

Cybersecurity



The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina works to enhance the ability of Bosnia and Herzegovina to prevent and respond effectively to security threats emanating from cyberspace in accordance with its OSCE commitments. The Mission works with authorities at all levels to support them in the development of a national cybersecurity framework strategy and necessary policies and mechanisms. It also supports BiH in the establishment of Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) and enhancing international co-operation in the field of cybersecurity.

International commitments

BiH is politically dedicated to implementing OSCE commitments deriving from the [OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions on Enhancing Efforts to Reduce the Risks of Conflict Stemming from the Use of ICT](#) as well as the agreed

set of [Confidence-Building Measures to Reduce the Risks of Conflict Stemming from the use of Information and Communication Technologies](#) (CBMs). The realization of these commitments and measures helps enhance predictability and transparency, thereby reducing the possibility

of misperceptions and conflict in the cyber domain. BiH has also expressed its determination to align with the network and information systems' security standards being applied across the EU ([NIS2 Directive](#)). BiH moreover aims to implement the [Council of Europe \(CoE\) Budapest Convention on Cybercrime](#) and its protocols, which guides the development of national legislation and co-operation in combating cybercrime.

Key challenges

BiH still lacks an official and agreed strategic approach for responding to cybersecurity threats. It is the only country in South-Eastern Europe without a national cybersecurity

strategy and CERTs. Progress has been limited due political instability, subpar co-ordination, inadequate capacities, and lack of agreement on a strategic vision. Existing legislation remains to be fully aligned with relevant international and EU standards.

All this leaves the public and private sectors in BiH, as well as individual citizens, vulnerable to the evolving threats from cyberspace - including to cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure. According to statistics of the academic CERT in BiH in 2023, the country faces between 300,000 and 400,000 cyber-attacks per day, or 2-3 million per week.

Cyber-attacks targeting the BiH Parliamentary Assembly and the Central Election Commission in 2022 illustrated both the vulnerability of key ICT systems and the urgency to address cybersecurity gaps in order to safeguard democratic processes and personal data of BiH citizens.

The role of the Mission

Owing to Mission support, the BiH stakeholders developed and adopted a cybersecurity strategic document – the **Guidelines for a Strategic Cybersecurity Framework**. Although not officially adopted as a national strategy, the document has laid foundations for activities designed to facilitate the development and adoption of the strategy by BiH authorities, which are supported by the Mission together with its local and international partners (the Neretva Group on Cybersecurity and the International Co-ordination Group). The Mission also assists BiH in establishing, capacitating and networking CIRTs – as key protection and response mechanisms for cybersecurity.

Under the Mission auspices, in 2018 an open-ended informal expert and multi-stakeholder group – the **Neretva Group on Cybersecurity** – was established to advance discussions toward a strategic framework for addressing cyber-related issues. Over the years, the Group has evolved into a recognized driver of new cybersecurity initiatives.

Comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors, academia, youth, and women professionals in cyber and ICT security, the group has gained international recognition as a unique model of **public-private partnership**.

One of the Neretva Group's key achievements is the development of the Guidelines for a Strategic Cybersecurity Framework in BiH. Based on EU national cyber security strategies and good practices, this milestone document operationalizes the OSCE Cyber/ICT security CBMs and represents a basis for the development of a cybersecurity strategy for BiH. Overarching and comprehensive in nature, the Guidelines address priority areas for enhancing cybersecurity in BiH in accordance with international standards.

In 2024, the Mission launched an extra-budgetary project **Building Sustainable Cybersecurity Capacities in BiH**, focusing on the development and networking of CERTs. The Project envisages capacity building of CSIRT/CERT teams in BiH towards their higher cybersecurity maturity level and integration into global cybersecurity frameworks and initiatives. It also aims at strengthening human and technical capacities of cyber-threat monitoring and incident-response teams in BiH, as well as their certification. Within the Project, a mentoring program for women was established to capacitate, connect and empower women cybersecurity professionals.

In 2025, Bosnia and Herzegovina became one of the adopters of OSCE Cyber/ICT Confidence-Building Measure (CBM) 14 on Public-Private Partnerships. The adoption of this CBM is a result of Mission continued support and advocacy vis-à-vis BiH counterparts, including through the involvement of the Mission-supported Neretva Group on Cybersecurity. As an adopter, BiH will be able to foster stronger public-private collaboration in the cybersecurity domain and increase opportunities for securing tailored international support, in turn increasing the country's compliance with international norms.

Sustaining Support and Building Resilience

Through supporting BiH to implement OSCE/ICT security CBMs, the Mission contributes to preserving and enhancing interstate co-operation, transparency and stability, and so to reducing the risk of conflict that stems from the use of ICT. The **Guidelines for a Strategic Cybersecurity Framework in BiH** continue to represent the basis for development of strategies and action plans in BiH as well as for BiH.

In view of the importance of CERTs for effective prevention and response to cyber-attacks, Mission support prioritizes their establishment, capacity building and networking in BiH.

Similarly, by facilitating and promoting greater and more meaningful inclusion of women and youth experts in cyber affairs, the Mission helps to diversify the much-needed cybersecurity pool of expertise.

For more information, scan the QR code.



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