

Social Cohesion



Social cohesion is a societal challenge that requires a strategic approach and the engagement of numerous stakeholders. Improved community cohesion achieved via the sustained engagement of civil society actors and public authorities in the implementation of locally-designed Community Cohesion Action Plans (CCAPs), is a central element of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina's engagement in this field.

The Mission has recognized the importance of investing into strengthening social cohesion in BiH, especially at the local level, and has been involved in this field since 2013. Primarily, the Mission's work on building social cohesion entailed the establishment of Coalitions

against Hate – informal groups of civil society organizations and activists that focused on condemning and reacting to hate- and bias-related incidents and co-organizing community-specific social cohesion actions.

Currently, the Mission is working with 10 Coalitions across the country. In addition to condemning incidents committed to instill fear in local communities, the Mission's work with Coalitions evolved in the last couple of years into designing locally-owned strategic documents for a more systemic and sustainable approach to ensuring social cohesion. These are called Community Cohesion Action Plans and are developed with local authorities according to specific needs of respective communities, and informed by the main results of surveys on social research that are led by prominent local civil society organizations.

The focus of Mission's work is on increasing the perseverance of civil society members

to augment the impact of social cohesion-related activities through their active participation in the design and implementation of local policies. At the same time, the Mission seeks commitment from public officials to include civil society continuously in addressing strategic and daily challenges in respective local communities.

The Mission is dedicated to building co-operation and co-ordination between stakeholders, playing a vital role in the sustainability of local and intercommunity social cohesion activities, and the prevention of bias and hate related crimes and incidents.

Community Cohesion Action Plans are documents developed by local authorities

in partnership with civil society organizations and members of the Coalitions against Hate, with the Mission's assistance. Such plans provide background information on recorded cases of hate incidents, define stakeholders in local communities, present previous activities, and clearly define actions (including responsible parties, budgets and timeframes) that need to be taken in order to increase social cohesion within a community and prevent the reoccurrence of incidents.

The Mission supports the structural revision of CaHs in terms of improving their internal engagement procedures, thus reinforcing their position and integrity within local communities. This provides validity to CaHs in establishing a dialogue with local authorities and continues to encourage the greater involvement of local authorities in social cohesion activities.

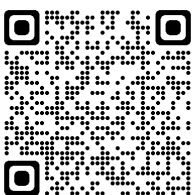
The Mission provides capacity-building opportunities for CSOs and individuals, including CaHs, on issues previously identified in co-operation with local communities' stakeholders. These include project management, monitoring and analysis of social cohesion, media and communications, and advocacy. In recent years, capacity-building efforts focused on improving the knowledge and skills of civil society organizations and Coalition members in conducting research on topics related to social cohesion. The main aim of this endeavour is to establish a foundation for evidence-based planning of social cohesion-related actions and activities at the local level. Activities of CSOs on social cohesion and the prevention and condemnation of hate or bias-motivated incidents requires visibility, hence the Mission provides support in designing communication

channels that offer a platform for positive stories. These include the design and administration of the website www.supergradjani.ba, as well as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts also connected to the name Supergradjani (Super Citizens).

The Mission's efforts invested in building and strengthening social cohesion will ensure that BiH society has the capacity to enable the long-term well-being of its members, including responsible individual participation in society, equal access to available resources, and respect for human dignity and diversity.



For more information, scan the QR code.



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