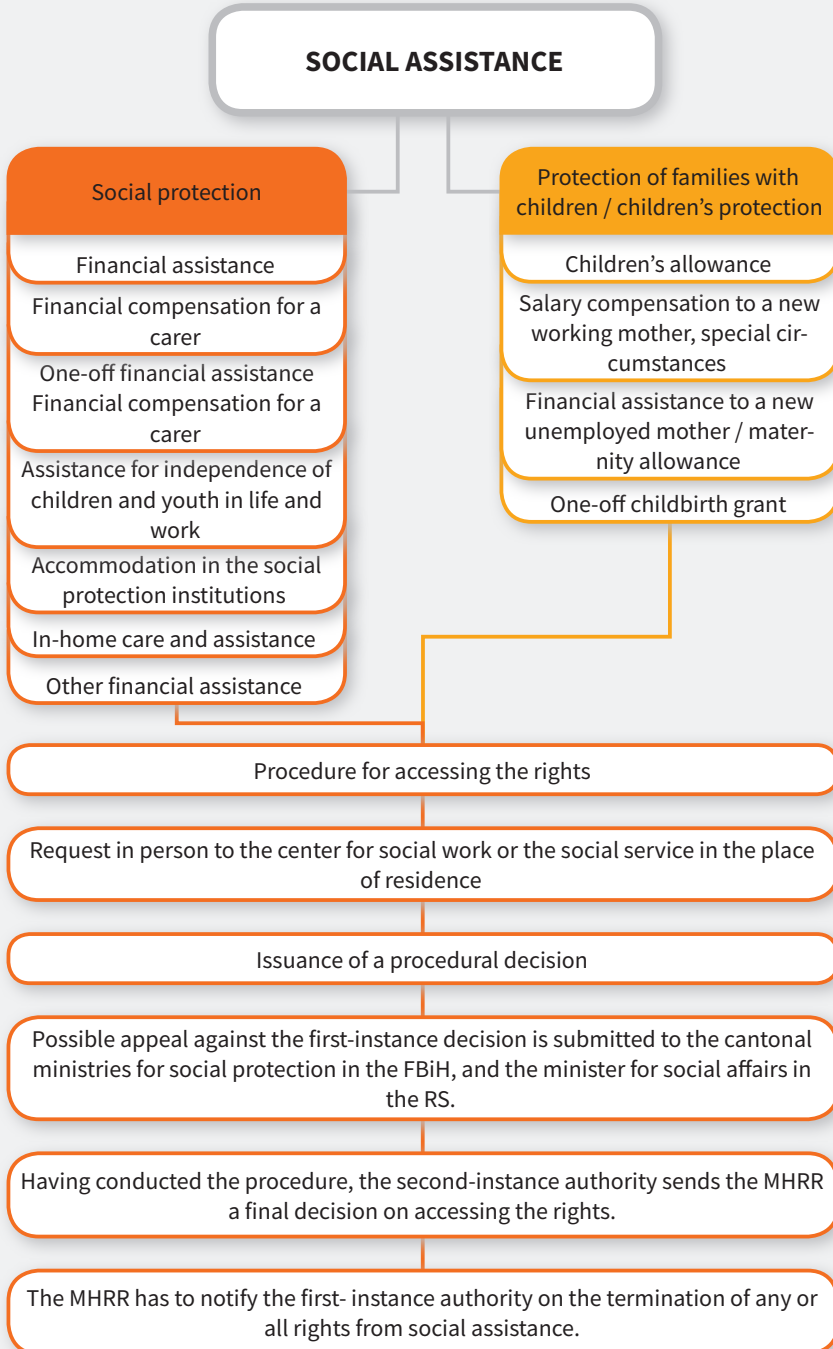
The funding for the rights is secured from the MHRR's budget. For every granted right, the MHRR transfers the money once a month to the first-instance authority that has submitted the first-instance procedural decisions on granting the rights for payment.

The competent first-instance authority reports on the paid funds to the MHRR monthly.

#### **2.12.1.13. Opening a bank account**

Most of the banks in BiH allow opening an account with proof on the source of income (e.g. employment contract, service contract, social service's procedural decision) and your refugee or subsidiary protection card. Banks have different internal decisions, so banking services might not be always available to citizens of some countries (The BiH Government cannot affect such decisions of private banks.)

## ACCESS TO RIGHT TO SOCIAL ASSISTANCE



## 3. ASSISTANCE AND EXEMPTIONS DURING INCLUSION INTO BiH SOCIETY

Assistance and exemptions during inclusion into BiH society may be granted to **foreigners with recognized refugee or subsidiary protection status, their family members who have gained the right to family reunion, and family members of the foreigners under subsidiary protection who have gained the right to maintaining family unity.**

If you are a person under international protection in BiH, in addition to the rights to an identification document, information, accommodation, work, education, health insurance, and social assistance, you are also entitled to the following assistance and exemptions in the process of integration into BiH society:

- **Learning official languages in BiH;**
- **Learning about and familiarizing with the cultural background in BiH;**
- **Assistance in the procedure for recognizing public and other required documents from the country of origin in BiH;**
- **Assistance in the translation, verification, and equivalence of the required educational and status documents from the country of origin for easier inclusion into BiH society;**
- **Legal aid;**
- **Psychosocial support;**
- **Assistance in access to social housing;**
- **Support in vocational training programs and additional training and retraining programs related to the qualifications earned in the country of origin;**
- **Assistance in the inclusion of children in preschool activities;**
- **Access to information important for easier inclusion into BiH society through an information brochure and other forms of information about the available rights and exemptions.**

**In cooperation with local and international government and non-government organizations and institutions, and under treaties and the applicable legislation in BiH, the MHRR plans and implements separate action plans and programs, taking into account your particular individual needs relating to age, sex, origin, health, social and other particularities.**

### 3.1. Learning official languages in BiH

Upon your request and in cooperation with institutions or non-government organizations registered for this purpose, **the MHRR secures funds for learning, testing, and determining the level of knowledge of the official languages in BiH** to help you obtain a valid relevant certificate and integrate easier into BiH society.

Access to this right is ensured to the extent and duration of language training under the applicable legislation, the standards in this field, and depending on the individual needs of foreigners in question.

### 3.2. Learning about and familiarizing with the cultural background in BiH

In cooperation with institutions, associations, or non-government organizations, the MHRR secures funds for projects, plans, and programs for learning about and familiarizing with the cultural background in BiH for persons under international protection.

### 3.3. Assistance in the procedure for recognizing public and other required documents from the country of origin in BiH

Depending on the financial possibilities, the MHRR secures assistance funds for persons under international protection in the procedure for recognizing public and other documents from the country of origin in BiH.

### 3.4. Assistance in the translation, verification, and equivalence of the required educational and status documents from the country of origin for easier inclusion into BiH society

Depending on the financial possibilities, the MHRR secures assistance funds for persons under international protection in the translation, verification, and equivalence of the required educational and status documents from the country of origin for easier inclusion into BiH society, under the applicable legislation.

### 3.5. Legal aid

The MHRR provides legal aid to persons under international protection by implementing separate projects, signing cooperation protocols, and co-funding with local and international government and non-government organizations.

### 3.6. Psychosocial support

The MHRR provides psychosocial support to persons under international protection by implementing separate projects, signing cooperation protocols, and co-funding with local and international government and non-government organizations.

### 3.7. Assistance in access to social housing

Persons under international protection are entitled to assistance in access to social housing in BiH through the competent institutions and under the applicable legislation enacted at the levels of BiH, the entities, the Brcko District, the cantons, and the municipalities under the same conditions as BiH citizens.

### 3.8. Support in vocational training programs and additional training and retraining programs related to the qualifications earned in the country of origin

Persons under international protection are entitled to assistance and participation in vocational training programs and additional training and retraining programs related to the qualifications earned in the country of origin in the same way and under the same conditions as BiH citizens.

Depending on the available budget, the MHRR may develop separate projects to support foreigners through competent employment services.

### 3.9. Assistance in the inclusion of children in preschool activities

The MHRR secures funds for accommodating the children of persons under international protection in public preschool upbringing and educational institutions, depending on the available possibilities.

Depending on the financial possibilities, the MHRR also secures funds for assessing the individual needs of and assistance to persons under international protection for their education in special upbringing and educational institutions if it is not possible to provide them with an appropriate education in regular schools.

### 3.10. Access to BiH citizenship through facilitated naturalization

In addition to the earlier listed rights, you are also entitled to BiH citizenship through facilitated naturalization provided that you have refugee status.

You may access BiH citizenship without meeting the requirements referred to in Article 9(1) points a), b), c), f), i) and j) of the Law on the Citizenship of BiH only if you have continuously stayed in the territory of BiH as a recognized refugee for five years before applying for the citizenship.

Also, an underage child of the person who has gained BiH citizenship based on refugee status is entitled to BiH citizenship without meeting the requirements referred to in Article 9(1) points a), b), c), f), i) and j) of the Law on the Citizenship of BiH provided that the child has the refugee status or approved temporary stay in BiH regardless of the length of stay. If the child is older than 14, their consent has to be obtained.

In cooperation with local and international government and non-government organizations and institutions, and under treaties and the applicable legislation in BiH, the MHRR plans and implements targeted projects and programs, taking into account the particular individual needs of persons under international protection relating to their age, sex, background, health, social and other particularities.

For more detailed information about your rights and exemptions, you may contact the MHRR in writing or by phone at:

**Ministarstvo za ljudska prava i izbjeglice (MHRR)  
Sektor za izbjeglice, raseljene osobe, readmisiju i stambenu politiku  
(Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons, Readmission  
and Housing Policy)**

Trg Bosne i Hercegovine broj 3, 71000 Sarajevo

Tel.: 00387 33 703 909

Fax: 00387 33 703 995

Web: [www.mhrr.gov.ba](http://www.mhrr.gov.ba)

**Representation of the United Nations High Commissioner for  
Refugees (UNHCR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

UNITIC Building, Tower B

Fra Anđela Zvizdovića 1, 71000 Sarajevo

Tel.: 00387 33 666 160

E-mail: [bsnsapi@unhcr.org](mailto:bsnsapi@unhcr.org)

Upon your request, free legal aid will be provided to you by:

**Udruženje „Vaša prava BiH“  
(Association “Your rights BiH”)**

Tel.: 00387 33 789 105

E-mail: [sarajevo@vasaprava.org](mailto:sarajevo@vasaprava.org)

[www.vasaprava.org](http://www.vasaprava.org)

Upon your request, psychosocial support will be provided to you by:

**Fondacija Bosanskohercegovačka inicijativa žena (BHWI)  
(Foundation BH Women’s Initiative)**

Tel: 00387 33 295 418

Mob: 00387 63 776 322

E-mail: [sekretarijat@bhwifoundation.ba](mailto:sekretarijat@bhwifoundation.ba)

Web: [www.bhwifoundation.ba](http://www.bhwifoundation.ba)



**Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees  
Division for Refugees, Displaced Persons, Readmission and Housing Policy**

and

**Catholic Relief Services  
(Ministry's partner in implementation)**

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