



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
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REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/Bosnia and Herzegovina/85

15 June 2023

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), have the honor to refer to the examination of the sixth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at the Committee's Seventy-fourth session, held in October-November 2019. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/6](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 51 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 12(a), 16(d), 18(b) and 24(c) of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/BIH/FCO/6](#)) received in June 2022 with a seven month delay under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its eighty-fifth session, held in May 2023, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 12 (a)** of the concluding observations that the State party **“without further delay, amend its legislation to incorporate a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women that covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres and intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with article 1 of the Convention, as recommended in the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5, para. 14)”**.

The Committee notes with interest that the State party held a joint thematic session of the Constitutional-Legal Committees of the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives, the Joint Committee on Human Rights, and the Committee on Gender Equality of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss the implementation of the recommendation. It also welcomes the proposed amendments made by the Gender Centre of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce the principle of gender equality in the Constitution. The Committee regrets, however, that an amendment for a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women that covers direct and indirect discrimination in the public and private spheres and intersecting forms of discrimination has not been proposed.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 12(a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

**Incorporate in its legislation a comprehensive definition of discrimination against women in line with article 1 of the Convention, as recommended in the Committee's previous concluding observations (CEDAW/C/BIH/CO/4-5, para. 14).**

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 16(d)** that the State party “**adopt, without delay, the revised national war crimes processing strategy, in which a timeline is defined for the prosecution of all war crimes by 2023, so as to accelerate the prosecution of crimes of sexual violence committed during the conflict of the 1990s**”:

The Committee notes with appreciation that the State party adopted on 24 September 2020 the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy, and the proposal of the decision drafted by the Ministry of Justice of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the establishment of a supervisory body to monitor the implementation of the Revised National War Crimes Strategy.

The Committee considers that the recommendation has been **implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 18(b)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**provide adequate human and financial resources to the Gender Equality Agency of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and other gender equality bodies, including through the financial instrument programme for the implementation of the gender action plan for the period 2018–2021**”:

The Committee notes that the Gender Equality Agency Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees secured an amount of 100,000 BAM per year, for the years 2020 and 2021, to cover the fixed costs arising from the operations of eight safe houses in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee regrets, however, that the human resources situation of the Gender Equality Agency has not improved, with only six (6) full-time employees and 1 (one) vacant position, and that its financial resources represent only 0.03 per cent of the budget of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It also notes that the State Party indicated that it is the donor support that has been used to strengthen the capacities of gender equality institutions, thus compensating the continuing lack of financial resources. It further regrets the possible reduction of the funds allocated for activities related to gender equality due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, the Committee considers that the State party has taken steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 16(d)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

**Provide adequate human and financial resources to the Gender Equality Agency of the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees and other gender equality bodies, including through the upcoming financial instrument programme for the implementation of the gender action plan for the period 2023–2027.**

In relation to the recommendation made in **paragraph 24 (c)** of the concluding observations that the State party “**establish a mechanism to monitor the use of sexist and misogynistic language and hate speech in public discourse and sexist portrayals of women in**



**the media, and raise awareness among journalists and media professionals of the importance of positive portrayals of women as active agents of change”:**

The Committee welcomes the State party's indication that it is planning to enact a provision prohibiting insulting or demeaning portrayals of women and men based on their gender and sexual orientation in advertising and to initiate the establishment of the mechanism for monitoring hate speech against women. The Committee notes with appreciation that the State Party has delivered and provided trainings manuals on gender sensitive reporting to media professionals. The Committee regrets, however, that the State Party has not yet established a specific mechanism to monitor the use of sexist and misogynistic language and hate speech in public discourse and sexist portrayals of women in the media. It also notes that while the State party has indeed organized trainings for journalists and media professionals to raise awareness on gender-based violence, these have not addressed the importance of positive portrayals of women as active agents of the change. The Committee further notes the significant amount of harmful content and smear campaigns towards female candidates during the General Elections in 2022 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation has been **partially implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is thorough and extensive and that it relates directly to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **satisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 16(d)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

**Establish a mechanism to monitor the use of sexist and misogynistic language and hate speech in public discourse and sexist portrayals of women in the media, and raise awareness among journalists and media professionals of the importance of positive portrayals of women as active agents of change.**

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Natasha Stott Despoja  
Rapporteur on follow-up  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women