

**The Fourth Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review on the Human Rights Situation
in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**drafted in accordance with Paragraph 5 of Annex to Resolution 16/21 of the Human Rights
Council**

September 2024

A. METHODOLOGY AND PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS

The Report of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH) for the Fourth Universal Periodic Review on the Human Rights Situation (hereinafter: UPR) was drafted in accordance with the Guidelines 17/119 and Resolution 16/21 of the Human Rights Council (A/TRT/10717/19), in coordination between the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH (hereinafter: MHRR) and representatives of the Entities' institutions and of the Brčko District (BD).

The report drafting process was supported by UNDP, with five consultation meetings held with civil society organizations. The report was published on the website, with the invitation for electronic consultations with civil society and other actors. Additionally, a preparatory workshop and several expert consultation meetings were held with representatives of the relevant institutions of the Federation of BiH, the Republika Srpska as well as the Brčko District (hereinafter: FBiH, RS, BD BiH).

B. PROGRESS IN THE COUNTRY SINCE THE PREVIOUS REVIEW AND PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

On 5 July 2023, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: CoM BiH) adopted a decision to establish the BiH Council for Persons with Disabilities. The RS adopted the 2017–2026 Strategy for Improvement of the Social Status of Persons with Disabilities, while the FBiH adopted its 2016–2021 Strategy for Improvement of the Rights and Status of Persons with Disabilities.

BiH has achieved a certain level of preparedness to implement the European legal standards, although there is still a challenge regarding the harmonization of the BiH Constitution and electoral legislation. The amendments to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (hereinafter: LPD) in 2016 and 2023 strengthened the anti-discrimination framework. The Rulebook on Data Collection of Discrimination Cases in BiH was also adopted.

The MHRR conducted an analysis on the harmonization of legal provisions with the LPD and with the Law on Gender Equality, as well as an assessment of the LPD's alignment with the EU *acquis communautaire*.

The judicial information system i.e., court Case Management System (hereinafter: CMS) was updated to enable the collection of comprehensive data on discrimination cases in BiH courts and collection of data on relations between the victim and the perpetrator in the cases of gender-based violence. A technical solution was developed which will enable the collection of data on hate crimes and on protected characteristics of victims of these criminal offences.

The Law on Amendments to the Law on the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH, the Law on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in BiH Institutions, and the 2024–2028 Anti-Corruption Strategy and its Action Plan were adopted.

BiH appointed a focal point for the Council of Europe campaign, "Journalists Matter." In 2023, the CoM BiH adopted the document "Mapping the Responses to Hate Speech." The second report on forms of discrimination in BiH was drafted. The 2023–2027 Gender Action Plan for BiH (hereinafter: GAP BiH) and the 2022–2024 Strategy for Combat against Domestic Violence in the RS were adopted.

BiH also adopted the 2021–2024 Action Plan for the Promotion of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of LGBTI Persons in BiH.

The death penalty was abolished in the RS by the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court in 2019. The Law on Non-Contentious Proceedings was amended in 2021 to enable the registration of children of migrants and asylum seekers.

The BD BiH Assembly adopted the Law on Peaceful Assembly and the BD BiH Council of National Minorities was appointed on 6 April 2022.

Certain progress was achieved in establishing institutional mechanisms for cooperation between governments and civil society organizations.

The CoM BiH adopted the 2021–2025 Action Plan for the Social Inclusion of Roma/Roma Women, aligned with the EU standards. The RS Ministry of Education and Culture (hereinafter: MEC) adopted the 2021–2024 Action Plan on Educational Needs of Roma/Roma Women in the RS.

1. INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES AND COORDINATION

Recommendations: 120.5; 120.6; 120.7; 120.8; 120.11; 120.24; 120.26; 120.27; 120.28; 120.110; 120.150

Strategic documents in the area of human rights and discrimination have not been adopted.

In 2022, the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH (hereinafter: HJPC BiH) adopted the Guidelines for Judicial Office Holders During Public Appearances and for the Use of Social Media, and in 2020 the HJPC BiH adopted the BiH Judiciary Gender Equality Strategy. All judicial institutions in BiH have adopted their own action plans for the Strategy implementation, which were approved by the HJPC BiH.

In October 2019, the Gender Equality Agency of BiH (hereinafter: GEA BiH) developed and issued the Recommendation for Employers and Relevant Authorities Related to Gender Equality.

The Civil Service Agency of BiH (hereinafter: CSA BiH) has organized trainings for civil servants of BiH institutions from 2019 to 2024 on the topics of: prevention and protection against discrimination, harmonization of laws and by-laws with the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination and the Law on Gender Equality in BiH.

The CoM BiH has adopted the Information on Mechanisms for Efficient Prevention and Protection against Gender-based and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in the BiH Institutions, along with the Guide for Implementation of Efficient Measures to Prevent Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in the BiH Institutions.

The HJPC BiH updated the Case Management System (CMS) so as to collect the data on discrimination cases, gender-based violence, and, from 2024, on hate crimes.

2. OMBUDSMEN AND OPCAT

Recommendations: 120.4; 120.10; 120.12; 120.13; 120.14; 120.15; 120.16; 120.17; 120.18; 120.19; 120.74

The Law on Amendments to the Law on the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH was published and also harmonized with the Paris Principles and recommendations of the Venice Commission, thus establishing the "National Preventive Mechanism" (NPM) for the prevention of torture and ill-treatment. The Law envisages that, within the BiH Ombudsman for Human Rights Institution, the NPM shall function as the preventive mechanism to prevent torture, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment in BiH. These amendments also ensure the financial independence of the Ombudsman Institution.

3. FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Recommendations: 120.71; 120.108; 120.109

On 8 March 2024, the BiH Parliament adopted the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in BiH Institutions. Likewise, the 2024–2028 Strategy for the Fight against Corruption and its Action Plan are currently in the process of adoption.

In 2023, in the field of processing the cases of organized crime and corruption, the HJPC BiH produced an independent report on the current practices of the HJPC BiH and a set of recommendations for strengthening the regulatory role, the Action Plan for Implementation of the Recommendations was adopted and its implementation commenced during the same year. In April 2022, in cooperation with the OSCE, a flyer titled "Report a Hate Crime – It's Important to Know!" was produced and distributed across police stations in the RS.

The RS Government adopted the Action Plan for Implementation of the 2018–2022 Anti-Corruption Strategy in the RS and established a channel called "MUP INFO" for reporting the corruption and other irregularities. In 2023, the RS Government adopted the Decision on the Development of the 2023–2029 Anti-Corruption Strategy.

On 6 June 2018, the BD BiH Assembly adopted the Law on the Office for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of Anti-Corruption Activities by which the Office for Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of Anti-Corruption Activities in the BD BiH was established. Also, with regard to its competences, this Office shall apply the Law on Protection of Persons who Report Corruption.

4. CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

Fundamental Freedoms and Participation in Public and Political Life

4.1. Freedom of Expression

Recommendations: 120.3; 120.41; 120.59; 120.60; 120.61; 120.62; 120.63; 120.64; 120.97; 120.98; 120.99; 120.100; 120.101; 120.102

A decision by High Representative for BiH, Valentin Inzko, amended the Criminal Code of BiH so as to criminalise hate speech in terms of glorification of war criminals, denial or justification of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes confirmed by the final court verdicts and to introduce sanctions for awarding recognitions, prizes or memorials or similar

privileges to persons convicted by the final verdict for genocide, crimes against humanity or a war crime, as well as for naming public places (e.g., a street, a square, a park, a bridge, an institution, a municipality or a city, a settlement and a populated place, etc.) after persons convicted by the final verdict for genocide, crimes against humanity or a war crime.

On 27 November 2023, the CoM adopted the document entitled “Mapping Responses to Hate Speech”.

The BiH Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) harmonized its regulatory framework with the EU Directive on Audio-Visual Media Services (2018), adopted a set of regulations on broadcasting, including the Rule 96/2023 on Services to Video-Sharing Platform, which contains the obligations of platform service providers to take appropriate measures with regard to protection of the general public from user-generated programs and videos containing hate speech. However, no video-sharing platform service providers are currently registered in BiH.

The Service for Protection of Integrity and Legality in the Work of the RS Ministry of Interior (MoI RS) conducts timely internal investigations and, in cooperation with relevant Prosecutor's Offices, criminal investigations against police officers in all cases of misconduct as well as in situations which have the characteristics of criminal acts. Since 2016, the MoI RS has been keeping records of reported attacks and threats against journalists and media representatives. On the website of the MoI RS, there is a dedicated subpage focused on high-tech crime and prevention of these criminal offenses. The MoI RS continuously conducts trainings on internet safety and on the protection against the criminal offense "Endangering Safety" through social media.

The police of BD BiH, based on Article 42, Paragraph (1), Item (u) of the Law on Police Officers, keeps records of attacks on journalists.

4.2. Prohibition of Discrimination

Recommendations: 120.1; 120.9; 120.37; 120.38; 120.39; 120.40; 120.21; 120.22; 120.42; 120.45; 120.48; 120.49; 120.50; 120.58; 120.73; 120.112; 120.113; 120.114; 120.116; 120.117; 120.118; 120.119; 120.120

The HJPC BiH updated the CMS for discrimination cases, created the Instructions for the Utilisation of the Enhanced CMS Codebook for Discrimination Procedures, and conducted a series of training sessions for courts on how to use the Instructions.

BiH has not amended its Constitution and the Election Law to comply with the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the cases of “Sejdić and Finci vs. BiH”, “Zornić vs. BiH” “Pilav vs. BiH”, “Pudarić vs. BiH”, and “Baralija vs. BiH”

In October 2022, the High Representative for BiH, Christian Schmidt, issued the Decision on Amendments to the Election Law of BiH and the Constitution of the FBiH, which, inter alia, amended the provisions with the aim to harmonize the provisions of the Election Law of BiH with the judgment of the Constitutional Court of BiH in the "Ljubić" case (2016).

According to the latest analysis by the Constitutional Court (July 2023), the judgment in the "Ljubić" case was still classified as unimplemented.

The MHRR has planned in its 2024 Work Program to develop the Mid-term Program for Combating Discrimination, as well as the 2023–2027 Training Programs for the Promotion and

Protection of Human Rights in BiH, as a strategic document in the field of human rights and anti-discrimination.

On 4 March 2024, the CoM BiH adopted the 2022 Report on Discrimination in BiH, which has been forwarded to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly for discussion. Development of the new 2023 Report on Discrimination is underway.

In 2023, a new Rulebook on Manner of Collection of Data on Discrimination Cases in BiH was adopted. It prescribes the content of the record sheet for collection of data on discrimination cases and the format for the annual report on statistical data in discrimination cases.

The MHRR conducted an analysis on harmonization of legislation at all levels of government with the LPD and the Law on Gender Equality, as well as an assessment of the LPD's compliance with EU *acquis communautaire*. The analysis identified certain inconsistencies and as such it may serve as a platform for further action by the institutional gender equality mechanisms for the purpose of further harmonization. Out of 188 laws encompassed by the analysis at the State and Entity levels, only four laws were found to be harmonized with the LPD. The analysis did not encompass the cantonal legislation.

The CoM BiH adopted the Guidelines for Harmonization of Legislation with the LPD, which is a tool, i.e., a work principle which the MHRR will implement with regard to assessing the harmonization of legislation with the LPD in the future. These Guidelines are also the principles which all institutions should follow when adopting the legislation.

An assessment was conducted in reference to the need for harmonization of the LPD with regard to migrants' status as a basis for discrimination.

4.3. Right to Life, Freedom and Safety

Recommendation: 120.111

In the FBiH, the Law on Non-Contentious Proceedings was amended in 2021, which enabled the identification of the place and time of birth by the relevant court for individuals who cannot be registered in the Civil Registry of Births under the Civil Registration Law. A similar provision was previously introduced by the RS Law on Non-contentious Proceedings, enabling the registration of children of documented migrants and asylum seekers.

BiH supported the commitments of the OSCE-UNHCR Regional Conference on "Access to Civil Documentation and Prevention of Statelessness in Southeast Europe" held in Skopje, North Macedonia.

4.4. Gender Equality

Recommendations: 120.53; 120.55; 120.147; 120.148; 120.149; 120.151; 120.152; 120.153; 120.154; 120.155; 120.156; 120.157; 120.158; 120.159; 120.160; 120.161; 120.162; 120.163; 120.164; 120.165; 120.166; 120.167; 120.168; 120.169

In the reporting period, the 2018–2022 Gender Action Plan of BiH (GAP BiH) was implemented at all levels of government in BiH, with the support of international donors and local non-governmental organizations. At the end of 2023, the CoM BiH adopted the 2023–

2027 GAP BiH as the fourth generation of comprehensive strategy for introduction of gender equality principle into public and private life in BiH.

The Guide for Implementation of Efficient Measures to Prevent Harassment and Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in the BiH Institutions has been developed, and most BiH institutions have adopted policies of zero tolerance for sexual harassment and gender-based harassment. Advisors for prevention of gender harassment and sexual harassment at workplace have been appointed and basic and advanced training sessions have been organized.

In BiH there is continuous work on the prevention of and fight against domestic violence and violence against women. Significant efforts have been invested in harmonizing the legal framework and developing a network of protection and prevention actors, which is in line with the standards of the Istanbul Convention.

Three Crisis Centers for Victims of Rape have been established within medical institutions in Tuzla, Mostar and Sarajevo, including equipping the Centers and training for staff who will work in those Centers.

In the RS, the 2020–2024 Strategy for Combating Domestic Violence was adopted, which led to subsequent development of action plans for combating and preventing domestic violence and for economic empowerment of victims. The General Protocol on Dealing with Domestic Violence Cases in the RS was harmonized in 2022.

The RS also implemented the 2019–2023 Strategy for Development of Women's Entrepreneurship, and the drafting of a new 2024–2030 Strategy is underway.

Amendments to the RS Criminal Code in 2023 resulted in significant improvement of the legislative framework for preventing gender-based violence and harmonization with the Convention. There are safe houses in the RS for accommodating women and children who are victims of domestic violence.

At the end of October 2020, the HJPC BiH adopted the Strategy for Improvement of Gender Equality in the Judiciary of BiH, based on which all judicial institutions in BiH adopted their own action plans. In the FBiH, the Financial Instrument for Implementation of the GAP BiH - FIGAP II program was established and successfully implemented, in order to secure funds for implementation of GAP BiH.

A Coordination Committee was appointed to monitor the implementation of the 2019–2022 GAP BiH in the FBiH.

Six cantonal GAPs (Sarajevo Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Bosnia-Podrinje Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Tuzla Canton, Una-Sana Canton) and action plans for 30% of local self-government units in FBiH were adopted.

The Action Plan for Implementation of the 2018–2020 Strategy for Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence in the FBiH was implemented.

On 12 June 2024, the House of Peoples of the FBiH Parliament adopted the 2024–2027 Strategy for Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence.

On 15 December 2022, the FBiH Government adopted the Decision on Zero Tolerance Policy for Acts of Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Harassment in the FBiH Governmental Bodies, FBiH Administrative Organizations, Services and Other Bodies Founded by the FBiH Government.

The 2018-2020 Action Plan for Development of Women's Entrepreneurship in FBiH was implemented with the aim to promote and develop women's entrepreneurship.

In the FBiH, regular trainings are conducted for judicial officials on the topics of discrimination and gender equality, gender-based violence and domestic violence, sexual violence, human trafficking, hate crimes, wartime sexual violence in criminal proceedings, on members of vulnerable groups as witnesses in proceedings, human rights of LGBTI persons etc.

4.5. Media Freedom

Recommendations: 120.46; 120.51; 120.84; 120.85; 120.86; 120.87; 120.88; 120.89; 120.90; 120.91; 120.92; 120.93; 120.94; 120.95;

BiH appointed a focal point for the CoE's campaign "Journalists Matter." The Coordination Working Group for the EFEx project ("Strengthening Institutional Capacities in the Field of Freedom of Expression and Information") will take on the role of the National Committee.

Since 1 January 2019, the CMS has enabled the registration of the occupation of "journalist" in reference to cases of attacks on journalists.

Focal points for the safety of journalists have been established at all levels of Prosecutor's Offices and in police agencies tasked with registering and monitoring the action taken upon reports regarding attacks on journalists.

The Law on Public Broadcasting System regulates the use of official languages. Similar provisions are prescribed by law in both FBiH and RS.

Threats through social media are not defined as a specific criminal offense but as the criminal offense of "endangering security."

4.6. Religious Freedoms

Recommendations: 120.52; 120.57; 120.106;

BiH has a legislative framework established that protects freedom of opinion and freedom of religion, which is harmonized with the international human rights standards. In order to implement this law and to ensure religious freedoms, BiH has concluded international agreements with the Holy See and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The agreement with the Islamic Religious Community in BiH has been under consideration and awaiting signature since 20 October 2015 at the BiH Presidency.

The CoM BiH financially supports the Interreligious Council, which consists of representatives of four religions (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Judaism and Islam), in the public domain, in joint activities concerning the fight against all forms of discrimination and religious fanaticism and promotion of tolerance between religious groups. Progress in this area is reflected in the active involvement of churches and religious communities in the implementation of the Platform for Peace, which, through their activities, they have jointly supported, encouraged all victims of war, and demonstrated the importance of public support for victims.

The Interreligious Council in BiH continuously provides funds in the amount of BAM 100,000, in order to encourage intercultural dialogue, tolerance and understanding among different religious communities in BiH. From these funds, through reports on implementation of grant funds during the period of 2019–2023, the following activities have been conducted: monitoring of the attacks on religious facilities, ensuring responses to COVID-19 in churches and religious communities, panel discussion entitled "Youth in the Fight against Hate, Intolerance and Discrimination", and strengthening interreligious dialogue in BiH at the local level in 15 local government units.

Through the RS Secretariat for Religions (RSR), the RS improves relations and cooperation with churches and religious communities, creating conditions for their free and responsible mission in the spirit of respect for their own heritage and traditional values of various confessions coexisting in the region. The RSR financially supports churches and religious communities through projects for the preservation of the existing religious buildings, for building new ones, and for protection of the historical and cultural heritage, as well as of the spiritual legacy of churches and religious communities in the RS. Support is also provided to ethnic and religious organizations and associations in archaeological research of church sites, in marking religious holidays and in media projects that inform the public about human rights and promote respect for religious and cultural diversity.

4.7. Judiciary, including impunity and Rule of Law

Recommendations: 120.2; 120.20; 120.23; 120.29; 120.30; 120.31; 120.32; 120.33; 120.34; 120.35; 120.36; 120.65; 120.66; 120.67; 120.68; 120.69; 120.75; 120.76; 120.96; 120.103; 120.104; 120.105; 120.107; 120.178

On 4 September 2020, the CoM BiH adopted the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy. Upon proposal of the BiH Ministry of Justice, on 22 January 2024, the CoM adopted the Decision on Extension of the Deadline for Implementation of Strategic Objective 1.2 of the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy until the end of 2025.

Although the establishment of a State Fund for Compensation and Reparations has been recommended, it has not yet been established. However, the HJPC BiH has taken steps to improve the legal possibilities for compensation for damage resulting from the commission of war crimes. It has been recommended to the relevant BiH authorities to establish the funds for reparation of damage for the victims of war crimes as a supplementary source of compensation for inflicted material/non-material damage, in case of individual insolvency of the convicted person. A good practice example is recognized in the activities of the organization TRIAL International which provides support to victims of war crimes of rape and sexual violence, and takes steps toward the establishment of a reparation fund within the MHRR.

Victims of criminal offenses exercise their rights within the criminal procedure, including the right to file a civil claim for compensation of damage which arose as a result of the commission of a criminal offense.

The civil claim may refer to compensation of damages, return of property or an annulment of a certain legal act.

A court decides on the civil claim. In its judgment which declares the accused person guilty as charged, the court may adjudicate the full civil claim to the benefit of the injured party or

adjudicate a part of the civil claim and refer the remaining part to be adjudicated in the civil proceedings.

The efficiency of processing war crimes in BiH is monitored within the project component of the HJPC financed by the EU's IPA 2022 grant, titled "Enhancing the War Crimes Processing in BiH." This HJPC's project component focuses on supporting the work of the Supervisory Body for Monitoring of the Implementation of the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy, as well as on regular reporting to the Standing Committee for Efficiency and Quality of Prosecutor's Offices and on the HJPC sessions on war crimes processing. According to the information provided by the Prosecutor's Offices in BiH to the HJPC, as of 31 December 2023, there were 322 unresolved war crimes cases in total registered in the Prosecutor's Offices in BiH.

The Missing Persons Institute of BiH (MPI BiH) is a state-level institution responsible for locating missing persons without discrimination and establishing the Central Registry of the Missing Persons, thus restoring the dignity of victims, providing response to their families, and contributing to justice served and realization of the reconciliation process.

The MPI BiH is still searching for 7,621 missing persons, out of the total of 35,000 persons reported missing. Until now, 26,268 exhumed victims have been identified. A unified Central Registry of Missing Persons has not yet been established. The central list of missing persons is subject to strict verification and data checking process to ensure the accuracy and to eliminate political manipulation regarding the number of missing persons.

So far, 29,870 missing persons reports have been verified. Between 2021 and 2023, 80 new reports of missing persons were submitted.

The Law on Missing Persons defines the principles of search for missing persons from BiH and within BiH, regarding persons missing between 30 April 1991 and 14 February 1996.

Article 15 of the Law on Missing Persons envisages the establishment of a Fund for Assistance to the Families of Missing Persons. The CoM BiH adopted a Decision on the establishment of this Fund at its 131st session on 18 October 2006, but it has not yet been established.

In accordance with Article 2, Point 8) and Article 5 of the Law on Missing Persons, in the RS there is the RS Center for Research of War, of War Crimes and for Search for Missing Persons which, in accordance with the Law on RS Administration, performs expert and other tasks, including the search for missing persons, primarily focusing on locating the places of suffering of missing persons, mass graves, individual graves and displaced graves within BiH.

In 2023, the Preventive Mechanism Institute was established, but its representatives have not been appointed. Instead, the Institution of the Ombudsman for Human Rights in BiH visited several police departments and stations in the RS, FBiH and BD in October and December 2023. A Special Report on the Conditions in Detention Facilities in Certain Police Stations in BiH was drafted and it provided recommendations to perform adequate adaptation of conditions in these facilities.

The MoI RS registers all reports related to the abuse of citizens, especially those deprived of liberty, in all organizational units of the MoI RS, and not just in police stations.

The BD BiH Assembly has adopted the Law on Peaceful Assembly which has been harmonized with Article 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

This Law has regulated the field of peaceful assembly in accordance with international standards and as outlined in the recommendations given in the Joint Opinion of the European Commission for Democracy through Law and OSCE/Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, Number 951/2019, dated 9 December 2019, concerning the legal framework for freedom of peaceful assembly in BiH, its Entities and the Brčko District.

The BD BiH Police has initiated the process of drafting the Law on Public Order and Peace, with the aim of protecting the internet space. Recent amendments to the BD BiH Criminal Code define the criminal offense of "Public Incitement and Encouragement of Violence and Hatred" under Article 355a.

Persons convicted by judgments of the BD BiH courts serve their prison sentences in the Entity correctional facilities, which are managed by the respective Entity Ministries of Justice.

In the FBiH, RS and BD BiH, protection is provided through free legal aid offices in the Legal Aid Office of BD BiH, in accordance with the Law on the Legal Aid Office.

In the RS, the rights established under the framework for compensation to civilian war victims, including the victims of wartime sexual violence, have been continuously exercised.

The protection of victims of wartime torture is the exclusive responsibility of the Entities. In the RS, the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms is provided for victims of war torture.

5. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Recommendations 120.47;120.56;120.70; 120.72;120.121; 120.122;120.123;120.124; 120.125;120.126; 120.127; 120.128; 120.129;120.130

The MHRR, in cooperation with the Youth Development Institute KULT, has drafted the document "2021-2025 BiH Framework Guidelines for Implementation of Leading Principles on Business and Human Rights," which was adopted by the CoM BiH on 9 November 2022. The Framework Guidelines are based on three pillars that emphasize the duty of relevant authorities to protect human rights, the obligations of the business sector to respect human rights, while the third pillar addresses the access to legal remedies.

In the period from 2020 to 2021, the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA) coordinated the project entitled "Needs Assessment of Social Welfare Centers and Other Social Protection Institutions in BiH" (TA IPA 2016), which enabled the creation of a project within the results of the "Improved Capacities of Social Welfare Centers in BiH (AD IPA 2020)," which are currently ongoing.

In the field of labor and employment, the implementation of the project "EU Support to Local Partnerships for Employment – Phase II (LEP II)" was coordinated, continuing the establishment of local employment initiatives with the aim of developing the programme of activation and integration into the labor market in accordance with specific local needs. The project has been ongoing since 2021.

The RS Government adopted the 2021-2027 Employment Strategy in the RS, and action plans were adopted as well.

The MCA BiH, together with the RS Ministry of Labor, War Veterans and Disabled Persons' Protection, FBiH Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Government of BD BiH, coordinated the establishment of the Youth Guarantee Scheme in line with the EU Youth Guarantee. The Action Plan for the Youth Guarantee in the RS was developed in 2023.

From 2019 to 2024, the MCP BiH, together with the relevant Entity ministries, has participated in the implementation of various programs and projects in the field of social protection and employment, the results of which have a direct impact on increase of the social inclusion of vulnerable groups and protection of families:

1. IPA 2020 Project – "Strengthened Systems of Social and Child Protection and Education in BiH for the Provision of Inclusive Services and Prevention of Institutionalization," implemented by UNICEF from 1 May 2024 to 30 April 2027.
2. IPA 2020 TA Project – "Strengthening Human Resources of Social Work Centers," implemented by the EPRD consortium from 15 May 2024 to 14 May 2027, in cooperation with the RS Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.
3. UNICEF's Program "Transformation of Child Care Institutions and Prevention of Family Separation," implemented from 2018 to 2020, in cooperation with the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.
4. UNICEF's Program "Deinstitutionalization in the Social and Child Protection System," implemented in 2023. The document "Roadmap for Deinstitutionalization in the Social Protection System of BiH" was defined within this program.
5. Project "EU Support to Local Partnerships for Employment – Phase II (LEP II)." The project has been ongoing since 2021.
6. The project "EU4 Employment", implemented by the International Labor Organization from 2023 to 2025, in cooperation with the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare.

In 2022, the RS Government adopted the 2022-2032 RS Environmental Protection Strategy. It was defined, as Priority 4.2, to improve the air quality management system that supports decision-making and informs citizens about air quality, as well as to develop a reporting system to international institutions and coordination of improved citizen information on air quality.

At the end of 2023, the FBiH Parliament adopted the 2022-2032 FBiH Environmental Protection Strategy, which defined the priorities and measures across seven thematic areas aimed at improving environmental conditions, mitigating and adapting to climate change, ensuring more sustainable public services in water and waste management, preserving nature, better harmonization of regulations with the EU legislation and international agreements on the environment and more coordinated and efficient management of the environmental sector. The FBiH Strategy includes activities to ensure a high level of public awareness about the importance of environmental protection and involvement in the decision-making process, including women, youth and socially sensitive groups.

In the RS, progress has been made in the following areas: a new Law on Health Protection has been adopted, defining the social care for citizens' health at the RS level, which is achieved by

providing health protection to population and nosological groups of particular social and medical significance. These groups are entitled to health care from the funds of mandatory health insurance in accordance with the Law on Compulsory Health Insurance.

The RS Family Law became effective on 1 September 2023, regulating family-legal relations between spouses, extramarital partners, parents and children, adoptive parents and adoptees, guardians and wards, and between relatives in marital, non-marital or adoptive family, as well as the procedures of relevant authorities related to family relations, guardianship and other important areas of family-legal protection. The 2023-2029 RS Social Protection Strategy was adopted on 7 December 2023. The strategy defines three strategic goals:

1. Enable the development of new services and improve the quality of existing services with better targeting of the needs of beneficiaries in the social protection system;
2. Continuously improve the system of child and family legal protection with a focus on the development of preventive support measures;
3. Increase the level of capacity building in social, child and family legal protection and strengthen mechanisms for intersectoral support and cooperation.

Through the SWOT analysis and information collected in the RS Social Protection Strategy, in addition to the rights under the Law on Social Protection, local self-governments (LSG) can, through their decision and according to the needs of the population, define other rights and services, as well as the criteria for their implementation. The most frequent rights in practice are personal assistance for people with disabilities, supported housing, sheltered housing, assistance in caring for adult individuals after leaving institutions or foster families, one-time in-kind assistance and other rights and services based on the needs of LSG.

The RS Law on Social Housing has been adopted. Housing care is also aimed at vulnerable categories such as displaced persons and refugees, returnees under readmission agreement, victims of war torture, single parents, families with three or more children, youth without parental care, beneficiaries of rights under the social protection law, such as materially disadvantaged and work-disabled persons, people with disabilities, elderly individuals without family care, victims of domestic violence and other individuals in accordance with the law. The RS Social Housing Development Strategy (2020-2030), led by the RS Secretariat for Displaced Persons and Migration (RSDPM), was adopted in 2020, which will contribute to further development of the social housing system.

The RSDPM continuously implements activities on reintegration and integration of displaced persons, returnees and refugees in the RS and FBiH, with the aim of economic and social sustainability (construction and reconstruction of homes or necessary related infrastructure, reconstruction of religious facilities with infrastructure, construction and expansion of livestock facilities, greenhouses, irrigation equipment, agricultural machinery, seedlings and projects for craft and production-service activities).

Since families with four or more children are recognized as particularly socially vulnerable, the Law on Support to Unemployed Parents of Four or More Children in the RS was adopted, which will contribute to improving the material status of these families.

Out of the total number of persons removed from the unemployment registry in the reference period, 51.7% were women, while 53.03% persons registered as unemployed are women. In

subsidized employment of vulnerable and hard-to-employ individuals, women are recognized as one of the target groups.

As for the current unemployment situation in the RS, the latest data shows that as of 31 March 2024 there were 58,377 people in the unemployment registry, of which 30,962 were women (53.03%). Thus, women make up a larger share of the total unemployment. However, data from the labor force survey indicates that 62.2% of women are inactive in the labor market, while women account for about 45% of total employment.

The RS Law on Child Protection defines nine rights, including the right to assistance for newborn equipment, child allowances, and pro-natality allowances for third and fourth-born children.

In the 2024 FBiH Budget, more funds for vertical programs of the Solidarity Fund have been allocated and additional funds were earmarked for the treatment of cystic fibrosis. In 2024, a decision was made to include spinal muscular atrophy in the vertical programs funded by the Solidarity Fund. During 2023, 10 million BAM was allocated for biomedical assisted reproduction. Larger funds in the Solidarity Fund mean less time waiting for treatment abroad and reimbursement for patients receiving chemotherapy i.e. new smart medications. There are no children on the waiting lists. Although around 10% of the population remains uninsured, they still receive healthcare, and the costs are reimbursed by cantons and social welfare centers.

A parent caregiver (or relative appointed as a guardian), whom this status has been recognized, is entitled to a monthly allowance equal to the lowest net salary in the FBiH, in accordance with the FBiH Labor Law, with contributions paid for pension and disability insurance, health insurance and unemployment insurance. This Law also prevents the institutionalization of people with disabilities.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, everyone in the FBiH had access to healthcare and COVID-19 was classified as a professional disease for healthcare workers. As part of the Emergency COVID-19 project during the pandemic, significant improvements were made to the capacities of public health laboratories, particularly for sequencing services in case of infectious diseases. An Order on the List of Severe Diseases was also adopted.

A Program for Strengthening Nursing in the FBiH was adopted, along with its Rulebook, as well as the Rulebook defining the Immunization Center.

The Rulebook on Additional Healthcare Education in the Community enabled the formal professional development of nurses to provide better quality services in the community. As a result, in 2023, healthcare centers in Sarajevo Canton, Zenica, Mostar, Tomislavgrad and Grude were formally chosen for conducting the additional education in this area.

The FBiH Development Strategy (2021-2027) and the Strategic Plan for the Improvement of Early Growth and Development in FBiH (2020-2025) were adopted. Currently, 13 Early Growth and Development Centers are operating in Public Health Centers (PHC) in the FBiH with partially formed multidisciplinary teams. In 2022, the Law on Material Support for Families with Children in the FBiH and the Law on Social Protection Institutions in the FBiH were adopted.

The FBiH Strategic Plan envisages the continuation of accreditation and reaccreditation for Baby-Friendly Hospitals, which encourage breastfeeding and a healthy start in life.

From 2019 to the present, in cooperation with UNICEF and the ministries of health and social protection at the cantonal level in Mostar and Zenica, activities have been conducted to introduce a child assessment according to the new so-called ICF approach (assessment of children's functioning in accordance with the International Classification of Functioning). In 2022, new by-laws were introduced in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton to regulate this process. A similar process is currently being implemented for the Zenica-Doboj Canton. In 2024, the RS commenced with the implementation of the pilot project for the "reform of the system for assessment and referral of children/persons with developmental disabilities in the RS, in accordance with the international classification of health, disability and functioning" (the same process as in the FBiH, with UNICEF's support).

5.1. Human Trafficking

Recommendations: 120.77; 120.78; 120.79; 120.80; 120.81; 120.82; 120.83;

Although the proposal of the 2024-2027 Draft Strategy for Combat against Human Trafficking in BiH has been harmonized, it has not yet been adopted.

The CoM BiH adopted the 2020-2023 Action Plan of the BiH Institutions for Implementation of the Strategy for Combat against Human Trafficking in BiH

The FBiH Government has established its coordination team, while the RS Government has set up six regional monitoring teams and also adopted the 2020-2023 RS Action Plan for Combat against Human Trafficking. Cantonal governments have also established their coordination teams for combat against human trafficking. The BD BiH established its own coordination team.

In BiH, 18 October is celebrated as the European Anti-Trafficking Day. The Ministry of Security of BiH (MS BiH) allocated funds in the amount of 10,000 BAM from its budget for these activities.

The Agreement on association and method of implementation of funds for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which take care of victims of human trafficking was signed in May 2020 between the MS BiH and the MHRR.

Depending on the budget of the BiH institutions, the allocation of 130,000 BAM is planned each year for these purposes.

The HJPC BiH adopted the guidelines for dealing with human trafficking cases in four thematic areas: compensation for victims of human trafficking in criminal proceedings, criminal prosecution in cases of using the services of human trafficking victims, impunity of human trafficking victims and criminal prosecution of legal entities in human trafficking cases.

The MS BiH is responsible for collecting data on human trafficking victims and, in accordance with this, gathers and consolidates data at least twice a year and even more frequently if needed. The data on human trafficking victims are disaggregated by gender, age of the victim, country of exploitation, type of exploitation and the country of origin of the human trafficking victims.

The establishment of a database for foreign victims of human trafficking is also envisaged by the measure 5.4 of the 2016-2020 Migration and Asylum Strategy and the Action Plan. On 30

June 2020, the “Statistical Portal on Human Trafficking Victims” was established (registry of both local and foreign human trafficking victims).

The data on potential/identified human trafficking victims is directly entered into the portal. Access to the portal and possibility to fill it out is provided to the coordinators of local coordination teams (of Entities, Cantons and BD BiH), who come from the Ministries of Interior, except for the coordinator from RS, who submits information on potential/identified victims of human trafficking through forms if cases of trafficking victims occur within their jurisdiction.

It is essential to note that BiH, in accordance with the Convention on Police Cooperation, has established Joint Investigation Teams with the police authorities of the Republic of France, the Republic of Austria and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which resulted in operational action being conducted in BiH, the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Austria, and the Federal Republic of Germany. BiH has also concluded the Operational Agreement with EUROPOL. The possibility of data exchange is ensured through cooperation with INTERPOL member states.

In BiH, a victim protection system has been established by the “Rules for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims who are Citizens of BiH” and the “Rules for the Protection of Foreign Victims of Human Trafficking.” These documents represent the referral mechanism for directing victims of human trafficking. Safe accommodation, medical assistance, access to information and their rights and legal assistance during criminal proceedings have been ensured for all identified victims. Financial resources for these purposes are regularly secured from the budgets of the MS BiH and the MHRR.

In the RS, the referral mechanism for combat against human trafficking has been established, and in this respect, the RS Government adopted the decision on appointment of the Coordinator for Combat against Human Trafficking in the RS. Moreover, the RS Government issued decisions to establish the Monitoring Team for the Implementation of the RS Government's Action Plan for Combat against Human Trafficking, as well as the regional monitoring teams tasked with conducting the activities outlined in the Action Plan. The RS Government's Action Plan envisaged a series of activities to strengthen the capacities and conduct the campaigns for combat against human trafficking, thus defining more detailed types of assistance and support offered to victims of human trafficking.

The FBiH Government has appointed a coordinator and a Coordination Team has been established for combat against human trafficking at the FBiH level and for monitoring the implementation of the FBiH Action Plan.

5.2. Education

Recommendations: 120.25; 120.131;120.132 ;120.133; 120.134; 120.135;120.136; 120.137; 120.138; 120.139; 120.140; 120.141; 120.142; 120.143; 120.144; 120.145

Within the joint EU/CoE Action named "Quality Education in Multiethnic Societies," the relevant educational authorities in BiH have prepared a document titled "Recommendations for Policies of Action with a Roadmap for Improvement of Inclusive Education in BiH," which was adopted by the CoM BiH in 2020. The measures proposed in this document emphasize the

need that the quality education for all is to be perceived as a public good and a fundamental social value in BiH.

A full mapping of existing curricula and teaching practices in history and geography has been conducted to assess their correlation with the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC) and the Common Core Curriculum developed by the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education. In 2020, the Advisory Board of the Joint Action adopted the reports that offer recommendations aimed at modernizing and improving the history and geography curricula and promoting a democratic school approach and a culture based on social coherence and diversity as an integral part of society.

The Handbook for Teachers on Studying the Competences for Democratic Culture online (2020) was developed with the purpose of supporting, through concrete ideas and activity examples, the development of these competences among nearly 16,000 students and 1,500 teachers in 29 pilot schools.

Since 1 January 2023, the third phase of the EU and CoE Joint Action "Quality Education for All" has commenced, which will continue to support further effective application of these documents.

The promotion of human rights culture, gender equality and comprehensive sexual education for children and youth in formal and non-formal education system has been enhanced and it was integrated into the curriculum as well as programs of informal education (extracurricular activity - CIVITAS) in the Posavina Canton. A subject called Politics and Economics, Democracy and Human Rights has been introduced in secondary schools, covering 17 topics related to democracy and human rights. These topics have also been integrated into primary school through classteacher's work programs.

All children, particularly Roma children and children with disabilities, have been integrated into the education system, eliminating any practices that may cause segregation or assimilation of minority groups in the education system. A supportive environment for their growth and development has been ensured in the Posavina Canton in accordance with the Law on Preschool Education, Law on Primary Education and Law on Secondary Education.

All education laws in BiH guarantee every child the equal access, equal opportunities to participate in appropriate upbringing and education and the right to equal treatment without discrimination on any grounds. No law contains discriminatory provisions. Primary education is free and it has been provided to all children, regardless of their ethnic affiliation or social status. Educational assistants are provided in preschool, primary and secondary schools. In the Posavina Canton, there are 32 children with developmental disabilities in primary schools.

Progress has been made in the Orašje Primary School, in which children of Croat and Bosniak ethnicity attend classes, where learning of two mother tongues according to students' choice has been organized for many years.

The Posavina Canton Development Strategy has been adopted and it includes Measure 2.1.1.- Improvement of the Educational Infrastructure for Work with Children and Enhancement of Social Inclusion of Children with Developmental Disabilities up to the Age of 21. Free education has been provided to all primary and secondary school students. Working conditions

for schools and for students who are returnees or displaced persons have been entirely equalized.

In the Tuzla Canton, in addition to engaging the teaching assistants for Roma students in primary schools, transportation is provided for students who travel 2 km or more from home to school. Free textbooks have been provided to primary school students in order to prevent the assimilation of the Roma community, and a curriculum for the Roma language with the elements of national culture has been introduced as an optional subject.

On the occasion of celebrating the International Roma Day, outstanding Roma students from primary and secondary schools have been promoted and have received one-time scholarships from the Tuzla Canton Government. Returnee students have been granted the same access to education as non-returnee students.

In the Tuzla Canton, human rights are studied within various subjects in both primary and secondary schools. Healthcare has been ensured to all students. In the school, students who belong to one of the constituent peoples have been provided with education in their mother tongue.

In the Bosnia-Podrinje Canton Goražde, the Law on Preschool Upbringing and Education, Law on Primary Upbringing and Education and Law on Secondary Upbringing and Education prescribe that the language and culture of every minority living in the Canton are to be respected to the greatest extent.

The RS Ministry of Education and Culture advocates for the implementation of inclusive education and equal rights and opportunities in preschool education, with assistants being engaged. Educational institutions are responsible for contributing to the creation of a culture that respects human rights and fundamental freedoms of all citizens.

The RS Public Fund for Child Protection co-finances the stay of children without parental care and children with developmental disabilities, who have a diagnosis and opinion of the professional commission, in preschool institutions. In the 2022/2023 school year, 475 teaching assistants were engaged in primary schools to provide support to children.

In the RS, all students have equal access to education without discrimination. Projects aimed at keeping Roma children in the educational system have been implemented in collaboration with NGOs. The RS Ministry of Education and Culture strives to act systematically to resolve the educational issues of the Roma population through activities such as: providing free textbooks, financing their transportation and cooperation with local communities and NGOs, but the problem with their education is still evident. Through the data analysis, it was established that the major number of students who drop out of/interrupt their primary education are Roma students.

The language and culture of national minorities in the RS are taught as part of optional classes and will be respected and used in schools in accordance with the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the law regulating the protection of the rights of national minorities.

For students who belong to national minorities and do not speak the official languages of the constituent peoples, school is required, with prior consent of the Ministry of Education and

Culture, to engage a person for support who has the necessary linguistic competence of the national minority.

In the RS, as well as in the BD BiH, there is no segregation, and there are no so-called "two schools under one roof" because there is no separation of children on the basis of ethnicity, while in Central Bosnia Canton and Herzegovina Neretva Canton, segregation in education is still present.

A new Regulation on the Curriculum has been adopted in the RS, which has been effective since the 2023/2024 school year. Educational programs for primary education have been developed, with learning outcomes focused on all areas of personality. The curriculum for working with students in homerooms in primary schools has been improved. With the support of the UN Population Fund for BiH, the process of integrating a comprehensive health education program for youth has been initiated through activities within the "Healthy Lifestyles" project for primary school teachers in the RS. A program for the subject of Humanity and Safety has been adopted based on the adopted Program of Measures for Strengthening Safety and Preventing Violence in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories in the RS. The goal of this subject is that students master the skills of empathy, tolerance, assertive communication, management of emotions, teamwork, relationship building, social responsibility, critical thinking and functional knowledge, all of which contribute to acquiring the knowledge about human rights in general.

The Ministry of Education and Culture continuously supports projects and programs aimed at supporting the social integration of Roma children. In 2024, the project named "Da to sam ja (Yes, it is me)" was implemented, raising public sensibility about the importance of early learning and inclusion of Roma children in preschool institutions and primary schools, with the emphasis on municipalities where Roma population lives.

A manual for working with children from vulnerable categories has been developed, and media campaigns have been organized to promote awareness of the need for the education of Roma children in society. In cooperation with the NGO "Otaharin" from Bijeljina, the Ministry applied for the public call from the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs with a project for the allocation of grant funds for Roma education in 2023.

In the BD BiH, inclusive education is being implemented. In July 2020, the Rulebook on Recognizing, Preventing and Protecting against Discrimination in Primary and Secondary Schools was adopted, with Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian languages being used equally, as well as both Latin and Cyrillic alphabets, in all teaching and extracurricular activities. Primary and secondary school students are educated about human rights through the curriculum of the subject of Democracy and Human Rights. With the aim of enhancing the inclusive education, in December 2022 amendments to the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools of the BD BiH also prescribed the engagement of assistants in educational work to improve conditions and the quality of education for students with special needs.

5.3. Cultural Rights

Recommendation: 120.146

Depending on the provisions of the Law on the Budget of BiH Institutions and the international obligations of BiH, the amount and method of allocation of grant funds are defined, as support for co-financing the programs and projects in the fields of science and culture in BiH. A public

call for the allocation of grant support is announced once per year, in accordance with the criteria for fund allocation. The CoM BiH decides on the distribution of grant funds. Through these decisions of the CoM, projects of national minorities in BiH are also supported.

In the RS, the 2023–2030 Strategy for Cultural Development and the Rulebook on the Procedure for Selection and Manner of Co-financing the Programs and Projects in culture of RS were adopted.

Pravilnik o raspodjeli sredstava za projekte kulturnog stvaralaštva nacionanih manjina podržava se rad udruženja naciopnalnih manjina i savez nacionalnih manjina. Prvenstveno smotra kulturnog stvaralaštva koju organizuje Savez Nacionalnih manjihna uz podršku Ministasrsvtva prosvete i kulture RS-a, na kojem učestvuju sva registrovana udruženja u RS, a za koje se izdavaju sredstvaukupno 8% od ukupnog budžeta.

The Rulebook on the allocation of funds for projects of cultural creativity of national minorities supports the work of associations of national minorities and the Union of national minorities, especially the cultural creativity festival organized by the Union of national minorities with the support of the RS Ministry of Education and Culture. All registered associations in the RS participate in this event and 8% of the total budget is allocated for this purpose.

2021 pod nazivom Nasljeđe i Identitet, Ministasrtvo je organizovalo vrlo značajne konferencije za razvoj kulture i umjetničkog stvaralaštva, književnost i izdavaštvo

In 2021, under the title Heritage and Identity, the Ministry organized significant conferences for the development of culture and artistic creation, literature and publishing.

2022 provedena je kampanja zaštita ćiriličnog pisma, redovno se oboilježavaju Dani Evropske baštine, Evropski dani jezika, Svjetski dan kulturne raznolikosti. Promovisan je projekat kultura bez barijera kojim su obuhvaćene 20 ustanove kulture u 19 lokalnih zajednica, izdvojena su sredstav u iznosu 310.680, 00 KM

In 2022, a campaign to protect the Cyrillic alphabet was conducted. Regular celebrations of European Heritage Days, European Language Days and the World Day of Cultural Diversity were held and the Culture Without Barriers project was promoted, encompassing 20 cultural institutions in 19 local communities, with funds allocated in the amount of 310,680.00 KM.

6. RIGHTS OF VULNERABLE GROUPS

6.1. Rights of the Child

Recommendations: 120.170; 120.171; 120.172; 120.173; 120.174; 120.175; 120.176; 120.177;120.170

Preparatory activities are underway for the development of the 2025-2029 BiH Children's Action Plan, in cooperation with UNICEF in BiH and the Council for Children of BiH.

The MHRR has developed the 2020-2024 Program for Monitoring of the Implementation of Recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in BiH as a comprehensive review of the recommendations by the UN Committee for the Rights of the Child to the relevant BiH institutions regarding the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its accompanying Protocols, with the following goals: 1. Timely and responsible fulfilment

of BiH's international obligations; 2. Efficient use of organizational capacities; and 3. Timely meeting the specified deadlines.

In implementing the measures from the previous Action Plan for Children, the best results were achieved in improving child protection mechanisms and in raising awareness to prevent and combat violence against children.

Social welfare centers in the FBiH take necessary measures to protect children's rights and best interests in accordance with legal provisions (criminal and family law). In addition to the legislative framework at the cantonal and municipal levels in the FBiH, child protection is regulated through signed Protocols on the conduct of all relevant institutions in cases of domestic violence, which also includes the area of protection and conduct in cases of child abuse and violence, as well as the actions in cases of violations of children's rights. Social welfare centers also act in accordance with the Guidelines for Addressing the Cases of Child Abuse and Neglect in BiH and regularly provide social support to children who are victims of violence or neglect, as well as to their families.

Amendments to the Criminal Code of FBiH are underway in line with the recommendations of the Lanzarote Committee of the Council of Europe on the protection of children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Meanwhile, the Criminal Code of RS has already been harmonized with the recommendations of this body.

The HJPC BiH has adopted the Minimum Standards for the Equipment and Use of Premises for the Hearings of Child Witnesses, to ensure that criminal proceedings involving children are conducted effectively and in accordance with relevant international standards and domestic legislation, respecting the best interests of the child.

In order to make information about the judiciary more accessible to children and minors, the HJPC BiH created an illustrated publication titled "My Guide through Criminal Proceedings," intended for children victims/witnesses of criminal acts, aged 12 to 18, as well as for their parents/guardians, with the aim to familiarize these vulnerable groups with their rights during the initiation and duration of criminal proceedings. A seminar was organized on the topic "Members of Vulnerable Groups as Witnesses in Proceedings," the program of which was developed by the HJPC BiH.

The HJPC BiH, with the support of UNICEF, Entity Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Center and the Judicial Commission of the BD BiH, launched a process of revising the curricula for specialized training of judges and prosecutors for juveniles.

The MoI RS has adopted a Plan of Measures and Activities for the Prevention of Peer Violence and Juvenile Delinquency. A Program of Measures for Enhancing Security and Preventing Violence in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories in the RS has been adopted, along with a Protocol for the Protection of Children from Violence, Neglect, and Abuse.

The RS Government has adopted the Protocol for the Protection of Children from Violence, Neglect, and Abuse, the Action Plan for the Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, as well as the 2020-2024 Strategy for Combat against Domestic Violence. The RS Family Law prescribes that domestic violence is prohibited and that every family member has the right to protection from violence (Article 15). Child in a family has the right to protection from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (Article 84, Paragraph

3). A parent who abuses parental rights will have these rights revoked by the court in non-contentious proceedings, particularly if physical and psychological violence against the child is carried out (Article 124).

The Law on Child Protection in RS prescribes the rights to assistance to provide basics for newborns, maternity allowance, child allowance, reimbursement, payment of salaries during part-time work to enhance child care until the age of three, reimbursement of salary for part-time work to care for a child with developmental disabilities, meeting the developmental needs of children, pro-natality incentives for the third and fourth child and the right to compensation for the parent-guardian or care provider.

The FBiH Government has adopted the 2024-2027 Strategy for Prevention and Combat against Domestic Violence, based on which a special body will be established to monitor the implementation of this Strategy.

The Framework Plan for the Prevention and Countering Violence in Educational Institutions in the FBiH is in the process of adoption.

The FBiH Government, upon proposal of the FBiH Ministry of Education and Science, accepted the "Framework Plan for the Prevention and Countering Violence in Educational Institutions in the FBiH" at the session held on 1 August 2024.

6.2. Persons with Disabilities

Recommendations: 120.179; 120.180; 120.181; 120.182; 120.183; 120.184; 120.185; 120.186; 120.187; 120.188; 120.189; 120.190; 120.191; 120.192

The 2023-2029 RS Social Protection Strategy prescribes the measure of strengthening cooperation among all protection actors in crisis and emergency situations, with the aim of strengthening cooperation among all protection actors in crisis and emergency situations. The project/program "Disaster Risk Reduction for Sustainable Development in BiH," implemented by various UN agencies in BiH, has enabled the inclusion of the social protection sector in the process of establishing local platforms for disaster risk reduction (DRR platform).

The rights prescribed by the Law on Social Protection ensure the assistance to persons who are in social need due to various circumstances (inability to work and insufficient income for sustenance, old age, disability, inadequate family circumstances etc.). Each local self-government unit is given the possibility to define by its decisions the additional, extended rights which meet the specific needs of beneficiaries living in that local community.

In BiH, 3 December is celebrated as the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 15 October as the International White Cane Safety Day and 21 March as the World Down Syndrome Day.

On 5 July 2023, the CoM BiH adopted a decision to establish the Council for Persons with Disabilities of BiH.

The HJPC BiH drafted the Report on the Architectural and Urban Accessibility of Buildings of All Judicial Institutions in BiH for Persons with Disabilities, based on which several judicial institutions have made necessary adaptations to their buildings.

Through the issuance of permit by the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) for public broadcasting systems on 26 April 2020, mandatory programme quotas for content accessible to persons with disabilities were introduced for all public broadcasters in BiH. In accordance with the Rule 95/2023 on the Provision of Audio-visual Media Services, a mandatory share of programs adapted to persons with disabilities is also prescribed for other commercial and public TV stations.

In order to improve the position of persons with disabilities in BiH, the following strategies were adopted: the 2016-2021 Strategy for the Improvement of Rights and Position of Persons with Disabilities in FBiH and the 2017-2026 Strategy for the Improvement of the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities in the RS, with the Action Plans for the improvement of the social position of persons with disabilities, in order to meet the obligations deriving from the ratification of international documents by BiH. A system of monitoring of the strategies has been established through coordination bodies, specifically an intersectoral body of the RS Government to support persons with disabilities.

The HJPC BiH conducted an analysis of the cases of deprivation of work capacity at the courts of BiH, which pointed to the need for harmonization of courts' and experts' practices with the standards of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and issued recommendations to the courts.

With the adoption and ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the FBiH has started the process of harmonizing its approaches and practices regarding disability with this international instrument. The Strategy for Improvement of the Rights and Position of Persons with Disabilities in the FBiH represented a comprehensive concept of coordinated action across all responsible sectors at the level of the FBiH, cantons and municipalities, aiming to create the conditions to improve the rights and position of persons with disabilities by ensuring their inclusion and participation in all areas of society on an equal basis with others, the highest possible level of independence and freedom of choice in accordance with the adopted international standards. Progress has been made in understanding the problems and needs of persons with disabilities, economic empowerment, overcoming discrimination in disability assessment based on the model rather than the consequences of disability, assessment and referral of children with disabilities, improvement of the database on persons with disabilities and cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities.

Specific activities are visible in terms of economic empowerment, i.e., the employment and integration of persons with disabilities into the labor market. Between 2021 and 2023, 1,589 persons with disabilities were employed through the FBiH Fund for Professional Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

Entity governments, within their budgets, provide means for the work of the funds for professional rehabilitation and retraining. Activities related to the implementation of inclusive education are to continue in the educational system. As a recognized vulnerable group, persons

with disabilities are included in the sectoral strategies at the Entity level, in the BD BiH and at the cantonal level.

Access to health insurance for displaced persons, returnees and refugees is provided in the budget of the RS Secretariat for Displaced Persons and Migration. Obligations for these vulnerable categories are paid into the RS Health Insurance Fund.

The RS Government has appointed the Intersectoral Body for Support to Persons with Disabilities, tasked with promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The RS Ministry of Health and Social Protection handles the professional and administrative tasks for the Intersectoral Body. The RS Government is committed to fulfilling the obligations arising from the ratification of international documents by BiH. The Strategy for the Improvement of the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities represents the first such document in the history of the RS, aiming to systematically improve one of the most sensitive areas of social policy in general.

In the 2021-2027 BD BiH Development Strategy, it has been planned to remove the architectural barriers in all primary and secondary schools, ensuring full access for students to educational institutions. In the 2022-2026 BD BiH Strategy for Youth, in reference to the education of students with difficulties in psycho-physical development in schools where these students are educated, it has been planned to procure and maintain the necessary equipment, training and to introduce the teaching assistants for children and youth who are part of inclusive education, as well as to procure the equipment for blind and visually impaired students.

6.3. LGBT

Recommendations: 120.43; 120.44 ;120.54

In July 2022, the CoM BiH adopted the 2021-2025 Action Plan for the Improvement of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of LGBTI Persons in BiH. The plan provides measures and identifies responsible parties for implementation of the following three strategic goals: equal opportunities and prohibition of discrimination, equal rights in all areas of life, and a society that respects diversity. In February 2024, the CoM BiH adopted a conclusion extending the validity period of the Action Plan until the end of 2025.

This Action Plan envisages measures for the harmonization and regular monitoring of criminal laws with regard to hate crimes against LGBTI persons, analyses of legal obstacles faced by persons living in same-sex communities, analysis of existing modalities for gender change, training for judicial officials, police officers and civil servants etc.

Training sessions have been intensified for police officers, judicial bodies, healthcare employees and the academic community. The topic "Protection of the Rights and Freedoms of LGBTI Persons in BiH" was included in the Training Plan of the BiH Civil Service Agency, with the first training held in December 2023.

State and Entity-level civil service agencies have organized the trainings for civil servants on the topics of prevention and protection against discrimination, as well as international standards on discrimination, gender concept and gender equality mechanisms and standards.

Through the project "Promotion of Diversity and Equality in BiH," implemented by the Women's Network with financial support from the EU and the Council of Europe, a training was held in 2021 for members of the police departments of Zvornik and Bijeljina on the topic

of "Sensitization of Police Officers in Working with the LGBT Population" and, within these activities, a monograph was produced under the title of "Police and LGBT: Criminological Aspects". Through collaboration with the NGO Kwart, a Manual for Police Officers was created, providing guidelines for dealing with hate crime cases.

At the Police Education Administration of the MoI RS, police cadet training which includes content related to hate crimes is conducted. Namely, within the curriculum of police cadet training in the Police Academy the content was integrated in relation to sensitization of police officers in responding to security incidents where prejudice or hatred may be the motive, with the focus on specificity of police response i.e., undertaking the so-called initial operational measures in such security incidents. A special segment of the curriculum is dedicated to the seminar part of police training, which covers the "Gender-based Violence and the Action Plan for the Implementation of UN Resolution 1325." Between 2021 and 2023, 762 cadets from the Police Academy of the MoI RS participated in the seminar part of police training with regard to sensitisation of police officers in working with the LGBTI community.

With the aim of protecting the human rights of LGBTI persons and establishing an LGBTI-sensitive judiciary, the HJPC BiH organized a roundtable titled "Legal Protection of LGBTI Persons: Between Anti-discrimination Laws and Criminal Laws and Practice" and conducted a seminar for judicial office holders on "Members of Vulnerable Groups as Witnesses in Proceedings."

In 2024, the FBiH Ministry of Education and Science introduced a new program titled "Support for Projects on Eliminating the Prejudice of Youth against LGBTQ+ Population." The program is implemented through a public call and it is intended for NGOs based in the FBiH to support projects of eliminating prejudice and stereotypes towards LGBTQ+ population and preventing discrimination against this population.

In BD BiH, one request was submitted in 2021 to initiate misdemeanor proceedings under Article 9 of the Law on Public Order and Peace. In 2022 six requests were submitted, and in 2024 one request was submitted. In 2020 and 2023 no requests were initiated under this legal basis. However, in 2023 a case was opened regarding a hate crime.

6.4. National Minorities

Recommendations: 120.115; 120.193;120.194;120.195; 120.196;
120.197; 120.198; 120.199; 120.200

The CoM BiH adopted the 2021-2025 Action Plan for the Social Inclusion of Roma, which has been harmonized with the EU standards. The Ministry provides the annual budgetary funds for implementation of the Action Plan, with 3,292,951.56 BAM allocated from 2019 to 2023. When it comes to housing field, 1,823,335.56 BAM was allocated, which enabled the construction of 38 buildings, the repair of 56 buildings and improved housing conditions for 247 Roma families. For the employment of Roma, 800,000 BAM was spent, 168 persons used these funds for employment and self-employment. In the field of healthcare, 602,000 BAM was allocated; 175 mediators were trained, around 500 Roma had preventive medical examinations and 18 children and 30 adults were vaccinated against COVID-19, while 115 persons were provided with health insurance. Since 2020, 85,599.98 BAM has been allocated for education, including 43,000 BAM for NGOs' projects, and 230,000 BAM for projects promoting the culture and traditions of national minorities.

To eliminate prejudice and stereotypes against Roma and create inclusive and just future, a two-day workshop titled "Active Dialogue for the Deconstruction of Stereotypes and Equal Access to Justice" was organized for judicial officials in cooperation with the Association "Kali Sara - Roma Information Center."

The National Minorities Council of BD BiH was established on 6 April 2022, by the Decision on its establishment.

A working group (WG) was appointed to develop a local 2024-2027 Action Plan for Addressing Roma Issues in BD BiH. The task of this WG is to develop a local action plan that covers priority needs in the following areas: education, housing, employment, healthcare and social protection, preservation of culture and tradition, and other needs of Roma in BD BiH.

The MHRR BiH organized and held a Regional Conference on Cooperation with National Minorities on 5-6 March 2024, which was attended by the OSCE High Commissioner.

On 21 May 2024, the CoM BiH organized the First National Minorities Conference in BiH, with the support of the OSCE Mission in BiH and the MHRR.

6.5. Refugees and Migrants

Recommendations: 120.201; 120.202; 120.203; 120.204; 120.205; 120.206; 120.207;

Regarding migration issues, in August 2023, amendments to the Law on Foreigners were adopted, which has been harmonized with two regulations and two directives of the EU, and by-laws are currently being developed. In 2022, the 2021-2025 Migration and Asylum Strategy was adopted, which provides the measures and activities aimed at improving the system of comprehensive migration and asylum management. Additionally, in 2022, the CoM BiH adopted the Rulebook on Standards of Operation and Other Matters important for the work of the center for reception and accommodation of asylum seekers.

Regarding centres for reception of migrants, there are currently four reception centers with a total capacity of about 4,600 places, two of which are specifically designated for the accommodation of vulnerable categories of migrants, such as families, women, and children, and one Immigration Center.

BiH has ensured humane and legal conditions for accommodating migrants. In order to ensure humane conditions, the UN agencies, international organizations and relevant institutions have been involved in the work and functioning of these centers, and they monitor and coordinate this process.

The Law on Foreigners (Article 123) provides for protection of the rights of minors and other foreigners, as well as the obligation of relevant authorities to treat minors with special care and consideration, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and laws in BiH related to the care and protection of minors.

Unaccompanied minors are kept in the immigration center as an exception, only as the last resort and for the shortest possible time.

Unaccompanied minor migrants are accommodated in one of the temporary reception centers for vulnerable categories, one of which is located in the Una-Sana Canton and the other in the Sarajevo Canton. These centers provide all humane conditions for accommodating this category of migrants. A temporary guardian, appointed by the relevant guardianship authority

(social welfare center), is assigned to unaccompanied minor migrants. The guardian is responsible for ensuring all the rights, including education and healthcare services.