



***EMBASSY OF BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA TO CANADA (OTTAWA)***

**Bosnia and Herzegovina's
Aspirations to join NATO
and the EU**

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General information

- Official name: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).
Capital: Sarajevo.
Area: 51.129 sq. km.
Population: 3.900.000
Official languages: Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian.
Monetary unit: Convertible Mark (KM).
Population distribution: Urban: 29.8%/ Semi-urban: 24.20%
/Rural: 45.92%
Ethnic/cultural composition: Bosniaks 48 %, Serbs 37.1 %, Croats 14.3 %, other 0.6%.
Religion: Muslim 41%, Orthodox 34%, Catholic 15%, others 10%.

Geography

- Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mountainous country. The Dinaric Alps make up the western border with Croatia, crossing the western and southern region of the country. Its highest peak is Maglic (2.387 m), on the border with Montenegro.
- The major rivers of the country are Bosna, Sava, Drina and Neretva.

Climate

The Mediterranean climate prevails in the south, with sunny and warm summers and mild and rainy winters. On the contrary, the interior and the north of the country have the continental climate with warm summers and cold winters. At higher altitudes the summers are short and fresh while the winters are long and hard. The average temperature in Sarajevo, in the continental area, is scaling between -1°C in January and 20°C in July.

Natural resources

- This is a country rich in natural resources, covered with large areas of farming land, extensive woods and valuable deposits of minerals such as magnesium, iron, lead, copper, chrome and carbon.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL DATA

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a young democracy which came into existence after the independence referendum of former Yugoslavia on March 3, 1992. Its Constitution was furnished to support the Dayton Peace Agreement, signed on December 14, 1995, bringing an end to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Dayton Peace Agreement established that the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to be comprised of two Entities with ample autonomy, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH, of Bosniak-Croat majority, 51% of the territory) and Republika Srpska (RS, of Serb majority, 49% of the territory), as well as the Brcko District which was given a special status. On a state level, BiH has one collective and rotating Presidency comprised of three members of the constituent peoples: Bosniaks (Muslims), Bosnian Croats (Catholics) and Bosnian Serbs(OrthodoxChristians).

Bilateral Relations

- Canada recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina on April 7, 1992, and diplomatic relations were established on December 14, 1995.
- Canadian Foreign Policy toward Bosnia follows so-called 3-D format: defence, development and diplomacy.
- Canada closed its Embassy in BiH's capital Sarajevo on August 1, 2009 and since then “covers” BiH on non-resident basis from Budapest (Hungary).

Bilateral Visits

- Last high-level visit of Canadian officials took place in 2008 (headed by Speaker Milliken), and of BiH officials to Canada in 2003, headed by then Minister for Security.

Canadian Legacy in BiH

- Canada participated at all the donor conferences for BiH,
- Canada is a member of the Executive Board of Peace Implementation Council (PIC), and strongly supports BiH on its road to NATO and EU membership.
- Participation of Canadian military forces in peace keeping activities in BiH is the biggest in Canadian history. Since 1992, more than 40.000 Canadian soldiers served in BiH in all peace mission: UNPROFOR, IFOR, SFOR, EUFOR.

Canadian Legacy in BiH

- Canadian CIDA implemented in BiH more than 120 projects whose value amounted to more than 140 million \$CAD. CIDA withdrew from BiH in December 2009.
- Canadian policy of “family doctor” was “copy-pasted” to BiH medical system.

Legacy of BiH in Canada

- More than 100.000 citizens of BiH are today citizens and nationals of Canada, most of them being highly educated, family oriented, positively recognized within their (Canadian) communities.

BiH Foreign policy priorities

Membership in NATO and EU represents ultimate strategic goal for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Strong public support and consensus of the main political parties in reaching these goals play an important role here.

BiH and MAP

- On April 22, 2010 in Tallinn (Estonia), Bosnia and Herzegovina was given a status within Membership Action Plan (MAP), which is the first step in long road of accession to and full membership in NATO.
- Canada supported this positive outcome.
- MAP status, together with EU visa-liberalization regime (November 8, 2010) produced internal optimism needed for implementation of other reforms.

Region and MAP

- The region of the South East European Countries (Croatia, BiH, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania).
- Croatia is the first which finalized the process, in seven years.
- Macedonia is the opposite example – it has been in MAP for the last 12 years and its application has still not been accepted.

Why NATO?

- It is a political-military organization, which calls for not only military but also overall political, democratic, commercial and social reforms.
- Greater level of stability, safety and security, which ultimately lead to greater foreign investments and commercial cooperation.

What has BiH done so far?

- Law on Defence Forcers adopted in 2005 stipulates that NATO membership is a primary goal of BiH foreign policy.
- Three years ago, Council of Ministers established NATO National Coordination Team, headed by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. It is inter-sectorial body including representatives of all the Ministries within the Council of Ministers, plus Directorate for European Integration, Directorate for Economic Planning, and Agency for Indirect Taxation.
- BiH implemented reform of defense which European Commission considered a model of efficiency and success in the region.

What has BiH done so far?

- In Tallinn, North Atlantic Council (NAC) also adopted decision to accept the first BiH Annual National Plan when BiH meets the last condition of registering 69 location of perspective immovable property as national property to be used by the Ministry of Defense. By then, BiH will use Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP), as a formal aspect of cooperation with NATO.
- Somewhat confusing term “perspective immovable property” actually stands for military facilities, polygons, shooting grounds, barracks, and airports.
- Since October 15, 2010, 45 BiH soldiers are in the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan, plus 10 police training instructors.

What has BiH done so far?

- Surplus of ammunition has been destroyed. It was not the condition stipulated by NATO, but was considered by BiH authorities as issue of importance in the domain of public security.
- US-Adriatic charter: From July to December 2009, Bosnia and Herzegovina successfully chaired the Adriatic Charter with the aim to show the perspective of regional cooperation in defense and foreign policy.
- UN Security Council: As of January 2010, BiH took over the function as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, and successfully chaired this body in January 2011, making Bosnia and Herzegovina globally more credible partner in all international relations and organizations.

EUROPEAN UNION

- Family of 27 European countries, with the headquarter in Brussels (Belgium).
- Frequently said that EU is the largest peace project of all the times, because since its establishment in 1950s, EU is a guarantor that there will be no more wars among its members.
- EU is also considered the greatest donor in the world. More than 100 programs is opened for its members offering financial support for implementation. BiH, one of the potential candidate countries, can use funds from the first two components: assistance in transition and institution capacity building, and regional and transborder cooperation.

EUROPEAN UNION

- Process of integration into EU is a tool for making states more functional. One of the basis for functionality is establishment of political census, based again on unity in diversity offered by principles of EU.
- Enlargement Policy states that enlargement process has a new momentum, despite all the challenges that EU faces, and is declaring that enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty ensured that EU may continue its enlargement agenda.

EU – WESTERN BALKANS RELATIONS

- The EU's main objective for the Western Balkans region is to create a situation where military conflict is unthinkable – expanding to the region the area of peace, stability, prosperity and freedom, established over the last fifty years in the European Union.
- In 1999 EU proposed Stabilisation and Association Process for five countries in SEE, including BiH. This way, the countries of Western Balkans have all been given the prospect of EU membership.

EU – WESTERN BALKANS RELATIONS

- **Milestones**
- **19-20 June 2003:** The Thessaloniki European Council confirmed the European perspective of the Western Balkans, which will become an integral part of the EU, once the countries meet the established criteria.
- **16 June 2008:** The EU signs a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with Bosnia and Herzegovina, following the country's approval of police reform, one of the EU's key demands.

EU – BiH RELATIONS

- Milestones
- November 8, 2010, EU Council made and adopted decision to lift EU visa requirements for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Before this decision was made, BiH successfully fulfilled all 176 conditions from the EU Road Map.
- In practice it actually means that holders of new BiH biometric passports do not need to have visa to enter any state of the Schengen Area, which currently consists of 25 European countries (EU countries minus Great Britain and Ireland).

BiH – EU RELATIONS

- Bosnia and Herzegovina is economically tied to the EU.
- BiH is exporting goods into EU of value that amounts to 1.6 billion Euros, that is 73% of BiH total export. At the same time, BiH imports good from the EU in 3.4 billion Euros, which is 63% of its total import.

STABILISATION AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT (SAA)

- Stabilisation and Association Agreement is a third, new generation of EU Association agreements and was offered as a tool of establishment of close and permanent relation and possible membership within EU. The SAA enters force after its ratification in the signatory country, European Parliament and EU member countries.

SAA AND THE REGION

- SAA was signed by:

Macedonia, 9 April 2001,

Croatia, 9 October 2001,

Albania, 12 June 2006,

Montenegro, 15 October 2007,

Serbia, 29 April 2008, and

Bosnia and Herzegovina, 16 June 2008.

What's next?

- All the EU member states ratified the SAA with BiH. We are in waiting for EU Council to adopt decision on accepting the SAA, and after decision is published, SAA will enter force on the first day of the second month after the adoption of the decision.
- As stipulated by procedure, this is to be followed by submitting the application for EU membership.
- However, BiH still has to fulfill three conditions: to adopt the Law on State Aid in harmony with the Acquis Communautaire (legal norms of the EU), the Law on Census, and to enforce the decision by European Court for Human Rights in case “Sejdic-Finci”.

What's next?

- After the general election in October 2010, BiH still does not have established Council of Ministers and Parliament, and that is the main reason that those conditions are still under procedure.
- After full fulfilment of all the conditions, BiH will apply for the EU membership, and then will be given a European Commission Questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

- The countries of the region needed approximately 3-5 months to answer the questions. The Questionnaire was submitted up to now to Montenegro, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia, and were comprised of 2000 – 4500 questions and sub-questions.
- Generally, it takes 2 years from the submission of the membership application till final decision on membership is to be made.

The End

Thank you for your kind attention.