



# Overview of the Higher Education System

Bosnia and Herzegovina



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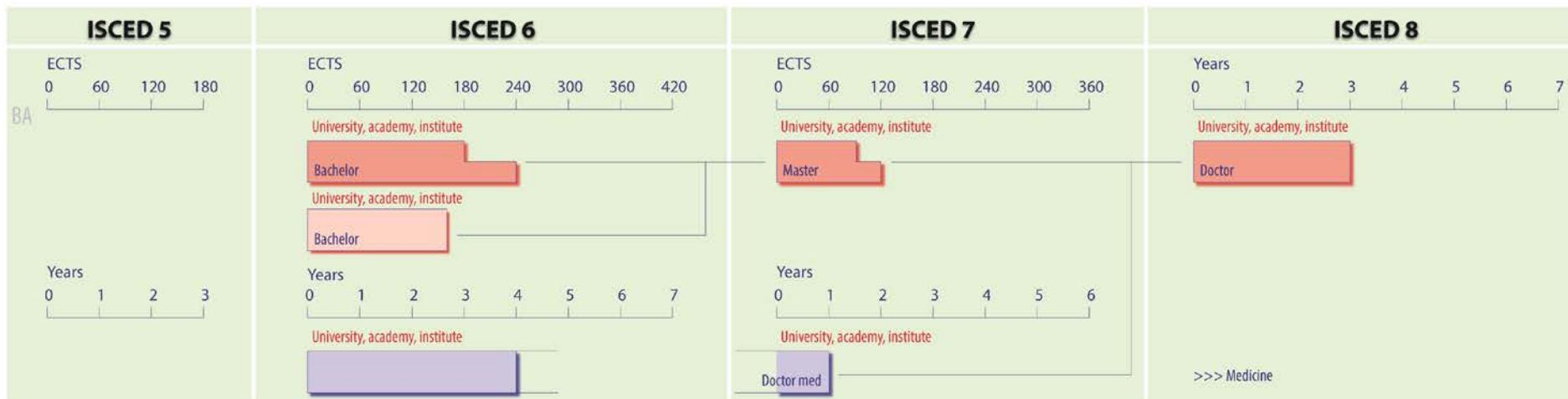
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## The higher education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina



■ Most common length of a Bologna cycle

■ Other length of a Bologna cycle

■ Professional programme

■ Programme outside the typical Bologna model

■ Professional programme non Bologna

**ECTS:**  
Credits according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

All	programmes have admission requirements
SOME	

regulated at national level



decided at institutional level





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## Glossary of Acronyms Used

APOSO	Agencija za predškolsko, osnovno i srednje obrazovanje Bosne i Hercegovine	Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BD	Brčko Distrikt Bosne i Hercegovine	Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina
BiH	Bosna i Hercegovina	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BFUG	Grupa za praćenje Bolonjskog procesa	Bologna Follow-Up Group
CEA	Nadležna obrazovna vlast	Competent Educational Authority
CEEPUS	Program razmjene studenata Centralne Evrope	Central European Exchange Programme for University Students
CIP	Centar za informisanje i priznavanje dokumenata iz oblasti visokog obrazovanja	Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education
CoE	Vijeće Evrope	Council of Europe
ECML	Evropski centar za moderne jezike	European Centre for Modern Languages
ECTS	Evropski sistem prenosa bodova/kredita	European Credit Transfer System
EHEA	Evropski prostor visokog obrazovanja	European Higher Education Area
ELGPN	Vodič kroz evropsku mrežu politika	European Guidance Policy Network
EPALE	E-platforma za obrazovanje odraslih u Evropi	Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
EQF	Evropski kvalifikacijski okvir	European Qualification Framework
ERI SEE	Inicijativa za reformu obrazovanja Jugoistočne Evrope	Education Reform Initiative for South Eastern Europe
EU	Evropska unija	European Union
Euroguidance	Evropski vodič	Euroguidance
EUROPASS	Evropski curriculum vitae	European CV
EURYDICE	Evropska mreža podataka o odgojno-obrazovnim sistemima	European Education System Data Network
FBiH	Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
HE	Visoko obrazovanje	Higher Education
HEA	Agencija za razvoj visokog obrazovanja i osiguranje kvaliteta Bosne i Hercegovine	Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance
HEAARS	Agencija za akreditaciju visokoškolskih ustanova Republike Srpske	Higher Education Accreditation Agency of the Republic of Srpska
HEI	Visokoskolska ustanova	Higher Education Institution
Horizon 2020	Okvirni program EU za istraživanja i inovacije	EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation
INQAAHE	Međunarodna mreža Agencija za osiguranje kvaliteta u visokom obrazovanju	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IPA	Instrument za predpristupnu pomoć	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
MoCA	Ministarstvo civilnih poslova BiH	Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH
QA	Osiguranje kvaliteta	Quality Assurance
QF	Kvalifikacijski okvir	Qualifications Framework
RS	Republika Srpska	Republic of Srpska
SEECEL	Centar za poduzetnicko učenje Jugositočne Evrope	South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning

## 1 Overview

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Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is situated in the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. On the north, west and southwest, it borders the Republic of Croatia, and on the east and south, it borders the countries of Serbia and Montenegro. BiH has a small exit to the sea, stretching over about 21 km long coastline, near Neum. The territory of BiH covers 51.209,2 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the Preliminary results of the 2013 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in BiH published by the Agency for Statistics of BiH, it was estimated that population in BiH is 3.791.622<sup>1</sup>.

Administratively, BiH consists of two entities: *Federacija Bosne i Hercegovine* (FBiH) and *Republika Srpska* (RS) and *Brčko Distrikt Bosne i Hercegovine* (BD). The FBiH is divided into 10 cantons which are further divided into 79 municipalities. RS is administratively divided into regions and further into 62 municipalities. The territory of BD, which was subject to arbitration became in possession of neither the FBiH nor the RS. Upon the decision passed by the Brčko Arbitral Tribunal, it was placed under the government of the state of BiH, as a separate district.

The official languages in BiH are Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian with two scripts (Latin and Cyrillic). Minorities living in BiH use their native languages in their mutual communication. Dominant monotheistic religions which coexist in BiH are: Islam, Christian Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Judaism. According to the Constitution of BiH, all its citizens have equal rights and freedoms in exercising their religious and other beliefs.

Gross domestic product per capita (GDP/C) was 3.718 EUR in 2015. Its annual growth, which was 14,1% in 2006, dropped to -2,7% in 2009 and rose to 2,1% in 2015<sup>2</sup>. Gross domestic product (GDP) had a nominal value of 14.598 million EUR in 2015.<sup>3</sup>

### 1.1 Fundamental Principles and National Policies

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For the purpose of establishing basic principles and standards of higher education in accordance with the principles of Bologna Declaration and Lisbon Recognition Convention, BiH adopted in 2007 the Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (FLHE).

In accordance with the FLHE, access to higher education within the scope of which the licensed HEIs operate in BiH is not restricted, either directly or indirectly, based on any realistic or assumed basis such as: sex, race, sexual orientation, physical or other disability, marital status, colour of skin, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, affiliation with an ethnic community, property, birth, age or any other status.

The FLHE presents only the framework for responsible higher education authorities to align their entity, to cantonal and district laws on higher education. It determines the organization of the higher education in BiH, the responsibility of the competent authorities, establishes those in charge of implementing the FLHE, defines international obligations of BiH, and the quality assurance in the area of higher education. The Law does not stipulate the recognition of foreign higher education qualifications<sup>4</sup> but establishes the Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications CIP as the ENIC BiH. On the basis of the FLHE, the relevant legislation on higher education was harmonized in the RS, the ten cantons of the FBiH and the BD, allowing the full implementation of the Bologna Process<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.bhas.ba/obavijestenja/Preliminarni\\_rezultati\\_bos.pdf](http://www.bhas.ba/obavijestenja/Preliminarni_rezultati_bos.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gross domestic product by production, income and expenditure approach 2005 – 2013, Sarajevo

<sup>3</sup> Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Gross domestic product of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo – First Release, Sarajevo, 2016

<sup>4</sup> Except the general provision about the recognition of foreign qualifications for purpose of access to higher education in BiH.

<sup>5</sup> For more information on legislation, please see section Laws on the [www.cip.gov.ba](http://www.cip.gov.ba)

In addition, in the period from 2013 to 2015, a joint EU/CoE project "Strategic Development of Higher Education and Qualification Standards" (funded by IPA) was carried out in BiH. One of its fundamental objectives was to define priorities for higher education development in BiH after 2015, i.e. the year in which *the Strategic Directions for Education Development in BiH with Implementation Plan for 2008-2015*<sup>6</sup> expired, projecting full accession of BiH to the EHEA. In accordance with that the Federal Ministry of Education and Science has adopted *Strategic directions for development of higher education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2022* (in 2013) and the Government of the RS has adopted a *draft of Strategy of educational development of RS for a period 2015 -2020* (in 2015).

The document *Decision on Adoption of Priorities for Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2016-2026* was adopted by the Council of Ministers (May 2016). These priorities are grouped within seven key areas, describing the institutions responsible for and participating in the activities, as well as the implementation period. This document provides a comprehensive overview of activities to be implemented in order to strengthen the development of higher education in BiH. The document's goal is to enable higher education in BiH, its institutions, graduates, academics, and students to benefit fully from European opportunities and to contribute to the development of BiH. The project findings support the competent and responsible authorities in BiH in two core areas:

- 1) The setting of priorities for the development of higher education in BiH after 2015, on the basis of the analysis of the state of higher education in BiH;
- 2) Progress of the implementation of the BiH Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (BiHQFHE) - with a view on the relevance of higher education to society and employability.

The project helped strengthening expertise and capacities within the country, and built on a series of previous joint projects of the European Commission (EC) and the CoE, supporting higher education reforms in BiH since it joined the Bologna Process in 2003.

On the proposal of the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, on 3 December 2015, the Council of Ministers of BiH promulgated *the Decision on Adopting the Road-Map for the Implementation of the Directive 2005/36/EC and Directive 2013/55/EU* in order to increase the level of harmonization of the relevant legislation in BiH with these two directives. This is one of the obligations from the EU Road-Map which BiH should fulfil. This means that activities concerning mobility and employment of the labour force as well as an easier approach to the recognition of regulated professions are initiated.

## **1.2 Lifelong Learning Strategy**

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In the framework of the EU project entitled "Strengthening the Capacity for Human Resources Development in BiH" (IPA 2009), the document *Principles and Standards in the Field of Adult Education in BiH* was drafted. In addition to accepted international and European principles underlying the policy of adult education in BiH, the basic principles in this document relate to the determination of the importance and status of adult education in BiH, its objectives and the foundations on which it is based. This document is adopted by the Council of Ministers of BiH.

The document *Strategic platform of development of adult education in the context of lifelong learning in BiH for the period 2014-2020* was also developed within the project. This document confirms that adult education and LLL become an integral part of education systems in BiH and of its aspiration towards achieving European standards in this field. LLL has a vital role for the development and coordination of employment strategies and the promotion of skilled workforce in a very demanding world of labour and modern technology.

In RS there is no specific LLL strategy but it is defined as one of the basic principles in the *Strategy for Development of Education 2015-2020*, adopted in April 2016 by the Parliamentary Assembly of RS. Identified measures for its implementation are:

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<sup>6</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 63/08

1 Developing student competencies for LLL through a development of teachers' skills.

This measure will be implemented through the developing the skills of students focused on assessment of the content through all education;

2 Encouraging adults to LLL.

This measure will be implemented by providing opportunities for continuous acquisition of new, functional and operational knowledge, enabling further adult education, and the possibility of further training, retraining and continuous professional development throughout adults' working lives.

3 Informing people about the possibilities for strengthening communication skills, languages, IT and numeracy.

This measure will be implemented through the following activities:

- Providing information on quality training programmes for the appropriate competence and acquisition of new knowledge;
- Creating options for documenting the knowledge acquired outside formal education.

One of the strategic objectives in the *Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2022 – Synergy and Partnership* is the introduction of LLL for which a cooperation with the industry and an overarching implementation of LLL policies in partnership with all relevant stakeholders (governments, HEIs, students, employees and employers) is needed and is also conditioned by the adoption of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The ways of implementation of this objective are as follows: establishment of career development centres at HEIs; opening of centres for LLL to facilitate the development and deepening of professional knowledge, skills and ability to adapt programmes to the labour market, i.e. harmonization of adult education programmes to the labour market needs, monitoring the development of science and scientific achievements of the profession in professional development; networking and cooperation with scientific institutions, ministries, chambers of commerce, agencies, professional associations, various associations and similar institutions; identifying useful approaches to incorporating key competences for LLL; identifying and disseminating important findings / best practices that can be applied in the education system.

*The Strategic Directions of Career Orientation Development in the FBiH for the period 2015-2020* with the proposed *Action Plan* adopted in 2015 are the beginning of activities on a systematic career orientation building as a mechanism ensuring the satisfaction and success of an individual, as well as developing and improving the competitiveness of the society. In the vision, it is emphasized that higher employment rates and productivity of the working age population, economic development and better social inclusion and cohesion may be achieved by the efficient system of career orientation in the FBiH. Activities envisaged by the proposed Action Plan include, among others, establishment of career development centres at HEIs or other authorized institutions and inclusion of career orientation contents in the curriculum in HEIs that educate teaching and related staff.

Some HEIs have adopted programmes for continuous and temporary forms of professional development for third persons offering courses, seminars and other forms of temporary education not defined by the level of education and issuing necessary certificates or by establishing Centres for Curricula Modernization and LLL. For example, 9 organizational units of the University of Sarajevo organized 51 LLL programmes in 2014.

### **1.3 Organisation of Private Education**

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Higher education in BiH is organized and conducted in both public and private HEIs. There are many private educational institutions in BiH, but in the field of higher education this number is quite large in comparison to the number of public HEIs in BiH. In 2014/15 academic year, 37 private HEIs operated in BiH.

## 1.4 National Qualifications Framework

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The Council of Ministers of BiH adopted the *Decision on Adoption of the Baseline of Qualifications Framework in BiH* on 24 March 2011<sup>7</sup> which officially triggered the process of building and implementing the QF for all levels of education harmonized with European Qualification Framework (EQF). The QF is a tool for the development and provision of occupational standards, qualifications, knowledge and education based on learning outcomes, as well as expertise and certification of education services providers. This Decision also defines, coordinates and positions qualifications in the 8 (eight) reference levels (some of them can have sublevels). Every reference level includes the combination of knowledge, skills and competences i.e. standard of achievements of that level and all lower levels. This can lead to the conclusion that every higher qualification level implies that the person has got more knowledge, skills and competences as learning outcomes. Such a system of reference levels enables comparison of qualifications based on a same systematic evaluation and more objectivity in the assessment of achievements. Thereby, a horizontal and vertical mobility through the education system and training in BiH and abroad is facilitated. Based on this document, in 2013, an Inter-sectorial Committee composed of the representatives of the education sector, labour and employment, statistics, employers and trade unions was established in order to draft and propose an agenda for all major activities in the development and implementation of the QF for LLL in BiH, including methodology, standards, deadlines, enforcement bodies, the necessary funds, etc. All of this was built into the *Action Plan for the Development and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in BiH for the period 2014-2020*, which the Committee successfully completed in early 2014. The Council of Ministers adopted a *Decision on the Adoption of the Action Plan for Establishment and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in BiH for the period 2014-2020*<sup>8</sup> on 11/02/2015. The Action Plan includes: vision, mission, goals, and the work plan and indicative timetable of all major activities for the development and implementation of the QF, which will serve all institutions and individuals who will, in accordance with its responsibilities and the appropriate levels of government, be involved in the development and implementation of the QF. BiH QF will give each citizen the opportunity to acquire trusted and recognized qualifications which are comparable with the EQF, will provide access to LLL, will increase competitiveness and social inclusion, linking with the European labour market and education area. This will also contribute to the development of the education system associated with the labour market, and economic and social development of BiH.

## 1.5 Statistics on Organisation and Governance

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Academic year 2014/2015<sup>9</sup>

Educational level	No. of HEIs	No. of students	No. of educators/teachers
Higher education	10 public HEIs 37 private HEIs	96.425	9.581

## 1.6 Distribution of responsibilities

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The Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH (MoCA) is responsible for carrying out activities and tasks within the jurisdiction of BiH related to defining basic principles of coordination of activities, harmonization of plans of entity bodies and defining strategy at the international level, including, among others, in the field of education. The Agency for Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA), Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education (CIP) and the Agency for Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary Education (APOSO) have been established at the BiH level. The bodies for the coordination of the education sector have also been formed including the Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH

<sup>7</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 31/11

<sup>8</sup> Official gazette of BiH, No. 28/15

<sup>9</sup> According to the Agency for Statistics of BiH, Press Release 2/15

and the Council for General Education in BiH. The Rectors' Conference of BiH has also been established and it defines and represents the common interests of public universities in BiH, cooperates with education institutions in BiH and acts as an advisory body for the implementation of the reform of higher education. Institutional image of the education sector in BiH is a reflection of the BiH's organization, and it is defined by the BiH Constitution, the constitutions of the two entities, cantons, and the Statute of BD. The RS, ten cantons in the FBiH and the BD Government bear full and undivided responsibility for education. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the RS, ten Ministries of education in FBiH and the Department of Education of the BD have sole competencies in education.

According to the Law on Ministries of the RS, RS's Ministry of Education and Culture performs administrative and other professional tasks in the field of education, which refer to: preschool, primary and secondary education; education of the children of citizens of the RS working abroad; validation of foreign school certificates; pupils' standards; preparing programme of educational cooperation with other countries and international organisations and international agreements in the field of education in accordance with the Constitution of the RS and the Constitution of BiH; Higher Education; students' standards; preparing programmes of educational cooperation with the FBiH, other countries and international organisations and international agreements in the field of higher education in accordance with the Constitution of the RS and the Constitution of BiH.

According to the Law on Federal Ministries and other bodies of the Federal Administration, the Federal Ministry of Education and Science performs administrative, professional and other tasks stipulated by law referring to coordination of planning and activities within the FBiH, in the area, among others, of higher education encompassing implementation of the Bologna Process, standards in the area of premises, equipment and teaching aids, scientific and research activity on improvement of educational work, university students standard and coordinating the exercise of the rights of youth in education and science.

Cantonal Ministries of Education perform administrative and professional tasks stipulated by the Constitution, law and other regulations relating to the competencies of cantons in the area of education and science.

The Coordination of Ministers of Education and Science of the FBiH is established as a permanent advisory body consisting of all heads of administrative bodies in the FBiH which, in accordance with the existing constitutional and legal solutions, have competencies in the field of education and science in the FBiH and composed of the: Federal Minister of Education and Science and Cantonal Ministers of Education and Science. The Coordination of Ministers of Education and Science of the FBiH is established as a permanent advisory body consisting of all heads of administrative bodies.

The department of Education in the BD performs:

- professional, administrative and other duties within the competence of the Government, relating to the enforcement of laws and regulations of the competent authorities and institutions of BiH and the District in the area of education, under the supervision and direction of the mayor;
- the financial, technical and personnel support to the District educational institutions;
- adoption of curricula in accordance with the standards of a modern, democratic and multi-ethnic society;
- cooperation between parents and teaching staff;
- conducting training programmes in the District;
- other duties under the responsibilities of this department in accordance with the laws and regulations of BiH and the BD Assembly or ordered by the mayor.

## **2 Higher Education Funding**

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### **2.1 Public Education**

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Education in BiH is largely financed by public funds of the entities, cantons, BD and the municipal budgets, depending on the jurisdiction. This means that, in terms of location BiH has thirteen separate budgets for education: the two entities', one in BD and ten cantonal budgets.

This issue is also covered in the recently adopted document *Priorities for Higher Education Development in BiH 2016 – 2026*.

*Draft Strategy for Development of Education 2015-2020* of RS recognized the problem of insufficient financing of public HEIs. Therefore, this document establishes a more efficient system of financing higher education institutions through effective mechanisms of using budget funds, , more efficient use of information systems, strengthening project and research activities of HEIs and increasing investment in higher education and proper control of investment efficiency.

Higher education financing in the FBiH is under the jurisdiction of cantons. FBiH allocates funds to cantons according to an agreed formula, but the formula for the allocation of cantonal revenues does not include a provision for higher education financing, and thus the burden of financing HEIs is divided unequally by cantons meaning that a canton has the freedom to allocate as many funds as it wants to HEIs. A cantonal mechanism used for the allocation of public funds to public universities is negotiated as well as incremental funding and a grant scheme, but also both mixed negotiated and incremental funding. According to the latest statistical data for 2014, 24,5% from the total public expenditure for educational institutions (public, private and international) is allocated to higher education, out of which 20% to public HEIs. The total private expenditure for educational institutions in the FBiH is 10,7% of total expenditure for educational institutions. The *Strategic Directions of Development of Higher Education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2020* propose three key measures for improvement of the higher education financing: modification of the cantonal system of higher education financing in order to prevent misallocation of resources among cantons, whilst taking into consideration the complex institutional context; creation of a combined financing system that will take into account financing per student formula, and thus financing would not be based on input costs and establishment of a better planning and allocation of resources through the development of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework - MTEF for the higher education sector.

The recently EU funded project entitled *Reform of Higher Education Financing in BiH completed in 2014*, proposed a student-based allocation model or “*a model of financing public HEIs/ universities to be defined as the principle of higher education financing according to which the basis for financing would be represented by costs per student of a certain study programme, within a certain study cycle*”. It also developed a tailored software enabling universities to calculate costs of operations, to establish actual and optimum costs per student and study programme, as well as to identify deficit or surplus study programmes, examine how cross-subsidization works or needs to work between the public and university income sources and among study programmes. However, this proposed model has not yet been implemented.

Financing of higher education at public universities/colleges is made from both the budget of education authorities and from students' fees.

#### **2.1.1 Financial Autonomy and Control**

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HEIs can be financed only from sources that do not affect their autonomy. The rector of the university or college director is responsible for the use of financial resources, in accordance with the financial plan and regulations governing the field of higher education and financial operations. The following items are co-financed in public HEIs from the budget of the relevant educational authorities: scientific and research papers, costs of materials and services, costs for the purchase of fixed assets. HEIs realize their own revenues by collecting tuition fees, registration fees, projects, scientific and research work, services of

laboratory tests and certifications, seminars and other training programmes of LLL, publishing, study development and expertise, rent of office space in accordance with the standards and norms for funding of public HEIs. The HEI Managing Board establishes rules on the criteria for the allocation of its own revenues, which specify how and to what extent organisational unit has the financial authority and takes responsibility within HEI.

### **2.1.2 Fees within Public Higher Education**

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Tuition is the amount of funds with which the student participates in co-financing of the total costs of his/her studies at public HEIs. Competent ministries of education propose tuition fees for all study programmes in public HEIs, based on the proposal of HEIs in accordance with the enrolment policy for that year. The government decides on the amount of tuition for all study programmes at HEIs and for each academic year. Registration fees are fees that students pay when enrolling at HEIs, including: administrative costs of entry, fees for failed students who repeat an academic study year, fees for examination commission, fees for the recognition of diplomas for students transferring from other faculties for purpose of continuing education, compensations fee for diploma printing, graduation exams and promotions, fees paid upon enrolment to each semester. Funds for higher education activities in public HEIs are provided from the following sources: budget of responsible education authorities, own revenues, budget of the local self-government, donations and other sources.

The amount of student fees depends on a range of criteria set by the individual HEIs. Approximately 30% of the students at the eight public universities in BiH have the status of budget-financed students and 70% of the students at these universities pay tuition fees (as self-financing students or part-time students). Budget-financed students have to pay registration and library fees per year equivalent to approx. BAM 150 (approx. € 76).

The fee for self-financing students in the first cycle varies from BAM 600 (approx. € 306) to BAM 1800 (approx. € 920) per academic year. The fee for integrated study at medical and health sciences HEIs ranges from BAM 6.000 (approx. € 3.060) to BAM 12.000 (approx. € 6.120) for studies in English.

In the second cycle, fees for self-financing students are between BAM 1.500 (approx. € 767) and BAM 6.000 (approx. € 3.060) per academic year depending on the field of study.

The fee for third cycle of studies ranges from BAM 4.000 (approx. € 2.045) to BAM 7.000 (approx. € 3.580) per academic year.

## **2.2 Private Education**

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The private educational institutions cover the costs of their operations mainly from tuition fees. Funding for higher education activities in private HEIs is provided from the following sources: own revenue, donation and other sources (seminars, projects, trainings, publishing, expertizes, renting etc.).

### **2.2.1 Financial Autonomy and Control**

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Private HEIs have full financial autonomy because they are not financed by the government but also a legal obligation to act as a non-profit organization. This means that its profits must be directed primarily to higher education and research. Their financial operations are controlled by the Management Board.

### **2.2.2 Fees within Private Higher Education**

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Private HEIs make their own decisions on the level of applied tuition fees; however they are required to publish, in an accessible manner and prior to the announcement of the competition for students, the tuition fees for all courses for which enrolment is announced.

Private HEIs may charge special services that are not included in tuition fees. They have an obligation to publish their fees and costs of study on their websites before the start of the academic year.

## **2.3 Financial Support for Learners' Families**

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There are no need-based grants, no credits or tax benefits for parents or family allowances.

## **2.4 Financial Support for Learners**

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Students ranked among the first, or in the top 30% from the total number of budgeted students are entitled to enter the following year of study as students financed from the budget of the relevant education authority. In RS there is an annual grant aimed to support students who decide to enrol study programmes that lead to work in underrepresented professions. They receive free textbooks and financial support.

At the entity/cantonal level, student scholarships are mainly provided by the government according to a range of criteria which include both need- and merit-based elements. The grants range from BAM 100 (approx. € 51) to BAM 250 (approx. € 128) per month and are available for 12 months each year till the graduation. In the FBiH the Loan Fund allocates loans for students amounting to BAM 2.500 (approx. € 1.280) per academic year according to prescribed criteria.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Science allocates each academic year financial support to all Roma students and to those with special needs, as well as, to the students having the best academic performance.

Furthermore, grants for students are provided by local governments, international organizations, companies, banks and foundations.

Part-time students are not eligible to apply for state-funded grants.

## **3 The structure of the Higher Education system**

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Higher education in BiH comprises full-time, part-time, distance learning, or a combination of these modes of study, as provided in the Statute of the HEIs, as the basic act governing issues important for the performance of activities of the institution, which must be harmonized with the existing legal provisions. Higher education in BiH has been identified as a priority area of special public interest. Care about the quality of education and its development is becoming a priority in BiH. Public universities began a series of reforms in this sense and introduced policies and practices of quality assurance prior to inclusion of BiH in the Bologna process in 2003.

FLHE stipulates that HEIs in BiH may have the status of a university or higher schools (see 3.1).

Higher education in BiH is organized in three cycles.

The first cycle leads to the academic title of completed undergraduate studies [the degree of Bachelor] or equivalent, obtained after a minimum of three and a maximum of four years of full time study and after previously obtaining a certificate of completion of secondary education. A Bachelor's Degree is evaluated with at least 180 or 240 ECTS credits. Exceptions are integrated studies of medical science group in the first cycle, which are valued up to 360 ECTS credits.

The second cycle leads to the academic title of master or an equivalent, acquired following the completed graduate study. It lasts for one or two years and it is valued with 60 or 120 ECTS credits, and so that aggregate with the first cycle it carries at least 300 ECTS credits.

The third cycle leads to the academic title of doctor or an equivalent and it lasts for three years and is valued with 180 ECTS credits.

One semester of studies carries 30 ECTS credits under each cycle.

### **3.1 Types of Higher Education Institutions**

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The higher education institutions in BiH include universities and higher schools (colleges).

The term “university”:

- is limited to the HEIs involved in both lecturing and research work, offering academic degrees in all of the three cycles, with goals including improvement of knowledge, thought and education system in BiH, education, cultural, social and economic development of BiH, promotion of the democratic civil society and accomplishment of the highest standards in lecturing and research work;
- pertains to a HEI which implements at least five various study programmes from at least three scientific areas – natural sciences, engineering sciences, biomedicine and health, bioengineering sciences, social sciences and humanistic sciences.

The university may have organizational units such as faculties, academies, higher schools or scientific institutes, which conduct the lecturing, scientific research and artistic work in one or more educational and scientific areas.

The term “higher school/college”:

- is limited to the HEIs accredited to issue diplomas and degrees of the first cycle, with goals including preparation and training of individuals for expert, economic and cultural development of BiH and promotion of the democratic civil society, as well as accomplishment of high standards in lecturing and study;
- pertains to a HEI which implements at least one study programme from one scientific area and meets other requirements pursuant to the law.

The FLHE stipulates that the theological faculties, higher theological schools and academies may be affiliated with universities, which are regulated through separate agreements.

### **3.2 First Cycle Programmes**

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First cycle studies are offered at all types of HEIs and in all fields of study in BiH.

The first cycle leads to the academic title of completed undergraduate studies [the degree of Bachelor] or equivalent, obtained after a minimum of three and a maximum of four years of full time study and after obtaining the certificate of completion of secondary education. It is evaluated with at least 180 or 240 ECTS credits. The exceptions are the studies of medicine, pharmacy, dentistry and veterinary medicine that last for 5 or 6 years and are evaluated with at least 300 ECTS credits and run as integrated studies (unique programme of studies which includes the first and second cycles). Each HEI adopted the Rules of Studies for the First Cycle.

Bachelor academic studies are organized at universities (more precisely, faculties or academies of arts that are members of universities) and colleges of academic studies. A Bachelor study programme can include a final thesis that the student has to defend at the end of his/her studies, yet this depends on the specific study programme curriculum.

No short cycle programmes have yet been accredited in either academic or applied studies in the education system of BiH.

#### **3.2.1 Branches of Study**

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This classification mainly follows the Field of Science Classification which is based on the adopted *Rulebook on Education Branches in the RS* in 2014, and rules and decisions on branches and subjects classified by main fields and subjects (study programmes) for particular fields of science and arts adopted by senates of HEIs in the FBiH as prescribed by cantonal laws on higher education. Main branches of higher education studies in BiH can be classified as follows:

Branches in the RS	Branches in the FBiH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education,</li> <li>• Arts and Humanities Sciences,</li> <li>• Social Sciences, Business and Administration and Law,</li> <li>• Natural Sciences and Mathematics,</li> <li>• Engineering, Technology and Construction,</li> <li>• Agriculture, Fisheries, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine,</li> <li>• Health and Health Protection,</li> <li>• Services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Sciences,</li> <li>• Humanities,</li> <li>• Medical and Health Sciences,</li> <li>• Natural, Mathematical and Biotechnological Sciences,</li> <li>• Arts,</li> <li>• Engineering.</li> </ul>

### **3.2.2 Admission Requirements**

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Admission to undergraduate studies is performed every year in late June or early July (log-in, written entrance exam or exam of aptitudes and capabilities, and enrolment). Candidates who completed four years of secondary education can apply for the approved number of students funded from the budget and self-financing students. A month before enrolment a competition notice with the detailed conditions of entry is announced. The list of candidates is determined in line with the success in the secondary school and at the entrance exam (if HEI organizes such exam). The second registration period is announced in September for possible unfilled seats, as well as, for candidates who completed secondary school education abroad. Some organizational units/faculties organize preparation classes for admission to studies and publish tests from the previous entrance examinations.

Specific admission conditions and procedures are individually regulated by HEIs. The ranking of candidates depends on both the entrance exam (and exam of aptitudes and capabilities) results and on those obtained in the previous level of education.

Competent Educational Authorities (CEAs) prescribe the number of students to be enrolled in the first year of study for public HEIs, and for private ones in case of RS.

### **3.2.3 Curriculum**

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The curriculum is announced and is accessible to public before the beginning of lectures for the following academic year. It defines the duration of studies, courses and their schedule by semesters and years and the number of hours for various teaching forms.

The HEIs are autonomous in the creation of the contents of their respective educational curricula. However, there are some general rules regarding the curricula prescribed in the laws on higher education. In every curriculum, the list of compulsory and elective subjects should be indicated, their schedule by years, as well as their descriptions, the number of ECTS of each of them and the number of lessons they include. A detailed manner of creating the curricula is defined in the internal instructions of certain HEIs. In the curriculum of the first cycle, a final thesis may be envisaged.

The curricula generally contain between 20 and 25 hours of teaching per week. Exceptionally, the number of hours of direct work with the student during the week may be higher if the study programme is licensed with a higher weekly workload. A HEI may organize examinations, some parts or an entire study programme in a foreign language. Two or more HEIs are allowed to organize studies jointly.

For certain professions (primary school teachers, physicians, pharmacists and similar occupations) some elements of the study programmes are broadly defined by national regulations. For example, the curricula

for undergraduate teacher studies needs to include a certain number of ECTS credits of pedagogical and methodological subjects and practice.

### **3.2.4 Teaching Methods**

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CEAs set the rules and regulations prescribing maximum numbers of students attending lectures and exercises for every level and year of study and every branch of studies.

The HEI prescribes the forms and methods of teaching in the structure of the study programme. Depending on the course, the teaching can be done in small or large groups, frontally or in teams, using audiovisual aids, textbooks, manuals, ICT and more. Higher education teachers have to organize their lectures in compliance with the curriculum. Teaching materials such as books and audio-visual materials are commonly used in the teaching process, but they are not always provided to students free of charge. Books and other aids are available in the libraries of HEIs.

Adequate teaching methods that will ensure that the set outcomes are achieved are necessary for the clearly described learning outcomes. The following teaching and learning methods are most frequently used: lectures, exercises, laboratory work, work at the clinic, field classes, practice in enterprises, seminars, teamwork, group presentations, and tutorials.

### **3.2.5 Progression of Students**

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Student's success in mastering a subject is continuously monitored during the classes, in the manner prescribed by the syllabus. The student takes the exam in a particular subject at the end of a semester.

If a student fails to pass a particular examination three times s/he is entitled to seek sitting for the examination before the commission. The student has the right to submit a complaint to a competent authority of the HEI within two days of receiving the assessment if s/he thinks that the assessment was made contrary to the law and HEI's general acts. The competent HEI authority considers the request within three days of receiving the complaint, and makes a decision. In some cases, if the complaint is accepted, a student shall take the exam again before the commission within seven days of receiving the decision on the complaint.

In general, the student acquires the conditions for entry into the next academic year if s/he achieved at least 45 ECTS credits in the current academic year (in case of some HEIs even more, depending on relevant legislation). A HEI may approve the October examination term for students who still need to pass two subjects or to achieve missing credits. If a student fails, then s/he repeats a year and has the right to attend classes and take exams up to the number of credits achieved in the previous year.

The list of obligatory and optional subjects is prescribed in the study programme. The student can pass a particular exam at any time from the moment the lectures related to it are finished, up to the start of the next year's lectures. If the student fails to pass a subject exam before the start of his/her next year's lectures, then s/he has to retake the same subject. In case of an optional subject, the student can either enrol in the same subject again or opt for another one.

### **3.2.6 Employability**

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Cooperation between HEIs and employers has been recognized as very important in the recent years, however it remains rather unexplored. Some HEIs have included internship programmes into their study curricula. Numerous faculties (especially technical professions) have their centres in order to establish connections with industrial enterprises where students can pursue a traineeship programme. Some universities organize internships for students in cooperation with state authorities, in order for students to get experience working in public administration. In addition, some HEIs have career guidance centres, which help students to find jobs or improve their qualifications in order to increase their employability. Most universities in the process of creating new or making changes to existing academic programmes involve stakeholders from the industry in order to improve their curricula. Every year, trade fairs of

education and employment in larger cities in BiH are organized to present students with business opportunities in different domains, employment possibilities and education. Students may also visit CISO<sup>10</sup> centres located in the employment services in 17 municipalities in BiH. They have an advisory role, focusing on providing guidance to the unemployed, how and in what way to make contact with the employer and general access to the labour market. On the other hand, there are companies, mostly in the IT sector, which appreciate the competences of students graduating from certain faculties and offer them jobs immediately after – and at times even before – graduation. Graduates of mathematics, informatics and computer science find jobs mostly easily, and students who graduate in life sciences (biology and environmental protection), arts and medical sciences find jobs in a more difficult way<sup>11</sup>.

However, this is not enough to achieve a strong partnership between higher education institutions and the labour market. Such cooperation needs to be improved through a careful research of the labour market and industry sector needs, as well as through a connection of learning outcomes with curricula and assessment methods.

### **3.2.7 Student Assessment**

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HEIs evaluate the success of students continually according to different types of assessments, which include monthly tests, short class tests, homework, projects, team work, etc. Students earn a certain number of ECTS for each activity they conduct during the studies. They can earn a maximum of 100 points by completing pre-examination obligations and relevant exams. A ratio of points earned through pre-examination obligations, and those earned at the exam is determined in the study programme. The minimum number of points that pre-examination obligations may carry is determined by the HEIs in accordance with the level, year and branch of studies.

Almost all public HEIs (University of Banja Luka, University of Bihać, University of East Sarajevo, Dzemal Bijedić University of Mostar, University of Sarajevo, University of Zenica and University of Tuzla) as well as the majority of private HEIs apply the following grading system: A or 10 excellent achievement; B or 9 above average; C or 8 average with small mistakes; D or 7 good with significant disadvantages; E or 6 satisfactory of minimum criteria; F, FX or 5 did not satisfy. The University of Mostar applies the following grading system: A or 5 excellent, B or 4 very good, C/D or 3 good E or 2 satisfactory and F or 1 failed.

The general act of a certain HEI prescribes precise regulations in terms of exam taking and grading procedures. The examination periods are January-February, June-July and September. HEIs may also approve the April period. The exam period contains two terms except the examination term in April.

### **3.2.8 Certification**

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Based on data from the student records, maintained by student administration office the HEI issues a public document in accordance with the law, regulations and statutes. Public documents include: Student's Book – Index, Diploma on Higher Education, Diploma Supplement and Transcript of Records.

After successful completion of all exams planned for the first cycle curriculum and preparation and defence of the final paper (if applicable), the student is awarded a diploma with relevant professional title, average degree and the number of ECTS earned. The student also receives a diploma supplement, which contains information regarding the level, type and content of the studies successfully finished. *The Guide on the Form and Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements Issued by Accredited Higher Education Institutions* was adopted by the HEA in 2009. The authority responsible for certification is the HEI.

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<sup>10</sup> CISO - Centre for Information, Counselling and Training

<sup>11</sup> From Student to (Un)Employed Professional, Findings from the first graduate survey in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro within the Tempus project CONGRAD, The Graduate Survey Report p.50 (<http://www.congrad.org/results-reports>)

### **3.3 Short-Cycle Higher Education**

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Currently, Short-Cycle programmes are not running in BiH since this matter is not regulated by the relevant educational legislation. Before the implementation of the Bologna Process in BiH, there were higher schools/colleges which provided two- or three-year higher education which was considered as a lower level of higher education in comparison to four-year higher education.

### **3.4 Second Cycle Programmes**

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#### **3.4.1 Branches of Study**

Master studies can be organized by universities, faculties and colleges with duration of one or two years (60 or 120 ECTS). In order to enrol for a Master programme, students must have completed a Bachelor programme with at least 180 ECTS (if they want to enrol a two-year Master programme) or with at least 240 ECTS (if they want to enrol a one-year Master programme). Exceptions are the studies of medicine, dentistry, pharmacy and veterinary medicine that last five or six years and are valued with at least 300 ECTS, which are performed as integrated studies (unique study programmes which include first and second cycle). Each HEI adopted the Rules of Studies for the Second Cycle. The student has to prepare and defend a Master's thesis at the end of the studies in order to complete a Master study programme.

#### **3.4.2 Admission Requirements**

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CEAs prescribe general conditions for entering the second cycle and the number of students that can be enrolled in a particular study programme, while HEIs prescribe eligibility rules, candidate rating criteria and regulations governing the competition procedures. A general condition for those entering the second cycle of studies is that they must have completed the first cycle of studies and obtained a diploma. Specific conditions (which, if necessary, HEIs define) may be passing the entrance exams, average grade in first cycle, academic activities in the relevant field, etc. If a candidate, who wants to enrol a particular programme, has graduated in a different scientific field, there could be an additional condition such as passing certain additional exams.

The admission to the second cycle study is organized every year from late June to early July for the approved seats. Students funded from the budget and self-financing students - candidates are required to submit alongside their application: a birth certificate, original or certified copy of the diploma of the first cycle study, a transcript of examinations passed, study curriculum completed by the applicant (if first cycle was completed at another faculty) and proof of payment. The second registration period is announced in September for the remaining vacant seats.

#### **3.4.3 Curriculum**

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Curriculum is similar to the one for the Bachelor studies except from the fact that the curriculum of the second cycle contains the obligation of a final thesis preparation which carries a certain number of ECTS. The second cycle studies lead to the academic title of Master or equivalent.

For more information please see section 3.2.3.

#### **3.4.4 Teaching Methods**

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The same teaching methods apply as for Bachelor studies.

For more information please see section 3.2.4.

#### **3.4.5 Progression of Students**

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Students' success in mastering a teaching subject is continuously monitored during the classes, in the manner prescribed by the study programme; the student takes the exam at the end of the teaching period. For more information please see section 3.2.5.

### **3.4.6 Employability**

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Students are responsible to follow the labour market and seek to be informed through the media, job fairs, employment services or advisory bodies on employment opportunities.

For more information please see section 3.2.6.

### **3.4.7 Student Assessment**

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All forms of assessment are public. Students' performance at an examination is assessed from 5 (failed), which is not recorded in the student's book-index, to 10 (outstanding achievement). General acts of the HEI closely regulate the manner of carrying out examinations and their grading.

For more information please see section 3.2.7.

### **3.4.8 Certification**

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The authority responsible for certification is the HEI. Upon completion of the second cycle, the student receives a diploma with his/her relevant professional title, average degree and the number of ECTS earned. The student also receives a diploma supplement, which contains information regarding the level, type and content of the studies successfully finished.

Based on data from the records, the HEI issues a public document in accordance with the law, regulations and statutes. Public documents include: Student's book – Index, Diploma on Higher Education, Diploma Supplement and Transcript of Records.

## **3.5 Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master Structure**

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In accordance with the FLHE, the study of the medical group of sciences under the first cycle is exempted from the provisions, which shall be valuated with up to 360 ECTS credits.

### **3.6 Third Cycle (PhD) Programmes**

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#### **3.6.1 Organisation of Doctoral Studies**

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The third cycle is organized after the second cycle, leading to a doctoral degree or equivalent, lasting for three years and valuated with 180 ECTS credits (60 ECTS for taught courses and 120 ECTS for research activities, work on thesis and thesis' defence). The student's third cycle programme includes the obligation of a written doctoral dissertation. Students are obliged to publish at least one scientific paper in a recognized journal relevant for the scientific field of study prior to defence of the thesis. The number of scientific papers varies from HEI to HEI.

The first doctoral studies in BiH in line with the Bologna principles were run through several Tempus and/or twining projects, such as Doctoral studies in mathematical sciences in South East Europe and PhD in Information and Communication Technology.

#### **3.6.2 Admission Requirements**

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The right of entry to the third cycle - doctoral studies is granted under the same conditions both to the citizens of BiH and foreign citizens for whom it was found, after the recognition and equivalence of diplomas of prior completed cycle/degree studies, that they had completed adequate education to continue their studies. The candidates who received their master of science/master of Bologna cycle - 300 ECTS credits in the scientific field for which they apply, are entitled to admission.

#### **3.6.3 Status of Doctoral Students/Candidates**

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Status of doctoral students is slightly supported through regular scholarships, and more through various

projects and offers of foreign governments or universities abroad. Most of them are employees and they are not considered as students.

#### **3.6.4 Supervision Arrangements**

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At universities and other higher professional institutions, a special body is appointed to plan, coordinate, organize and simultaneously accept doctoral studies and research work. These are programme councils or commissions for academic research work, doctoral studies and field coordinators. Every doctoral student has a supervisor at the beginning of his/her PhD programme and later on a mentor (sometimes accompanied by a co-mentor), who advises students in their choice of subjects and guides their research work. The topic of a doctoral dissertation is assessed by a commission and certified by the senate of the HEI. Mentors may simply be university professors or experienced scientists with PhD degree and adequate scientific references/performances. They can be employed by HEIs or by other institutions (foreign or domestic). They have demonstrated their research qualifications (with an appropriate scientific bibliography).

#### **3.6.5 Employability**

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The employability of PhD graduates is also promoted by financial mechanisms, i.e. through young researcher schemes as well as the new scheme for the co-funding of doctoral studies. The latter promotes doctoral studies, designed in such a way that the students' research contributes to the resolution of business problems or current social challenges.

#### **3.6.6 Assessment**

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Knowledge is assessed by oral or written exams and by completing seminar papers. The numerical assessment scale is from 5 (failed) to 10. Usually student have obligation to publish few papers (minimum two) in indexed journals as a precondition to start procedure of doctoral thesis defence. Individual obligations may also be assessed with a simple 'pass' or 'fail' or 'pass with distinction'. In regard to the completion of III cycle, the candidate has to defend his/her doctoral thesis in front of the thesis defence committee usually consisting of 3 – 7 members.

#### **3.6.7 Certification**

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Based on data from the records, HEI issues a student's book – Index to all III cycle students. Upon the completion of the third cycle study programme of a higher professional institution, students are awarded a diploma with their official scientific title Doctor of Science (PhD). The diploma may also state the academic field the title is derived from, but the aforementioned academic field is not a component of the academic title. The regulations for the conferral of the diplomas following the completion of the joint doctoral study programmes are the same as for the completion of the joint first or second cycle study programmes.

### **4 Teachers and Education Staff**

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#### **4.1 Initial Education for Academic Staff in Higher Education**

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Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH, as well as all strategic documents of the CEAs prescribe mandatory on-going professional development of academic staff. The relevant ministries as well as universities and faculties plan and implement training and use of ICT in education as well as knowledge of foreign languages as conditions for internationalization of and mobility in the education sphere. Participation in training programmes at the national and international levels is one of the elements for the promotion and advancement related to the scientific-educational titles.

## **4.2 Conditions of Service for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education**

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HEIs shall award academic titles, which may be lecturing, scientific or artistic ones. Universities shall award scientific, lecturing and artistic titles, as follows: full-time professor, part-time professor, associate professor, lector, senior assistant and assistant. Higher schools shall award lecturing and artistic titles, as follows: higher school professor, higher school lecturer and assistant.

### **4.2.1 Planning Policy**

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At this time there is no teaching and education staff planning policy.

### **4.2.2 Entry to the Profession**

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The minimum requirements for election of academic staff into scientific lecturing functions at HEIs shall be: assistant: appropriate university degree with at least 240 ECTS credits and the lowest average grade of 8, or 3.5; - senior assistant: second cycle degree (master's); - lector: second cycle degree (master's); - associate professor: scientific doctoral degree in the given area, at least three (3) scientific works published in recognized publications, proven lecturing skills; - part-time professor: at least one election period spent in the function of associate professor, and at least five scientific works published in recognized publications, a book published and original expert success such as a project, patent or original method, all of these being after election into the function of associate professor, mentoring of applicants for the second cycle degree; - full-time professor: at least one election period spent in the function of part-time professor, at least two books published, at least eight scientific works published in recognized publications, all of these being after acquisition of the title of part-time professor, and successful mentoring of applicants for the second and third cycle degrees.

The minimum requirements for election into artistic lecturing functions into which academic staff is elected at the study profiles at universities, if the artistic criterion is of particular significance to the lecturing subject, shall be: - assistant: completed first cycle degree with at least 240 ECTS credits and the average grade of 8, or 3.5; - senior assistant: completed second cycle degree, that is, first cycle degree and publicly presented forms of artistic creation; - associate professor: completed at least first cycle degree, a larger number of publicly presented forms of artistic creation and results proven in the lecturing work; - part-time professor: completed at least first cycle degree, a larger number of publicly presented forms of artistic creation, recognitions for successful activity in the appropriate art area and results proven in the lecturing work; - full-time professor: completed at least first cycle degree, a larger number of publicly presented forms of artistic creation that have significantly contributed the development of culture and art and to development of the lecturing and artistic human resources.

The minimum requirements for election into lecturing functions at higher schools shall be: - assistant: completed first cycle degree, with the lowest average grade of 8 or 3.5; - higher school lecturer: completed second cycle degree and proven lecturing skills; - higher school professor: completed third cycle degree and proven lecturing skills. Persons with functions of full-time professors, part-time professors and associate professors elected at universities may also lecture at higher schools.

The minimum requirements for election into artistic functions at higher schools shall be: - assistant: completed first cycle degree, with the lowest average grade of 8 or 3.5; - higher school lecturer: completed at least first cycle degree, clearly presented forms of artistic creation, and proven lecturing skills; - higher school professor: completed first cycle degree, prominent clearly presented forms of artistic creation, and proven lecturing skills. Persons elected for artistic lecturing subjects at universities may also lecture at higher schools.

### **4.2.3 Professional Status**

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Academic staff at universities represents public servants and as such its employment is in line with the legislation on public service and higher education legislation, collective agreements and the like.

#### **4.2.4 Salaries**

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Salaries for academic staff are funded from the budget of the relevant educational authorities and/or from the latter's own revenues. The salary is regulated by the law on salaries.

#### **4.2.5 Working Time and Holidays**

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In accordance with the Collective Agreement, the 40-hour workload of academic staff consists of lectures, exercises, seminars, field work, consulting, mentoring, programme review, term papers, examinations, preparation, training in teaching skills, work in the faculty council, working in university committees, scientific and research work and scientific development. Holidays in RS are: Republic Day, New Year's Day, International Labour Day, the Day of Victory over Fascism, Day of Establishment of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH, and religious holidays are: Orthodox Christmas, Catholic Christmas, Eid al-Adha, Catholic Easter, Orthodox Easter and Eid al-Fitr. People celebrate them depending on their national and/or religious affiliation. Holidays in FBiH are: New Year's Day, International Labour Day, Independence Day of BiH and National Day of BiH. Religious holidays in the FBiH entitle people to four days off, and include: Eid al-Adha, Orthodox Christmas, Catholic Christmas, Catholic Easter, Orthodox Easter and Eid al-Fitr, or others depending on their religious affiliation. BD holidays are: New Year's Day, District Day and International Labour Day. People in BD celebrate religious holidays depending on their national and/or religious affiliation.

#### **4.2.6 Promotion, Advancement**

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See section 4.2.2

#### **4.2.7 Retirement and Pensions**

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Full-time professors usually retire at 65 years of age, unless they are engaged further on merit basis, if required, and in accordance with the law.

### **4.3 Continuing Professional Development for Academic Staff Working in Higher Education**

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#### **4.3.1 Organisational Aspects**

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Majority of HEIs organize additional training for their employees in the area of teacher competence, teaching, and content creation, e-learning, entrepreneurship and project management, soft skills, etc.. Training for executive management as well as for professional development of academic staff is often organized in the form of activity-based projects. Academic staff is not obliged but they are strongly advised to attend such programmes.

#### **4.3.2 Incentives for Participation in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Activities**

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Each HEI is entitled to determine a certain number of working days used up for professional development of academic staff. If the institution budget allows so, the staff may receive additional funds for research work and participation in conferences and other important academic events. The CEAs regularly approve funds for research work, science development, participation in conferences and study visits for which academic staff may apply. Special funds are available to young researchers who recently pursued master or doctoral degrees.

## **5 Management and Other Education Staff for Higher Education**

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#### **5.1 Requirements for Appointment**

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According to the FLHE, the Statute of HEI is the basic act of a HEI, regulating issues of importance for the performance of activities of the institution. In accordance with provisions of the FLHE (Article 22) HEIs

have the right to elect their governing and management authorities and fix their terms of office, arrange their structures and activities with their own rules pursuant to the FLHE, other applicable laws and their statutes, elect teaching and other staff, admit students and determine methods of teaching and assessment of students, independently develop and implement curricula and research projects. The statute is adopted by the senate, with a previously obtained opinion of the governing board of the HEI. As defined by the FLHE and already mentioned, HEIs are universities and colleges. University bodies are the governing board, the senate and the rector. Also, a university may have organizational units such as faculties, academies and scientific institutes conducting teaching, scientific research or artistic work, in one or more educational or scientific areas. The organization and competencies of organizational units are set in detail by the statute of the university. There is a difference in college bodies, which are the governing board, the senate and the principal.

The governing board of the university or college has the responsibility for the business activities of a licensed public HEI. The governing board performs tasks set by law and by the statute of the university, such as giving opinion on the statute of the HEI, and adopting a general act on internal organization and systematization of jobs and other general acts in compliance with law and the statute of the HEI, adopting decisions on the establishment of other legal persons, adopting financing and development plans, annual work plan of the institution, etc. The governing boards have between seven and eleven members, at least one third of which are appointed by the founder, and others are appointed by the senate of the HEI, in compliance with the statute. The Senate of the university appoints and removes members of the governing board, for a term of office of four years, in a public and transparent procedure of public competition. The Senate of the HEI is responsible for academic issues as the highest academic body comprising representatives of academic staff and the students. The Senate decides on all academic issues related to teaching, scientific, artistic and professional activities of the institution, adopts the statute with the previously obtained opinion of the governing board, adopts curricula, elects the rector, vice-rectors of the university, i.e. director of the college, academic staff, etc. Students' representation of all cycles makes up no less than 15% of the Senate. The number of members, composition of the senate and its method of work are set by the statute of the HEI.

A university is managed by a rector and a college is managed by a principal, in accordance with the law and the statute of the HEI. The rector of a university is elected by the Senate, on the basis of a public competition. A teacher holding the title of a full professor or meeting the requirements for that title at the university where he/she is applying may be elected as rector. The principal of a public college is elected by the Senate on the basis of a public competition. A person meeting the requirements for a teacher at that college may be elected as principal. The rector or principal are elected for a term of office of four years, with a possibility of re-election. The Dean is the head of an organizational unit (faculty, academy) within the university. There is also a council and other advisory or expert bodies formed in accordance to the statute.

## **5.2 Conditions of Service**

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Other details on the selection of the managing bodies, their dismissal, responsibility and other conditions of service are determined separately by each HEI and by other general acts that are defining conditions for public service in case of public institutions. Usually, the candidates must have a proof in a form of a notarized statement that they are not convicted of a criminal offense against official duty or criminal offense against the security of legal transactions and other statements/documents which are particularly mentioned in the announcement.

# **6 Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

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## **6.1 Responsible Bodies**

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The FLHE sets the organisation of higher education in BiH, defines the responsibility of CEAs in this area, establishes bodies for implementation of FLHE and international commitments of BiH and as well as the

methods of QA in the area of higher education. The Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) has been established by FLHE as an independent public organization established in 2008. The FLHE provided for the competences and the basis for HEA operations in Articles 47 to 52.

Article 48 of the FLHE provides the following competences of HEA:

- setting clear, transparent and accessible criteria for accreditation of HEIs and adopting norms that set minimum standards in higher education;
- determining criteria for the selection of national and international experts to provide assessment and conduct quality review and give recommendations on accreditation of HEIs;
- giving recommendations on criteria and standards to the CEAs, for establishment and termination of HEIs and for restructuring of the study programmes;
- giving recommendations on criteria for licensing of HEIs and study programmes;
- giving recommendations on the lowest tuition fees for all students of accredited HEIs, with a view to harmonise the lowest tuition fees throughout BiH;
- providing advice on work and development policy to the CEAs;
- providing advice and information on issues within its competence to stakeholders;
- setting quality standards, analysing quality, giving recommendations for eliminating deficiencies in the quality of studies and HEIs;
- representing BiH in international organisation for quality in higher education;
- proposing general guidelines and criteria based on which funds from the budget of the institutions of BiH may be allocated to HEIs for the purpose of scientific research;
- adopting rulebooks (secondary legislation presenting a special category of general acts, of a lower legal power than the laws, different in their titles and legal nature) and other documents that fall within its competence.

Article 49 of the FLHE, in the area of accreditation, HEA is competent for:

- announcing open calls for the selection of national and international experts to provide quality assessment and conduct quality reviews and to give recommendations on accreditation of HEIs or their study programmes (experts);
- establishing the commission for setting up the list of experts meeting the criteria referred to in Article 48, of the FLHE. The commission shall have five members, comprising one representative from each of the following institutions: the Rectors' Conference, one cantonal ministry, the Ministry of the RS, the BD of BiH, and HEA;
- submitting the set list of experts for adoption to all ministries of education in BiH and the competent department of the BD of BiH;
- appointing expert panels on the basis of the proposals by the CEAs for the selection of experts from the set list of experts;
- giving recommendations to the CEAs on the accreditation of a HEI or study programme, on the basis of the opinion of the expert panel;
- procedure and decision on accreditation and licensing of HEIs issued by the CEAs, pursuant to Article 48, of the FLHE;
- as Programmes outside the Bachelor and Master structure are only study programmes in specific domains sessing the compliance of accreditation decisions with the norms and criteria referred to in Article 48, of the FLHE and, in case of identified instances of non-compliance, giving recommendations to the Steering Board to take further measures, including the measure of annulling the accreditation decision. The CEAs shall appeal against the decision on the annulment of the accreditation decision to the HEA Steering Board;
- maintaining a National Register of Accredited HEIs;
- granting access to the list of accredited HEIs in BiH on its website and publishing it in "The Official Gazette of BiH" minimum once a year and in three widely circulated daily newspapers minimum two times a year.

Article 50 of the FLHE authorises HEA to issue an instruction on the form and content of the diploma and diploma supplement issued by accredited HEIs.

Acting in accordance with the goals set in connection with improvement of international credibility, the HEA has been a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) since December 2009. In February 2010, the HEA became an associate member of the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and in May 2010 HEA became a full member of Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN).

As the higher education in the original constitutional competences in BiH belongs to the RS entity, cantons in the FBiH and BiH BD, the legal framework for the work of HEA consists of the laws on higher education of the RS, cantons of the FBiH and BD of BiH, as well as the law regulations adopted by the CEAs. Regarding carrying out internal QA, the FLHE, in Article 48, defines that HEA is competent for establishing clear, transparent and accessible criteria for the accreditation of HEIs and adoption of the norms setting minimum standards in the area of higher education. In its performance of this legal provision, HEA adopted, in consultations with the colleagues from foreign agencies and after a public debate with all the HEIs and CEAs in BiH, the following:

1. *Decision on Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions ("Criteria")*<sup>12</sup>,
2. *Decision on Norms Setting Minimum Standards in Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Standards)*<sup>13</sup>, hereinafter: the Decision on Norms.

In addition to the Ministry of Education and Culture of RS, there is also the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of the RS (HEAARS). According to Article 27 of the Law on Higher Education of the RS<sup>14</sup>, the accreditation procedure for existing HEIs and study programmes, with the view to evaluate the quality level reached in accordance with existing standards and criteria in the area of quality assurance, is conducted by HEAARS and in cooperation with HEA. Also, HEAARS keeps a register of accredited HEIs and study programmes in the RS, collects and processes data on the higher education system in RS with the purpose of providing relevant information and statistical indicators to stakeholders, organises trainings and certification of staff in the area of QA. HEAARS became a full member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2015. It established the Accreditation Forum of RS as an expert body, which has a significant role in the realisation of Agency's mission to enhance the quality of higher education in RS. In order to develop the higher education system and professional and advisory assistance to HEIs and relevant authorities, the Council for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance of the RS was founded. The Council shall review reports of the Commission for licensing and elaborates for justification of establishing new HEIs in the RS. Also, it considers the self-evaluation reports of HEIs in the RS and provides recommendations for improvement of HEIs' quality system.

CEAs in the cantons and the BD have similar responsibilities to those of HEAARS and they are defined by the relevant laws.

The body for internal QA in BiH (for example the Committee for Quality Assurance) composed of institutional experts in the field of quality in higher education was established at the level of HEIs. These bodies are responsible, among other things, for drafting the proposal of quality policy and quality strategy, necessary procedures and guidelines for quality assurance at the institutional level and the implementation of quality system on HEIs. Offices responsible for the technical support to quality assurance are established at universities and colleges. Some universities have appointed vice-rectors responsible for quality assurance and coordinators for quality assurance in their organizational units (faculties).

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<sup>12</sup> [http://hea.gov.ba/Dokumenti/dokumenti\\_agencije/?id=2462](http://hea.gov.ba/Dokumenti/dokumenti_agencije/?id=2462)

<sup>13</sup> [http://hea.gov.ba/Dokumenti/dokumenti\\_agencije/?id=3512](http://hea.gov.ba/Dokumenti/dokumenti_agencije/?id=3512)

<sup>14</sup> Official Gazette of RS, No. 73/10

## **6.2 Approaches and Methods for Quality Assurance**

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In BiH, two separate processes are implemented: the process of licensing and the process of accreditation.

Licensing is the process of reviewing fulfilment of the minimal standards for beginning of work and performance of higher education activity and it presents the permits for work that are awarded by the CEA. Quantitative-normative requirements related to the human, spatial and material and technical resources of the HEI (the necessary space in m<sup>2</sup>/student, number of library units, number of computers/student, number of academic staff/size of educational groups, etc.) are also referred at, these standards not being uniform throughout the whole BiH. Each CEA adopts its own minimal standards and evaluation is done by independent expert panels for licensing, appointed by CEA. Accountability for the processes of establishing fulfilment of the applicable laws, standards and norms, as well as, continuous monitoring and control of work are also part of the competencies of the 12 CEAs in BiH. The HEA does not have a role in the implementation of the licensing process of HEI in BiH, but it has, in line with the obligation from the FLHE, developed the criteria for licensing of HEIs and study programmes in BiH. The criteria for obtaining a license are not the same in all the parts of BiH. According to the relevant laws, CEAs are responsible for the licensing of HEIs.

Accreditation is the process by which, on the basis of external review and quality assessment, it is confirmed that the HEI has fulfilled the set of standards and criteria in its work, which correspond to the quality norm. The accreditation criteria were adopted by HEA and they are uniform and mandatory for all the HEIs in BiH, both public and private and they are applied throughout the BiH's territory. The aforementioned criteria present the basis for the HEIs, as well as for the preparation of the self-evaluation report and their fulfilment is checked by an independent expert panel appointed by HEA in the process of external evaluation. The criteria for the accreditation of HEIs in BiH are as follows: development and strategy of HEI; management, internal QA and quality culture; procedures for QA of study programmes; student assessment procedures; human resources; quality of physical resources; the information systems; public information; international relations.

The FLHE sets out that the CEA will, as well as other authorities and organisations in BiH and for the purpose of employment or a public capacity, recognise only those academic degrees and diplomas that are issued by HEIs.

The participants in the process of external QA in higher education are: HEI, CEA, HEA and a panel of domestic and international experts (their role is to provide assessment and conduct quality reviews and give recommendations on accreditation of HEIs and study programmes in BiH). There are four categories of experts: representatives of the academic community, representatives of economy and practice, international experts and students. The panel for each accreditation procedure for HEI should comprise a minimum of each of the four categories of experts. External QA processes in BiH are structured in a four-step model:

- 1) a self-evaluation report drafted by the HEI,
- 2) a site visit by the panel to the HEI,
- 3) external review report published by the CEAs,
- 4) follow-up activities undertaken by the HEI to address the recommendations of the panel outlined in the external evaluation report.

In accordance with the constitutional structure of BiH, there are several regulations in BiH for external QA which are combined for each accreditation procedure, and they are as follows: FLHE, Criteria for Accreditation of HEIs in BiH, Criteria for Accreditation of Study Programmes (Decision on Amendments to the Decision on Criteria for Accreditation of HEIs in BiH (Official Gazette BiH, No. 44/13), Decision on Norms Setting Minimum Standards in Higher Education in BiH and Regulations on accreditation procedures of CEAs: 7 cantonal accreditation procedures and HEAARS Procedure for the Accreditation of HEIs.

The List of Accredited HEIs in BiH is available at the following link:  
[http://hea.gov.ba/akreditacija\\_vsu/Default.aspx](http://hea.gov.ba/akreditacija_vsu/Default.aspx).

## 7 Educational Support and Guidance

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### 7.1 Support Measures for Learners in Higher Education

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#### 7.1.1 Definition of the Target Group(s)

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FLHE specified that higher education is available to all those who have completed four years of secondary education in BiH, or equivalent. Access to higher education based on individual capacity, is guaranteed by the legal framework providing for equality in terms of the higher education being focused on the full development of the human personality, respect for human rights, civil and other democratic, academic, legal and constitutional principles and freedoms. According to the law, access to higher education cannot be restricted, directly or indirectly, on any actual or presumed grounds such as gender, race, sexual orientation, physical or other disability, marital status, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, association with a national community, property, birth or other status. Special attention is paid to students with special needs, Roma students, children of war veterans and so on.

#### 7.1.2 Specific Support Measures

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Students with special needs, whose percentage of physical impairment equals 70% or more, are eligible to be enrolled and funded from the budget regardless of the approved number of students for enrolment. At each public university, there are support offices, which provide necessary assistance for students with special needs. Roma students, socio-economically disadvantaged students, children of war veterans or without one or both parents are also supported through various funding schemes of CEAs.

Full-time students enrolled in BiH are entitled to financial assistance in the form of scholarships and other forms of financial assistance: accommodation, meals, health care and transportation. Part-time students are not entitled to any form of financial assistance.

### 7.2 Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

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#### 7.2.1 Academic Guidance

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At some faculties, students are assigned mentors from among the academic staff (usually the professor's assistant) for academic guidance. Senior students can also give advice on the issue of academic guidance to first year students.

#### 7.2.2 Psychological Counselling

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Psychological counselling services are available at some universities or at the level of individual faculties - usually within the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy. These services can be targeted at individual counselling or specialized courses on learning how to learn. Psychological counselling is also offered by students' outpatient health departments. Support offices for students with special needs also provide psychological assistance for students.

#### 7.2.3 Career Guidance

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Centres for career guidance are usually found within the Employment Services and they provide career guidance services. Students' associations organize career days where students can connect with potential employers.

## **8 Mobility and internationalisation in Higher Education**

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### **8.1 Student Mobility**

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Encouraging mobility for learning and improvement of the international dimension of education, and the development of international relations among educational institutions, is one of the most important strategic goals in BiH. In order to achieve these objectives, a number of instruments were established, of which the most important are the funds and programmes of the EU, and intergovernmental bilateral and multilateral programmes and initiatives. BiH benefits from Community programmes supporting mobility for learning.

The internationalisation of education, especially higher education is an integral part of all policy documents at national and institutional level. The legal framework is developed in the direction of facilitating and encouraging internationalization in all its aspects, including mobility.

One of the goals of the recently adopted document *Decision on Adoption of Priorities for HE Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina* is internationalisation. Its aim is to improve regional and cross-border cooperation through joint registration and participation in projects; actively support the international mobility of HEIs' staff by linking this to career advancement; support the development of study programmes in foreign languages; support the international mobility of students; create conditions for accommodation and other infrastructural capacities for international trade; provide training in foreign languages to staff in HEIs, and enable learning of official languages in BiH to visiting staff; strengthen human and financial resources of services for international cooperation in HEIs; create legal and other requirements for the development of programmes for the acquisition of joint degrees; develop and fund programmes to gain experience abroad for graduates in the field of growth and innovation, on the condition that they return and apply their knowledge in BiH.

In January 2016 a new project "Internationalization of Higher Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina – STINT" started in BiH. It includes University of East Sarajevo, University of Banja Luka, Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar, University of Mostar, University of Sarajevo, University of Tuzla and University of Zenica. The aim of the project is the improvement of internationalisation of higher education in BiH and academic mobility through the procedures of academic and professional recognition of foreign higher education diplomas in line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

In order to promote academic exchanges between universities in the region, Europe and beyond, universities and colleges in BiH are equal partners in many mobility projects. A unique database of Scholarships for Western Balkans (S4WB) is available to all students in BiH. S4WB offers a wide range of scholarships for students and researchers of the WB, and gives them the opportunity to be informed about financial aid for undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral studies. The database provides information on scholarships from 17 fields of study in 33 countries across Europe. Education is a key contribution to the integration into the EU. Therefore, this database provides the Western Balkans students with easy access to detailed information about the possibilities of studying abroad, as well as basic information about financial assistance. S4WB will enable students of the Western Balkans to gain new experience in a different cultural environment and to apply this experience upon their return to their homeland.

BiH signed Erasmus + Agreement in June 2014, which replaced all previous programmes in the period 2007-2013, such as: The Lifelong Learning Programme (with its sub-programmes of Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Comenius and Grundtvig), Youth in Action, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus, Alfa Edulink. Students from BiH are included in various mobility programmes: Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, MEVLANA, UNET Network as well as through institutional bilateral agreements.

All 8 public universities participated in the Erasmus Mundus action 2 projects, including the University of Sarajevo, University of Banja Luka, University of Mostar, Dzemal Bijedic University of Mostar, University of Tuzla, University of Zenica, University of Bihac, and University of East Sarajevo.

Moreover, eight university exchange networks have been funded: [BASILUES](#)<sup>15</sup>, [JoinEU-SEE](#)<sup>16</sup>, [SIGMA A](#)<sup>17</sup>, [ERAWEB](#)<sup>18</sup>, [EUROWEB](#)<sup>19</sup> and [STEM](#)<sup>20</sup>.

From 2014 there are two new partnerships - exchange networks with participation of BiH institutions: GREEN-[TECH-WB](#) (GreenTech: Smart & Green Technologies for Innovative and Sustainable Societies in Western Balkans) and [SUNBEAM](#) (Structured UNiversity mobility between the Balkans and Europe for the Adriatic-Ionian Macro-region).

Under Erasmus Mundus Action 1 over 150 [Joint Erasmus Mundus Masters](#) and some 40 [joint PhD programmes](#) were available for students to apply; all these programmes led towards joint or multiple diplomas. During the past seven years, around 70 students from BiH were awarded scholarships for attending EM joint Master and PhD courses at prestigious EU universities.

Since 2007, BiH has been involved in the CEEPUS-III, which has provided up to now more than 76.000 Euro monthly scholarships for mobility in 16 European countries participating in the Programme.

CIP, as ENIC centre of BiH, has continued with the presentation of BiH in ENIC/NARIC networks through provision of information about the higher education system of BiH for purpose of the recognition abroad of higher education qualifications obtained in BiH as well as information to the competent BiH authorities for recognition of foreign higher education qualifications obtained abroad in BiH. The CIP website ([www.cip.gov.ba](http://www.cip.gov.ba)) provides all information related to the recognition and academic mobility. In line with the Lisbon Recognition Convention, CIP has published important recommendations: Recommendations on Criteria for Evaluation in the Process of the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications for the Purposes of Employment or Further Education. Recommendations on the use of Qualifications Frameworks in the Process of the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications in BiH and Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications in BiH to the Persons with Insufficient Documentation or without Documentation, Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Cross-border Education and Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Joint Programmes.

*Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2022*, state that one of the objectives is to establish a fund for the mobility of students and teaching staff, and see year 2022 as the year in which the FBiH higher education will be a full member of the common ERA and EHEA.

*The Strategy of the Development of Education in the RS for the period 2010-2014* also speaks of the need to establish a fund for the mobility of professors and students (p. 25), and points to the need for the academic community to be intensely involved in international research projects and the use of EU pre-accession funds, and sees the establishment of connections for distance learning with recognized universities in the world as a road to internationalisation. Internationalization of higher education is set as one of the strategic objectives in the draft of *Strategy of educational development in RS for a period 2015-2020*.

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<sup>15</sup> BASILEUS is an Erasmus Mundus Action 2 project funded by the European Commission. The project consortium consists of 10 EU universities and 10 universities in the Western Balkans, of which the University of Sarajevo, BiH, and 8 associates, of which the University of Tuzla, BiH

<sup>16</sup> JoinEU-See > PENTA – EU & South Eastern Europe: Participating, Exchanging and Networking in a Transnational Alliance for Internationalization in Higher Education, a scholarship scheme for mobility between the EU and the Western Balkans

<sup>17</sup> SIGMA Agile is an Erasmus Mundus Action 2 project within the European Commission scholarship programme Erasmus Mundus Action 2, Strand 1, Lot 2, Western Balkans.

<sup>18</sup> ERAWEB (ERASMUS–WESTERN BALKANS) is a joint mobility programme offered by eight Western Balkan universities, of which the University of Sarajevo and six EU universities

<sup>19</sup> EUROWEB - European Research and Educational Collaboration with Western Balkans. The partners from BiH are the Universities of Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka

<sup>20</sup> EM2-STEM was an Erasmus Mundus project enabling the exchange of staff and students across higher education institutions in the EU and the Western Balkans, while fostering entrepreneurship and management skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics

## **8.2 Academic Staff Mobility**

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The mobility of academic staff has been conducted through participation in numerous TEMPUS projects since 1996 in BiH and is further improved by BiH's access to Erasmus +, which opens up opportunities for participation and links HEIs in joint research programmes and projects of the EHEA. Teaching staff in BiH is included in mobility programmes such as Erasmus MUNDUS (JOINEU SEE, SUNBEAM), CEEPUS and MEVLANA, as well as in bilateral institutional agreements.

In the section 8.1 overall internationalization policies are described.

## **8.3 Other Dimensions of Internationalisation in Higher Education**

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### **8.3.1 European, Global and Intercultural Dimension in Curriculum Development**

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BiH joined the Bologna Process in 2003 and its legally binding implementation officially started with the adoption of the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH (FLHE) in 2007 when both institutional and legal settings for the implementation of the Bologna goals have been assured. In late 2007, the Council of Ministers decided on the adoption of the documents necessary for the further implementation of the Bologna process in BiH. It concerns seven documents including the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH, Standards and Guidelines for QA in Higher Education in BiH, the National Action Plan for Recognition of Qualifications in BiH, and the Diploma Supplement Model for BiH. These adopted documents represent the framework of action for all institutions and individuals involved in the implementation of the Bologna process in BiH.

FLHE gave way to the establishment of two new institutions: Agency for development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance (HEA) and Centre for Information and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher education (CIP). HEA made the necessary regulations and adopted a number of recommendations within its competence. This provided the basic legal and institutional conditions for the internationalization of higher education in BiH, and the integration of this sector in the EU.

Seeking internationalization of higher education in BiH, all government strategies refer to updating the curricula in higher education with the aim of reaching European standards in this sector. The documents highlight the goal of recognition of diplomas received in BiH and this goal cannot be achieved unless all essential criteria for the recognition of European standards in BiH education have been met.

### **8.3.2 Partnerships and Networks**

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At the level of BiH there are three very important programmes that contribute to the internationalization of BiH's higher education. The Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) is the State Coordinator of CEEPUS. The third cycle of the programme is in progress and it draws the attention of students and teachers. Entity Ministries of Education finance the exchange, according to the agreement that was reached between them and the MoCA (see [www.ceepus.info](http://www.ceepus.info)).

With the assistance of the Czech Government, the MoCA has established and is tasked to service the internet portal *studirajvani.ba*. The portal is constantly actualized, and it provides information about opportunities for studying in Europe and other parts of the world.

In June 2014 BiH signed the Agreement on Participation of BiH in Erasmus + Programme of the Union for Education, Training, Youth and Sports.

The MoCA is also contact point at the level of the State for the EU Framework Programmes (see NCP FP BiH).

The MoCA has nominated contact points for the following networks: Eurydice, Euroguidance, Europass, ELGPN and EQF. APOSO has nominated contact points for EPALE.

BiH is a member of SEECEL (South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning), ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe), BFUG (Bologna Follow-Up Group), ERI SEE (Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe) and different other international organisations in the field of education.

In order to improve its international credibility, in December 2009 the HEA became a full member of the INQAAHE. In February 2010, the HEA received the status of an associate member of the ENQA and, since May 2010, the HEA is a full member of the CEEN. All these programmes are directed towards the internationalization of BiH's higher education.

### **8.3.3 Bilateral Agreements**

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In accordance with the FLHE and its provisions on the autonomy of universities, the latter have directly established bilateral inter/institutional agreements and cooperation with different universities in the region, EU, USA, Turkey, Malaysia, countries in Asia and from other regions as well, sometimes leading to joint double degrees. BiH has signed different bilateral agreements (approx. 27) related to higher education with different countries and regions. Also, the RS has signed a bilateral agreement with the Republic of Serbia by which the higher education diplomas from both parties are automatically mutually recognized.

### **8.3.4 Cooperation and Participation in Worldwide Programmes and Organisations**

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BiH is a member of different international organisations dealing with education issues (such as OECD, Council of Europe, UNESCO, UNICEF) and participates in Programmes such as Erasmus+, HORIZON 2020 (see sections above concerning mobility and internationalisation).

## **9 On-going reforms and Policy developments**

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### **9.1 Overall national education strategy and key objectives**

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*Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in BiH with the Implementation Plan 2008 – 2015* provides the main directions for the development of education in BiH by 2015. This document defines the priorities in the development of education related to raising the level of education of the population and the competence of the workforce, improving the effectiveness of education and training, prevention of social exclusion among children and youth and expanding opportunities for adult education and training, as well as the QA and revitalization of research in education. In addition to creating an institutional framework for the implementation of reforms, the basic characteristics of current and forthcoming reforms are reflected in the modernization and development of teaching and learning at all levels of the education system, equality of access and equity in education, developing links between education and the labour market, encouraging continued professional development for teachers, managers and other employees in education and upbringing institutions, ensuring quality, international cooperation, etc.

In terms of the objectives and purpose of education at every level, it is necessary to mention that there were clearly defined short-term (2008), medium-term (2008-2010) and long-term (2011-2015) objectives in the Strategic Directions for Development of Education in BiH with the Implementation Plan 2008-2015 and currently the Strategy has been revised.

However, the recently adopted document by the Council of Ministers entitled *Decision on Adoption of Priorities for Higher Education Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2016-2026* sets clear guidelines to work on in the next 10 years and it includes: Good governance and management, Resources, Connection between the labour market and higher education, Qualification standards, Student experience, Internationalisation and Statistics. These priorities are grouped in seven key areas, describing the institutions responsible for and participating in the activities, as well as the implementation time period. This document provides a comprehensive overview of activities to be implemented in order to strengthen the development of higher education in BiH.

The Reform Agenda adopted for the period 2015-2018 in the field of labour market has set a goal to reform the education system in the medium term for better linking education with the labour market.

Fundamental principles and national policies in RS are defined by the *Strategy for Development of Education 2015-2020*, developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of RS. The Draft of this document was adopted at RS's General Assembly's meeting on 8th December 2015. There are several strategic goals in Higher Education System defined by this document: Improving the organizational structure and the quality of higher education, Scientific research-oriented higher education and linking higher education and the labour market, Modernization of initial education and professional development and continuous professional development of educational workers, Internationalization of higher education, Strategic objective and Improving student standards. Above all of this, there are basic principles that span the entire educational system and all of its levels: the principle of LLL and the principle of Entrepreneurial Learning.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Science proposed the *Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the FBiH from 2012 to 2022 – Synergy and Partnership*, which were adopted by the Government of the FBiH in 2013. They include a series of activities necessary for comprehensive action to implement their objectives, as defined in the EHEA.

## 9.2 Overview of the education reform process and drivers

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BiH is considered by far the most complex country in the Western Balkans regarding the organisation of higher education, mainly due to the complexity of its system of government. Under the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH (1995), two entities were established to constitute BiH: RS (with centralised administration) and the FBiH (which consists of ten cantons). Apart from the two entities, there is a separate administrative unit – the District of Brčko (BD).<sup>21</sup>

This arrangement applies to the area of higher education, which is in the jurisdiction of the 14 units altogether: the RS, the BD, and, in the case of FBiH 10 cantons, and some limited competences at the level of FBiH and BiH.

The FLHE stipulates a range of important reforms, from the three-cycle system to university autonomy, governance, and integration, QA and accreditation mechanisms, an increased student participation at all levels, information and recognition provision for degrees and study periods, the establishment and scope of two state-level agencies. Some provisions of the law are vague, for example, those related to QA and recognition, while a number of areas have not been regulated (for example financing). At the level of BiH, the MoCA is the responsible authority for coordination in the field of higher education. Furthermore, at the level of BiH the following advisory bodies were established: the Rectors' Conference of BiH (BiH RC), in 2005, and the Conference of Ministers of Education in BiH (CME), in 2008. Also, at the federal level, two agencies were established in 2008: HEA and the CIP. All of these bodies have been stipulated in the FLHE, adopted in 2007, with the exception of the CME, which is the highest advisory and coordinating body, established by a Memorandum of Understanding in early 2008, signed by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of BiH, the Prime Minister of RS, Deputy Prime Minister of the FBiH, and the Mayor of the BD.

Scientific research and cooperation is regulated in a separate Framework Law on Research, as of 2009<sup>22</sup>, by which the Council for Science of BiH was established. RS also maintains a Council for Science and Technology at the level of its entity. RS has further established a number of bodies concerned with higher education at the level of its entity: The Council for the Development of Higher Education, the Higher Education Accreditation Agency of RS (HEAARS), the Rectors Conference of RS, the Student

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<sup>21</sup> Branković, Jelena/Nina Branković: Country Report: BiH. Overview of Higher Education and Research Systems in the Western Balkans. Produced within the framework of the Project "European Integration of Higher Education and Research in the Western Balkans" 2013; Retrieved from [http://www.herdata.org/public/HE\\_and\\_Research\\_in\\_BiH\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.herdata.org/public/HE_and_Research_in_BiH_FINAL.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Framework Law on Scientific Research Activities and the Coordination of Internal and International Scientific Co-operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Union of RS, whereas the Ministry for Education and Culture of RS maintains the Council for the Development of Higher Education and Commission for information and recognition of foreign higher education documents.

### **9.3 National reforms in Higher Education**

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#### **9.3.1 2015**

An Action Plan for the Development and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in BiH for the period 2014-2020 was adopted (26 March 2015).

The Strategic Directions of Career Orientation Development in the FBiH for the period 2015-2020 with the proposed Action Plan was adopted by the Government of FBiH (15 October 2015).

Strategy of Educational Development of RS for a period 2015-2020 adopted by the RS General Assembly's meeting (June 2016).

#### **9.3.2 2014**

In June 2014 BiH signed the Agreement between BiH and the EU on the participation of BiH in the EU's Programme for Education, Training and Youth.

Two documents were adopted by the Council of Ministers of BiH:

- *Decision on Adoption of the Principles and Standards in Education of Adults in Bosnia and Herzegovina (May, 2014)*<sup>23</sup>
- *Decision on Adoption of a Strategic Platform for the Development of Adult Education in a Context of Lifelong Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the Period 2014-2020 (December, 2014)*<sup>24</sup>

A programme of collaboration in the field of education and culture between the MoCA of BiH and the Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary for the period 2014 – 2016 was adopted in March 2014.

#### **9.3.3 2013**

Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Serbia and other members of ERI SEE on seat of the Secretariat of ERI SEE, Memorandum of Understanding between Council of Ministers of BiH, MoCA of BiH and German Society GIZ, Protocol on cooperation in the field of education between the Council of Ministers of BiH and the Republic of Slovenia were signed.

Strategic Directions for the Development of Higher Education in the Federation of BiH from 2012 to 2022 – Synergy and Partnership were adopted by the Government of the Federation of BiH (January 2013).

## **10 Legislation**

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1. Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH<sup>25</sup>(August, 2007, link: <http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Okvirni.eng.pdf>) and Law on Change and Amendment to the Framework Law on Higher Education in BiH<sup>26</sup> (July, 2009, link: [http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Zakon\\_o\\_izmjeni\\_i\\_dopuni\\_Okvirnog.eng.pdf](http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Zakon_o_izmjeni_i_dopuni_Okvirnog.eng.pdf))
2. [http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Zakon\\_o\\_izmjeni\\_i\\_dopuni\\_Okvirnog.eng.pdf](http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Zakon_o_izmjeni_i_dopuni_Okvirnog.eng.pdf))
3. Recommendations on Criteria for Evaluation in the Process of the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications for the Purposes of Employment or Further Education (February, 2013, link: [http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke\\_o\\_kriterijima\\_za%20vrednovanje\\_inostranih\\_viso\\_kokolskih\\_kvalifikacija\\_sluzbeni\\_glasnik\\_bih\\_10-13.eng.pdf](http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke_o_kriterijima_za%20vrednovanje_inostranih_viso_kokolskih_kvalifikacija_sluzbeni_glasnik_bih_10-13.eng.pdf))<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 39/14

<sup>24</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 96/14

<sup>25</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 59/07

<sup>26</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 59/09

5. Recommendations on the Use of QF in the Procedure of the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications in BiH (October, 2014, link: [http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke\\_o\\_koristenju\\_kvalifikacijskog\\_okvira\\_u\\_postupku\\_priznavanja\\_inostranih\\_visokoskolskih\\_kvalifikacija.eng\\_new.pdf](http://cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke_o_koristenju_kvalifikacijskog_okvira_u_postupku_priznavanja_inostranih_visokoskolskih_kvalifikacija.eng_new.pdf)<sup>27</sup>)
6. Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications in BiH to the Persons with Insufficient Documentation or without Documentation (October, 2014, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke\\_o\\_priznavanju\\_inostranih\\_visokoskolskih\\_kv alifikacija\\_u\\_BiH\\_licima\\_sa\\_nedovoljnom\\_dokumentacijom\\_ili\\_bez\\_dokumentacije.eng\\_new.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke_o_priznavanju_inostranih_visokoskolskih_kv alifikacija_u_BiH_licima_sa_nedovoljnom_dokumentacijom_ili_bez_dokumentacije.eng_new.pdf)<sup>28</sup>)
7. Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Cross-border Education (October 2015, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke\\_o\\_priznavanju\\_inostranih\\_visokoskolskih\\_kv alifikacija\\_stecenih\\_prekogranicnim\\_obrazovanjem.eng.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke_o_priznavanju_inostranih_visokoskolskih_kv alifikacija_stecenih_prekogranicnim_obrazovanjem.eng.pdf)<sup>29</sup>)
8. Recommendations on the Recognition of Foreign Higher Education Qualifications Acquired through Joint Programmes (October, 2015, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke\\_o\\_priznavanju\\_inostranih\\_visokoskolskih\\_kv alifikacija\\_stecenih\\_zajednickim\\_programima.eng.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/preporuke/Preporuke_o_priznavanju_inostranih_visokoskolskih_kv alifikacija_stecenih_zajednickim_programima.eng.pdf)<sup>30</sup>)
9. Law on Validity of Public Documents in BiH (August, 2003, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/zakon\\_o\\_vaznosti\\_javnih\\_isprava/Zako\\_o\\_vaznosti\\_javnih\\_isprav a\\_u\\_Bosni\\_i\\_Hercegovini\\_bos.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/zakon_o_vaznosti_javnih_isprava/Zako_o_vaznosti_javnih_isprav a_u_Bosni_i_Hercegovini_bos.pdf), not translated)<sup>31</sup>
10. Instruction of both the Form and the Contents of Diploma and Diploma Supplement Issued by the Accredited Higher Education Institution (November, 2009, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Uputstvo\\_o\\_formi\\_BiH.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Engleski/Uputstvo_o_formi_BiH.pdf) not transl. )<sup>32</sup>
11. Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH, Recommendations for Implementation of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in BiH, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Higher Education in BiH, Recommendations for Implementation of Quality Assurance in BiH, State Action Plan for Recognition of Qualifications in BiH, model of the Diploma Supplement, and the Manual for Users of the Model of the Diploma Supplement<sup>34</sup> (Official Gazette of BiH, No. 13/08).
12. Decision on Adoption of the Baseline of Qualifications Framework in BiH (April, 2011, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Bosanski/Nacionalni\\_kvalifikacijski\\_okvir\\_bos.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/Legislativa/Bosanski/Nacionalni_kvalifikacijski_okvir_bos.pdf) not translated)<sup>35</sup>
13. Decision on Adoption of the Action Plan for the Development and Implementation of the Qualifications Framework in BiH for the period 2014-2020 (March, 2015, link: [http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/zakoni/Akcioni\\_plan\\_za\\_izradu\\_i\\_provodjenje\\_kvalifikacijskog\\_okv ira%20\\_u\\_BiH\\_za\\_period\\_2014\\_2020.bos.pdf](http://www.cip.gov.ba/images/pdf/zakoni/Akcioni_plan_za_izradu_i_provodjenje_kvalifikacijskog_okv ira%20_u_BiH_za_period_2014_2020.bos.pdf) not translated)<sup>36</sup>
14. Strategy for Entrepreneurial Learning in Education Systems in BiH (1/22/2012)
15. For relevant education legislation at the level of entities, cantons and BD please see CIP website <http://www.cip.gov.ba/> (section Laws) or CEAs websites.

<sup>27</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 10/13

<sup>28</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 81/14

<sup>29</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 81/14

<sup>30</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 80/15

<sup>31</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 80/15

<sup>32</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 23/04

<sup>33</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 86/09

<sup>34</sup> Documents developed within the joint project by the EC and the CoE in 2006-2008 "Strengthening of Higher Education in BiH"

<sup>35</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 31/11

<sup>36</sup> Official Gazette of BiH, No. 26/15



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