

## Session III : Diasporas and Development

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Within the competence to design emigration policies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina carries out a range of activities to link migration with development of BiH, engage the diaspora in development processes in BiH and use migrant resources for better development of the country

The need for these activities comes from the facts that:

- **BiH emigration is great in numbers (1/3 of the population) and as such should not be excluded from the development trends in BiH** - According to estimates by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees, the total number of emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina and their second and third generation of descendants is about 1.7 million. Most of them live in European countries (Germany: about 240 thousand, Austria: about 150 thousand, Slovenia: about 150 thousand, Sweden: about 80 thousand, Switzerland: about 60 thousand), followed by the United States: about 350 thousand, Canada: about 50 thousand and Australia: about 60 thousand;
- **BiH has faced a brain drain and a large portion of the BiH diaspora is highly qualified and highly educated workforce** - The World Bank estimates that the percentage of highly educated emigrants from Bosnia and Herzegovina is as high as 28.6%. There is no accurate data on brain drain from BiH, but the data that 79% of research and development engineers, 81% people holding master's degrees and 75% people holding PhDs have left BiH can serve as an illustration of the extent of the brain drain.
- **There is a huge inflow of remittances from migrants and diaspora savings** - According to data from the Central Bank remittances in 2012 amounted to more than BAM 2 million, while total transfers from abroad, which include foreign pensions, amounted to over BAM 3.5 million. Remittances in 2012 made up about 7.1% of the gross domestic product of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Among activities related to migration and development, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH has carried out the following activities:

- The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH has recognized the role of the diaspora in the development and incorporated a number of activities to link migration and development in strategic documents of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- The Council of Ministers has adopted several of national documents related to migration and development (1 – An Information Paper on Bosnia and Herzegovina scientific diaspora and the possibilities of its use for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina" – finds that emigration resources, including human resources and scientific diaspora, are considered an important factor of development of BiH and recommends that BiH authorities should utilize resources of the diaspora for development and include them in their development documents; 2 – A study on inflow of funds from abroad to BiH titled "Maximizing the impact of financial flows and investments related to migratory movements on BiH development" recommends that

all BiH authorities should take into account development resources of the diaspora, both financial (remittances, savings, investments) and human resources, while drafting policy documents and regulations they are in charge of;

- MHRR takes part in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina Migration Profile (section on emigration and remittances);
- In October 2011, with the financial support of the European Commission's TAIEX instrument, we organized the first regional workshop on "Linking migration and development of countries of origin in the Western Balkans."
- In September 2012, we organized an international conference titled "Research workshop of migrations from BiH";
- In October 2012, we organized a regional conference titled "The institutional environment for diaspora policies focused on development"
- We initiated an IOM-funded study titled "Research on the financial contributions of the Diaspora", 2010;
- Data collection and networking with NGOs and individual professionals and entrepreneurs in order to create a network of knowledge transfer projects and investments from the diaspora to Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Support of and participation in IOM brain gain programme; WUS Austria (Brain Gain);
- Support of NGOs from BiH diaspora and BiH NGOs to transfer knowledge from diaspora to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The 2012-2015 Migration and Asylum Strategy of BiH, in which one of the objectives is strengthening the institutional capacities in BiH to link migration and development and the use of development resources of the diaspora for development of Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted in 2012.

In addition to these strategic documents, some other strategies at the state and entity levels recognize the diaspora as an important element in the development of BiH and require the fulfilment of certain obligations towards the diaspora (2010-2015 Strategy for the Development of Science in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cultural Policy Strategy of BiH, 2010 - 2014 Employment Strategy of BiH, 2008-2015 Strategic Directions for the Development of Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina etc.).

Within the Partnership on Migration, signed by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Switzerland, the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) has shown interest in financing activities in the field of migration and development in BiH. SDC is currently funding two projects of the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees in this area and they are:

- Study: "Diaspora of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Switzerland: profile and possible contributions to development"), which aims to gain a clearer picture of the structure and potentials of BiH diaspora in Switzerland and give a boost to BiH diaspora to contribute to the development of BiH. Based on the recommendations that will result from this study, specific activities focused on the contribution of BiH diaspora to development of BiH will be designed.
- Project titled "Migration and Development: Mainstreaming Migration into Local Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina", which is implemented in partnership with



10 municipalities in BiH. The aim of the project is to support municipalities in strengthening their capacity for development cooperation with diaspora and inclusion of migrant resources in municipal development strategies.

All these measures taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to link migration and development in accordance with the guidelines under the European Commission GAMM (The Global Approach to Migration and Mobility) Communication which outlines four main pillars of migration and mobility and the fourth one is about maximizing the development impact of migration and mobility. In addition, EU 2011 Report on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which is a biannual report published in December 2011, reads that, *inter alia*, „Migration is thus firmly on the EU’s policy agenda and increasingly being integrated into other policy areas such as development, foreign affairs, employment, education and training, and social affairs while development concerns are increasingly being taken into account when it comes to migration policy“ and that „the EU supports partner countries in mainstreaming migration in their development strategies, as well as designing migration policies which take into account the phenomenon of the linkage between migration and development.”

BiH citizens in foreign countries are a major financial and human potential for the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, because of their numbers and because of the fact that they make up a large number of highly educated people and business people, especially young people who are educated at prestigious universities around the world. Our expatriates are among the best integrated foreigners who have demonstrated knowledge, diligence and competences and become useful and valued members of their communities in the countries where they are now living. A lot of them have achieved a success and proved themselves in scientific, economic, cultural, sports fields and even politically. They are a tremendous development resource that is available to BiH.