

Bosnia and herzegovina demand response

Bosnia and Herzegovina has taken significant steps to improve migration management. The Ministry of Security continued efforts to improve coordination with local authorities and boosted international cooperation. However, major weaknesses still undermine the provision of necessary assistance. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to urgently adopt the strategy and action plan on migration, step up efforts to ensure access to asylum, and strengthen border management.

Bosnia and Herzegovina remains at an early stage in terms of capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces in the EU and did not make significant progress in this area. The quality of education has remained low, while insufficient action was taken to improve the transport and energy infrastructure. The trade and transport sectors both grew in terms of their relative economic importance (in value-added terms) as a response to strong external demand, while the size of the public sector in the economy was slightly lower by the same measure.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is at an early stage/has some level of preparation in its ability to take on the obligations of EU membership. The country needs to significantly step up alignment with the EU acquis and implement and enforce the necessary legislation. Limited to no progress was made on the different EU acquis chapters during the reporting period.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has some level of preparation and made some progress in the area of public procurement as amendments adopted in August have further aligned the legislation with the EU acquis. This is a first important step on the commitments taken on 12 June and contributes to address key priority 7. There was limited progress was made on statistics; preparations for the next census have hardly progressed and the production of macroeconomic statistics continues to deviate from the EU acquis. Some progress was made on public internal financial control, with both entities adopting strategies.

Bosnia and Herzegovina made limited or no progress in most areas of competitiveness and inclusive growth (taxation, digital transformation and media, social policy and employment, enterprise and industrial policy, science and research, education and culture) and some progress in the area of customs union. The country showed backsliding in other areas (economic and monetary policy) where it is at an early stage or has some level of preparation. These areas have significant links to the country's Economic Reform Programme. Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to introduce socio-economic reforms to address structural weaknesses (including low competitiveness and high unemployment), and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bosnia and Herzegovina made no progress in the areas of resources, agriculture and cohesion (agriculture and rural development, food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy, fisheries, and financial and budgetary provisions), where preparation is mostly at an early stage. The country must step up its efforts to prepare and

adopt a post-2021 countrywide strategy for rural development, align its legislation on food safety, veterinary and phytosanitary policy and strengthen its administrative capacities. More efforts are also needed to prepare and adopt a countrywide strategy on fisheries and aquaculture and harmonise data collection. Furthermore, Bosnia and Herzegovina should start preparing a countrywide regional development strategy.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has some level of preparation and made some progress in the cluster on external relations, in particular by improving its alignment with EU foreign policy statements and restrictive measures, which increased to 81% by end August 2022. The country needs to implement the additional protocols to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) on trade facilitation and trade and services, and swiftly adopt the additional protocol on dispute settlement. Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to actively participate in regional cooperation and to maintain good neighbourly relations.

In 2021, Bosnia and Herzegovina benefited from EUR 73 million under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 2021 - 2027 (IPA III), providing support to programmes in migration and border management, the electoral process, energy, transport, employment and social protection, as well as private sector and regional development. This first set of programmes, complemented by a package of multi-country programmes, significantly contributes to kick-starting implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans and the Green Agenda. Adopting countrywide sector strategies remains a key requirement for Bosnia and Herzegovina to benefit fully from IPA funding in the future.

June 2003: The EU-Western Balkans Thessaloniki Summit confirms the EU perspective for the Western Balkans.

June 2008: The Stabilisation and Association Agreement and the Interim Agreement on trade and trade-related issues is signed.

December 2010: Visa-free travel to the Schengen area for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

September 2011: Double-hatting of the Head of EU Delegation as EU Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reinforcing EU's role in the country.

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