

Border Security and Management



The Mission supports Bosnia and Herzegovina in ensuring open and secure borders. Its support is based on the **OSCE Border Security and Management Concept** which entails a whole-of-government approach and promotes co-operation among all relevant agencies as well as international co-operation. The Mission assists in the development of an integrated border security and management system that effectively prevents all forms of cross-border crime and threats while allowing unhindered movement of persons, goods, services, and commerce.

Key challenges

The complex security challenges encountered by BiH - such as movement of terrorists and trafficking in

human beings and cultural goods - require urgent steps to further integrate its border management system, including advancing inter-agency, cross-border and civil-military

co-operation, scaling up the use of modern technologies, and improving contingency planning.

The increase in the number of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers entering BiH since 2018 has strained the human and financial resources of responsible institutions. According to official figures, in January 2024 the number of such entries into BiH (2,953) was 1.7 times higher than in the previous year (1,781), which itself had more than quadrupled compared to 2022 (429)¹. At the same time, the Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina encounters staffing shortages with only

70 per cent of positions filled in January 2025². Moreover, mechanisms for operational-level co-ordination and information exchange among agencies are insufficient, especially those for managing migration and crises at the border.

BiH lacks the Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems. Despite recent progress, BiH authorities are yet to develop a national policy and timeline. The absence of such systems impedes the timely detection of suspicious travel patterns and identification of criminals and their victims - including

¹ <https://bih.ion.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11076/files/documents/2025-01/bosnia-and-herzegovina-migration-response-situation-report-30-december-2024-5-january-2025.pdf>

² <https://n1info.ba/english/news/bosnias-border-police-faces-severe-staff-shortages/>

the movement of terrorists. Furthermore, BiH continues to be affected by cases of identity fraud and impostors. In 2024, the BiH Border Police temporarily confiscated 339 documents suspected of being forged.

Unlawful looting of archaeological sites and in illicit cross-border smuggling of stolen cultural heritage and artwork remains a challenge to address. BiH - located on the Balkan trafficking route – is both a transit country and an end destination of stolen artwork. Trafficking in cultural property is closely linked with transnational organized crime, money laundering and corruption.

The role of the Mission

The Mission's approaches these complex and interconnected security threats in comprehensive fashion to ensure the change both effective and sustainable.

The Mission supported BiH authorities in the development of the country's Strategy for Integrated Border Management for 2025-2029, along with its Action Plan. The adoption of the Strategy in 2025 marked a significant step for BiH in building an integrated border security and management system that effectively prevents all forms of cross-border crime and threats. The Mission assists the Coordination Body for the implementation of the Strategy for Integrated Border Management in its work and implementation efforts to further develop relevant strategic policy, legislation, and co-operation mechanisms.

Mission support also helps increase the awareness and the capacity of criminal justice actors to combat illegal migration and transnational organized crime, including the [smuggling and trafficking in human beings](#), weapons, and cultural property, as well as related corruption.

In January 2025, the BiH Parliamentary Assembly adopted the Law on Border Control, aligning BiH's legal framework with international standards and the commitments of the BiH Integrated Border Management Strategy (2025-2029). The Mission assisted BiH authorities throughout the four-year drafting process by providing expert and technical support, as well as supporting institutional co-ordination. The law strengthens BiH's capacity to address border-related security challenges, enhances interagency co-operation, and represents a key step towards the establishment of the API/ PNR systems.

In March 2024, the Mission, in co-operation with the OSCE TNTD/Border Security and Management Unit, facilitated a training course led by the OSCE Mobile Training Team. The training comprised two modules focusing on behavioral analysis and interviewing techniques as well as the fight against human trafficking. The course strengthened the capacities of 38 Border Police officers (24 male, 14 female) to effectively profile, screen, interview and detect suspected Foreign Terrorist Fighters and perpetrators of cross-border crimes, as well as potential victims of these crimes, while

mitigating the risk of harm and adhering to human rights principles throughout the assessment process.

Travel document security and detecting impostors

The Mission supports BiH authorities in the establishment of API and PNR systems, vital tools for enhancing border and aviation security as well as for facilitating legal and efficient cross-border movement.

In co-operation with OSCE Secretariat's Border Security and Management Unit (BSMU), the Mission's train and equip approach is enhancing the ability of BiH Border Police to detect impostors as well as forged personal identification and travel documents, and to conduct related document verification using the latest forensic equipment. Such support contributes to wider efforts to combat transnational threats.

The 2019 Protected Documents Handbook, developed and published with Mission support, has been used since to advance the knowledge and skills of police officials on detecting the latest document forging techniques.

Trafficking in cultural property

To help BiH preserve its cultural and historical heritage, and prevent the financing of criminal activity using proceeds from trafficked cultural property and artwork, the Mission also works with BiH authorities to strengthen their capacities, legal framework, and inter-agency co-operation.

In partnership with INTERPOL, the Centre against Trafficking in Works of Art, and the BiH Ministry of Security's Agency for Education and Professional Training, the Mission organized trainings that advanced the capacities of approximately 200 security and justice sector personnel. The high degree of BiH ownership over these results is reflected in the Agency having accredited and included the course on countering trafficking in cultural property into its official curriculum.

With Mission support, the Centre against Trafficking in Works of Art developed a manual which serves as a training tool for the BiH Border Police and other law enforcement agencies, customs officials, as well as judges and prosecutors on import and export of artwork and cultural goods. The Mission conducted a month-long public campaign on protection of cultural heritage and combating trafficking in cultural property to convey key messages, including the role of the public in crime prevention by promoting the Krimolovci law enforcement hotline for reporting suspected cases of trafficking.

For more information, scan the QR code.



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