

# Border Security and Management



The Mission supports Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in ensuring open and secure borders. This includes attaining an integrated border security and management system that effectively prevents all forms of cross-border crime and threats while still enabling the unhindered movement of persons, goods, services and commerce. Such assistance is framed by 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.

## 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 dramatic increase in the number of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers entering BiH since 2018 has strained the human and financial resources of responsible institutions. For example, in February 2023, the number of such entries into BiH (1,564) almost tripled as compared to the previous year (578)<sup>1</sup>.

According to estimates of the BiH Border Police, it is currently understaffed by 562 police officers, or nearly a quarter of the envisaged number of posts<sup>2</sup>. Mechanisms for

operational-level coordination and information exchange among agencies are lacking, especially those for managing migration and crises at the border.

BiH is in a preliminary phase of establishing the Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) systems, and is yet to develop a related 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 the movement of terrorists. Moreover, in relation to travel document security, BiH continues to be affected

<sup>1</sup> [https://bih.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11076/files/2023/SITREP/01\\_IOM%20BiH%20External%20Sitrep%206-19%20MARCH%202023\\_final%20%281%29.pdf](https://bih.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd11076/files/2023/SITREP/01_IOM%20BiH%20External%20Sitrep%206-19%20MARCH%202023_final%20%281%29.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.klix.ba/vijesti/bih/mirko-kupresakovic-granicnoj-policiji-bih-nedostaju-562-policaica-adekvatna-oprema-i-objekti/230324065>

by cases of identity fraud and impostors. In 2022 alone, the BiH Border Police temporarily seized a total of 262 documents suspected of forgery<sup>3</sup>.

There is a dramatic upsurge in the unlawful looting of archaeological sites and in illicit cross-border smuggling of stolen cultural heritage and artwork across the OSCE region. BiH is on the Balkan trafficking route – as a transit country and an end destination of stolen artwork. It is estimated that 6.3 per cent of illegal trade in art takes place in South-East Europe. Trafficking in cultural property is closely linked with transnational organized crime, money laundering and corruption<sup>4</sup>. According to UNODC<sup>5</sup>, annual proceeds of transnational crime related to art and cultural property are estimated at USD 3.4 - 6.3 billion.

### The role of the Mission

Using the 2019-2023 Integrated Border Management Strategy of BiH and its Action Plan as a basis for its work, the Mission partners with the competent BiH co-ordination body in further developing relevant strategic policy, legislation, and co-operation mechanisms. Mission support is also helping 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 the related corruption.

The Mission's comprehensive

approach to these complex and interconnected security threats is vital for ensuring change that is both effective and sustainable.

A Mission-facilitated training on the differences between trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants advanced the ability of 39 border and security management professionals to apply human rights-based, gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approaches when working with smuggled persons and victims of trafficking.

### TRAVEL DOCUMENT SECURITY AND DETECTING IMPOSTORS

The OSCE is supporting BiH authorities with 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 significantly 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 greatly contributes to wider efforts to combat transnational threats.

The Protected Documents Handbook, developed and published with Mission support, is now used 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 precious cultural and historical heritage, and prevent the financing of criminal activity using proceeds from trafficked cultural property and artwork, the Mission works to strengthen related BiH 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 in the period 2019-2022 that greatly advanced the related capacities of 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 now 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. As part of a month-long public campaign on protection of cultural heritage and combating trafficking in cultural property, the Mission developed a brochure and video clip

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.

<sup>3</sup> Response by the Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security (14 June 2022)  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.osce.org/stories/cracking-down-on-illicit-art-trade-to-improve-security>  
<sup>5</sup> <https://news.un.org/en/story/2015/11/514712>

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