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## Principles and general objectives of education

According to the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2003) the purpose of education is to contribute to the development of society through the optimal intellectual, physical, moral and social development of individuals, based on the rule of law and respect of human rights, as well as to contribute to economic development to ensure the best standard of living for all citizens. The general aims of education result from the generally accepted, universal values of a democratic society, and from the values based on the specific national, historical, cultural and religious traditions of peoples and national minorities who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These aims include, amongst others, the following:

- provide access to knowledge as basis for understanding of self, others and the world we live in;
- ensure the optimal development of each individual, including those with special educational needs, in accordance with their age, abilities and intellectual and physical capacities;
- promote and respect human rights and basic freedoms, and prepare each person for life in a society which respects democratic principles and the rule of law;
- raise awareness about belonging to the state Bosnia and Herzegovina, one's own cultural identity, language and tradition, respect others and those who are different, respect diversity and promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity between all human beings, peoples and communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the world;
- ensure equal educational opportunities regardless of gender, race, national identity, social and cultural origin and status, family status, religion, psycho-physiological and other personal traits;
- provide quality education for all;
- reach standards of knowledge which can be compared to the international and European levels ensuring integration into the European education system;
- achieve lifelong learning;
- promote economic development and integration into the European space.

## Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Since 1995 and according to the Dayton-Paris agreement, the country has been split into two political entities: the Bosniak/Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb-led Republika Srpska (RS). The Federation covers 51% of the territory and the RS covers the remaining 49%. Each entity has its own political structure and administration. In addition, the Brčko District was established as a separate administrative unit after the arbitration process undertaken in 1996. There are three main ethnic groups in the country: Bosniak (48% of the population), Serb



(37.1%), and Croat (14.3%). Along religious lines, 40% of the population declare themselves Muslim, 31% Orthodox Christian, and 15% Roman Catholic. The political structure of the Federation is divided into three levels: entity, canton and municipality (local self-government). Each municipality has its own municipal council and administrative structures. The RS is more centrally organized. (ETF, 2010; UNICEF, May 2010).

The **Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina** adopted in June 2003 initiated the primary (basic) education reform through the introduction of the compulsory nine-year programme. In 2003/04, the RS started the implementation of the new legal requirements, while in the Federation the process began one year later; in 2008 two cantons had not yet introduced the reform. Articles 42 to 44 specify that a common core curriculum shall be implemented in all public and private schools. This common core curriculum consists of the syllabi of all the subjects of primary and secondary education that have an agreed common core as broad as possible. The common core curriculum should be developed by a temporary *ad hoc* body whose members are appointed by the ministers of education of the entities, cantons and the District of Brčko, as well as one member from the Ministry of Civil Affairs. Such a curriculum should, among other principles, ensure that positive relations and a feeling of commitment to the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina are developed through the educational process. Taking into account the best interest of the student, parents, teachers and the society, it should also ensure the consistency of education standards in all schools and at all levels, and its application should correspond to the developmental needs of all children. The Law also provides that the standards of students' achievements and assessments are the responsibility of the Standards and Assessment Agency (now the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education).

The **Law on the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education** adopted in 2007 provides for the establishment of this new Agency, replacing the former Agency for Educational Standards and Assessment for the Federation and the RS. (MCA, 2008).

The **Framework Law on Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina** of 2007 determines that preschool education is an integral part of the education system and envisages one year of compulsory preschool attendance for all preschool aged children before enrolment into primary school (Article 16). In 2008 the cantons of Sarajevo and Posavina adopted laws on preschool education and care in accordance with the Framework Law.

The revised **Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina** entered into force in August 2008.

The **Framework Law on Higher Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina** adopted in July 2007 sets the basic standards and principles for the area of higher education. The higher education laws and regulations of the RS, the ten cantons in the Federation as well as Brčko District, are to be harmonized with the Framework Law.

The RS National Assembly adopted the **Law on Adult Education** in June 2009, and thus adult education has become an integral part of the education system of



education of the RS. This Law requires the establishment of the RS Institute for Adult Education within the Ministry (established in 2010) responsible to supervise and develop the adult education sector.

Article 2 of the **Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina** states that the Federation will ensure the application of the highest level of internationally recognized rights and freedoms provided in the documents listed in the Annex to the Constitution, including the right to education. The **Constitution of the RS** provides that the constitutional arrangement of the Republic shall be based upon, among others, the guarantee and protection of human freedoms and rights in accordance with international standards. Article 38 explicitly mentions the right to education.

In accordance with the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina, every child shall have equal right of access and equal opportunities for participation in appropriate education, without any discrimination. Equal access and equal opportunities include ensuring equal conditions and opportunities for all (Article 4). Article 16 stipulates that primary education shall be mandatory and free of charge for all children. Mandatory education shall begin in the calendar year in which by April 1 the child shall have completed six years of age and shall last, without interruption, throughout the period that may not be shorter than eight years. The competent educational authorities and schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be obligated to create, no later than by June 2004, all the conditions required for the implementation of nine-year primary school education. Article 17 specifies that secondary education shall be accessible to all, on the basis of the performance in the primary school, personal interest and abilities. Secondary education shall be free of charge in public educational institutions.

The Law on education in primary and secondary schools of the Brčko District (2008) stipulates that a pupil who reaches the age of 15 is no longer obliged to attend primary school in that calendar year, and that full-time student of a secondary school cannot be a person older than 18, or 19 years of age in case of a child with special needs. The Law on primary education in Sarajevo Canton (2008) stipulates that primary education shall last nine years and it shall be mandatory for children of age 6 to 15. The Law on primary education and care of the RS specifies that a pupil at 15 years of age is not obliged to continue his or her primary school education; however, based on the decision of the school headmaster, further education can be provided up to the age of 17.

## **Administration and management of the education system**

The legislative power and creation of education policy includes many administrative levels. For the education sector the overall authority has been delegated to ten cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Brčko District, each with a ministry of education responsible for the organization and functioning of the education system. The **Federation Ministry of Education and Culture** has a coordinating function over the ten **cantonal ministries of education, science, culture and sport**. The competent authorities in the RS and the Brčko District are the **Ministry of Education and Culture** and the **Department of Education** respectively. In the RS, the municipalities have minimal role and



responsibilities in regard to decision making and school administration. As per the Law on Ministries and Other Administrative Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina of 2003, the state **Ministry of Civil Affairs** (MCA), through its Departments for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education and for Higher Education, is responsible for the coordination of activities, harmonization of plans of the entity authorities, the enforcement of international obligations in the area of education, and strategy development in the field of education and science. Pursuant to its coordination role, the MCA initiated the process of adoption of state framework laws while the lower government levels have the duty to harmonize their legislation with the state-level laws. Curricula and textbooks differ from region to region, the education system is fragmented and, as a consequence, extremely difficult to reform. (MCA, 2008; UNICEF, May 2010). Education is financed from the public resources of entity, canton, Brčko District and municipality budgets mainly, depending on competencies. In terms of allocations, this means that there are thirteen separate education budgets.

In accordance with the legislation adopted since 2003, three agencies have been established as autonomous administrative bodies: the Agency for the Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance, the Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education, and the Centre for Information and Documents Recognition in the field of Higher Education. The **Agency for Preschool, Primary and Secondary Education** is expected to define standards, assess learning outcomes, and develop common core curricula for preschool, primary and secondary education. The **Center for Information and Recognition of Documents in the Area of Higher Education** is in charge of information and tasks related to recognition in the area of higher education under the framework of the Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Diplomas in Higher Education. (MCA, 2008). Among other tasks, the **Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance**, which became operational in December 2008, shall: define criteria for the accreditation of higher education institutions; set norms for quality standards in the field of higher education; provide recommendations to relevant ministries on criteria and standards for the establishment and closure of higher education institutions; license higher education institution and programmes; provide recommendations on student fees; and represent the country in international organizations dealing with quality assurance in higher education.

There are eight **Pedagogical Institutes** (one in the RS, two in the canton Herzegovina-Neretva, and one each in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica, Bihac, and Gorazde); three are autonomous bodies, while the others are under the ministries of education. The Institutes are responsible for the monitoring and supervision of educational institutions, including curriculum development, the adoption of new approaches and educational methods, and the organization of training for teachers and principals within the areas of their jurisdiction. Within each ministry of education there are also **Education Inspections** ensuring administrative supervision and overseeing the enforcement of existing laws and regulations (in the Brčko District the education inspection is separate from the Department for Education and operates within the Public Security Department). The **Rectors' Conference** represents the common interests of universities and cooperates with the institutions in the higher education reform. The **Conference of Ministers of Education** has been established in 2008 as the highest advisory and coordination body in the field of education. The **Council for General Education** is expected to act as an expert and independent advisory body in



the areas of preschool, primary and secondary general education. (MCA, 2008; ETF, 2010).

In accordance with the Framework Law on Preschool Education (2007) the responsibility for the implementation of preschool education policies, the general administration of preschool institutions and the management of human and material resources lies in the hands of the **Administrative Boards**. The principals of preschool institutions are appointed by the boards on the basis of the procedures to be determined in the laws or regulations of the RS, the cantons of the Federation, the Brčko District, and in the general acts of preschool institutions. Schools are mainly legal entities (excepting district schools, mostly in rural areas, affiliated to central schools). According to the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education (2003), schools are administered by **School Boards**; pupils and parents are entitled to form their councils. School principals are appointed by school boards following the procedures regulated in the law applicable at that government level. Higher education institutions are administered by Administrative Boards; one third of the members are appointed by the founder, while the rest are appointed by the Senate of the higher education institutions. The Rector manages the public university, and he is elected by the Senate based on a public competition. (MCA, 2008).

The **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe** (OSCE) is involved in education in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of the importance of this sector as a determinant of (and threat to) the security of the country. OSCE has an extensive network of 23 education officers in the field, who constantly monitor the situation in education, conduct research, organize local seminars and produce status reports. (UNICEF, May 2010).

## Structure and organization of the education system

### Pre-school education

In accordance with the Framework Law on Preschool Education of 2007, preschool institutions shall implement educational activities for children from birth until their entry into school. Article 16 stipulates that one year of preschool attendance is compulsory for all children before enrolment into primary school.

### Primary education

The implementation of new nine-year compulsory primary (basic) education programme started in 2003/04, and it is intended to replace the former eight-year primary programme (still being offered in about 64% of schools in the cantons of the Federation in 2009/10). The entry age is 6. The model of Framework Curriculum for the nine-year primary school in the Federation as well as the nine-year primary school curriculum in the Republika Srpska, are organized into three three-year cycles, i.e. preparatory (grades 1-3), classroom instruction (grades 4-6), and subject instruction (grades 7-9).



## Secondary education

Following the progressive introduction of the nine-year primary programme, general and technical-vocational secondary education in principle lasts three years (grades 10-12). Generally, secondary education is offered in four-year (grades 9-12) gymnasias, technical and related schools, art, religious and special education schools. Secondary vocational schools also offer two- and three-year programmes. At the end of three-year programmes students sit the final examination; certificates are also issued to students who have passed specific modules. Upon completion of general and technical-vocational secondary education (four-year programmes) students sit the *matura* exams.

## Higher education

Access to public universities is subject to the results in the entry exam. Colleges offer three-year professional programmes leading to a diploma. Under the Framework Law on Higher Education of 2007, universities started to offer programmes organized into three cycles following the Bologna pattern. First-cycle programmes leading to an undergraduate degree (bachelor's or equivalent), take three to four years to complete (or between 180 and 240 European Credit Transfer System–ECTS; 360 ECTS in the case of medicine). Second-cycle programmes lead to the award of a master's degree or equivalent after an additional one to two years of study. The duration of doctoral degree programmes is at least three years. Universities can also offer one- or two-year postgraduate specialist courses in certain specialized fields (i.e. medicine). Harmonization of higher education legislation between cantons has not been completed yet. Over 75% of institutions and programmes use ECTS for both transfer and accumulation purposes.

The model of Framework Curriculum for the nine-year primary school in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is organized on the basis of a school year consisting of 34 teaching weeks in grade 1 and 35 weeks in grades 2 to 9. The nine-year primary school curriculum in the Republika Srpska is organized on the basis of a school year consisting of 36 teaching weeks in grades 1 to 8 and 34 weeks in grade 9. (EQA/OKO, 2009). The academic year is divided into two semesters.

## The educational process

Curricula are approved by the ministries of education of the Republika Srpska (RS), the ten cantons of the Federation, and at the level of the Brčko District. They are designed and developed by the Pedagogic Institutes, which are also in charge of teacher training and assessment of school performance. Syllabi are prepared by the subject-related working groups, and are then approved by the educational authorities. The members of the working groups mainly include subject experts from schools, pedagogic institutes and university faculties. Based on the provisions of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, common core curricula are being adopted and implemented in all public and private schools, on the basis of the agreement reached by the ministries of education in 2003. The common core curricula include the subjects, subject contents and common relevant topics, and are mandatory for all students.



Within the framework of the project funded by the European Union ‘Reform of General Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina’, implemented during 2004–2006, the following documents were prepared: Model of the Framework Curricula; Model of Subject Curricula for mother tongues and mathematics for grades 3, 6, and 9, and for the fourth form of the general secondary education; and the Draft Guidelines for Curricula Implementation. The Framework Curricula contains the core principles of the curriculum based on contemporary pedagogical approaches to the teaching and learning processes. The document provides guidance for development and upgrading of the common core curricula, as well as for the development of the part of the curriculum defined by the RS, the cantons in the Federation and the Brčko District, and by each school within the scope of its autonomy.

Pursuant to the Framework Law on Secondary Vocational Education and Training (VET), secondary VET curricula consist of the common core developed in compliance with the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education, syllabi for vocational subjects and the part of the curriculum designed by the schools. Public and private schools have the freedom to develop and implement educational contents according to the requirements of the local labor market up to 30% of the overall curriculum. Curricula at secondary vocational schools are developed as much as possible through application of modular methodology. (MCA, 2008).

The nine-year compulsory education curricula include: the Common Core Curriculum (CCC) for primary school; Entity, canton and Brčko District level curricula (that integrate the CCC and a part of the curriculum that encompasses specific characteristics related to language, culture, history and tradition of peoples and national minorities living in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including also the regional and local specific characteristics and interests); and school curricula that integrate all enlisted in the previous section, and part of curriculum developed by schools, in accordance with the needs of students and school environment. In 2009, twelve curricula were implemented in nine-year primary schools (cantons, the RS and Brčko District). Their main characteristic of these curricula is their orientation towards learning outcomes, organization and implementation of a child-centred educational process, with needs and interests of a child in focus, in accordance with the international trends in modern curriculum development process. The general principles are the following: education should be aimed more toward learning processes and outcomes than to presenting contents of individual educational areas/subjects and content/topics which are integrated into the adequate subjects and the school educational work on the whole; education should be based on standards, with systematic monitoring and evaluation of its quality; education should be based on the curriculum that includes horizontal and vertical connections between educational areas/school subjects; education should respect individual differences among students with respect to manner of learning and pace of progress, and knowledge that they gain out of school; education should develop positive attitudes toward school and lifelong learning; education should be based on participatory, cooperative, active and experience-based methods of learning and teaching. (EQA/OKO, 2009).

The curricula on which the CCC was based were not conceptualized or supported by adequate educational standards. The former Standards and Assessment Agency in Education of the Federation and the RS has determined the first student's





achievements standards that were to guide the educational process towards the accomplishment of expected outcomes of education as late as in 2002 for mother language and mathematic in grade 4, and on larger sample in 2003. The nine-year primary school curricula were not based on these standards either, although from 2004 onwards, students' achievements standards for several subjects have been developed. The main reason for this is the fact that the standards are not yet adopted by the competent educational authorities, and that the process of transforming the bodies for the determination of educational standards has not been taking place as stipulated by the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education. On the other hand, the process of establishing the newly formed Agency for preschool, primary and secondary education is quite slow. (*Ibid.*).

The structure of curricula is mostly reflected in the division into subjects, and division of subjects further on into teaching units or smaller parts, according to the number, titles and sequence of the teaching units. An important component of the curriculum structure is the part explaining explicitly the objectives, educational outcomes/educational achievements and their connection with educational standards, starting concept and learning environment, implementation and utilization of different methods and forms of work, and in particular those aimed at active learning and interactive teaching, in conformity with students' needs and interests, and assessment. The outcomes are defined predominantly in terms of achievements related to learning the content and, much less, in relation to development of competencies, skills, habits and attitudes.

The nine-year primary education concepts and some curricula point out the importance of continual monitoring and assessment of students, teachers and schools. They promote a new assessment approach, including alternative ways of assessing. Concerning the Federation, within the framework of the nine-year compulsory education guidelines are provided for monitoring and descriptive assessment of students. The assessment is descriptive in grades 1 and 2, while in grade 3 it is both descriptive and numerical. The assessment approach is made concrete at the level of subjects, taking into consideration the subject's specific characteristics. In upper grades of primary school, assessment is numerical only. (*Ibid.*).

### **Pre-primary education**

In accordance with the Framework Law on Preschool Education in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2007), preschool institutions shall implement educational activities for children from birth until their entry into school. Article 16 stipulates that one year of preschool attendance is compulsory for all children before enrolment into primary school.

The Framework Law specifies that preschool upbringing and education, as an integral component of the education system, is based on humanistic and democratic principles and on principles of professional autonomy and responsibility. The humanistic approach implies adjustment and respect of development possibilities and needs of every child, and democracy suggests an equal treatment and equal possibilities of participation without any kind of discrimination. The Law on Preschool Care and Education of the RS and the Law on Preschool Care and Education of the Brčko District regulate preschool care and education as part of a



unified system of care and education and the basis of lifelong learning and development of the child. The aim of this level of education is to enhance the physical, intellectual, social, communication, and creativity development of children, extending their knowledge about self, others and the world. One of the tasks of preschool care and education is preparing children for school.

The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006 showed that only 6.4% of children, including 6.8% of children aged 36-59 months in the Federation and 6.1% in the Republika Srpska (RS), were attending preschool in 2006. Urban-rural differences are significant, as the figure is as high as 14.3% in urban areas compared to 2.4% in rural areas. Differences in preschool education attendance by sex are also significant, with 4.7% of boys attending preschool compared to 8% of girls. There is a significant correlation between preschool attendance and the educational level of the mother: 29.2% of mothers with higher or university education have their children attend preschool, in contrast to 1.5% of mothers with primary education. (DEP & UNICEF, 2007). As few as 10% of children entering grade 1 have attended some form of pre-primary education. (UNICEF, 2010).

The Federal Office of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina reports that in 2009 there were 129 preschool institutions in the ten cantons of the Federation with 9,839 children enrolled (of whom 4,822 were girls). About 7,100 children attended all-day institutions (over eight hours of preschool provision). The number of employees was 1,395 (of whom 1,293 were female), including 720 educators (of whom 690 were female). (FOS, 2010).

## Primary education

As mentioned, the implementation of new nine-year compulsory primary (basic) education programme started in 2003/04, and it is intended to replace the former eight-year primary programme (still being offered in about 64% of schools in the cantons of the Federation in 2009/10). The model of Framework Curriculum for the nine-year primary school in the Federation as well as the nine-year primary school curriculum in the Republika Srpska (RS), are organized into three three-year cycles, i.e. preparatory (grades 1-3), classroom instruction (grades 4-6), and subject instruction (grades 7-9).

According to the Law on Primary Education and Care of the RS, primary education aims to: ensure the complete and harmonious development of individual potentials and abilities of the child, taking into account individual needs, interests and abilities; develop creative and critical thinking skills; raise awareness about the need to acquire new knowledge; raise awareness about the need to care for health; develop self-esteem, self-respect and sensibility for one's own and other peoples; raise awareness about positive belonging to one's own cultural identity, language and tradition; develop and nurture basic moral values, opinions and relationships. According to the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools in the Brčko District the aim of the education is to raise pupils' awareness about the need for further education and training.

In the nine-year curriculum of the RS, the expected learning outcomes are defined for all subjects, each three-year cycle, and in grade 1 (integrated teaching) for each subject area. Upon completion of the nine-year programme, students should:

- gain basic knowledge from diverse scientific areas;
- be familiar with universal human rights and respect social values deriving from them;
- gain capacity of critical and abstract thinking and communication skills;
- possess a broad range of mathematical notions, skills and principles, and be able to apply them in everyday life;
- have a clear idea on the importance of science and technology in contemporary society;
- be computer literate;
- be empowered to understand and express themselves in their mother tongue, as an assumption for inclusion into their own cultural traditions;
- be familiar with other cultures and civilizations and be able to communicate in two foreign languages, one of them being English;
- have basic knowledge in general and national history;
- be empowered for living in plural and democratic society;
- develop experience and expression in the field of music, arts, dance, drama and other types of arts, in accordance with their own inclinations;
- develop motor skills through sport activities, understand responsibility for own health, adopt a healthy style of living and develop an appropriate relationship with and responsibility for environment.

The Concept of nine-year primary education in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina defines the learning outcomes in all primary school programmes as follows:

- student literacy in the broad sense of the term (reading, writing, numerical and computer literacy, media culture, etc.);
- possessing personal skills (ability to make decisions, cope with difficulties and problems, care about own health and the health of the others, positive habits, respect for life);
- student readiness to accept the role of responsible citizen (acknowledging the culture and customs of others, advocating equality, positively influencing the culture of peace and tolerance in school);
- successful problem solving critical thinking abilities;
- communication skills;
- a clear idea about importance of science and technology in contemporary society;
- basic knowledge of two foreign languages. (EQA/OKO, 2009).

The weekly lesson timetables of the Framework Curriculum for the nine-year primary school in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the nine-year primary school in the Republika Srpska, and the nine-year primary school in the Brčko District are presented in the tables below:



### Model of Framework Curriculum for the nine-year primary school in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First cycle			Second cycle			Third cycle		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Language and literature *	3	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
First foreign language	–	–	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
Second foreign language	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	2	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	3
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Knowledge of nature	–	–	–	–	1.5	–	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	1	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	1
My environment	2	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–
Society	–	–	–	–	1.5	–	–	–	–
Culture of living	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
History	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	1	2
Technology and ICT	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Technical education	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	2	1
Computer science	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	–	–
Art education	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education and health	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Compulsory electives **	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
Extracurricular activities	1	1	1	1	1	–	–	–	–
Head teacher class	–	–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods (max.)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>

Source: EQA/OKO, 2009. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The school year consists of 34 teaching weeks in grade 1 and 35 weeks in grades 2-9. \* Bosniak, Serbian or Croatian. \*\* Religious instruction and another subject (in grades 8 and 9).

### Nine-year primary school in the Republika Srpska: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	First cycle			Second cycle			Third cycle		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Serbian language & literature	–	5	5	5	5	5	4	4	4
Another language *	–	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Another language **	–	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)	(5)	(4)	(4)	(4)
Orthodox religious education	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
First foreign language	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Second foreign language	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Art education	–	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1
Music	–	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1
Nature and society	–	2	2	2	–	–	–	–	–
Knowledge of society	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
Knowledge of nature	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
History	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2
Democracy and human rights	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Mathematics	–	5	5	5	5	4	4	4	4
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Technical education	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Basics of computer science	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Physical education	–	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
My environment	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Speech, expression, creativity	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Gymnastic, sports, music	5	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Head teacher class	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: EQA/OKO, 2009. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The school year consists of 36 teaching weeks in grades 1-8 and 34 weeks in grade 9. \* For pupils speaking a language other than Serbian. \*\* Language of instruction in schools using only one language. Democracy and human rights is being introduced starting from 2009/10.

### Nine-year primary school in the Brčko District: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Language *	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4
First foreign language	–	–	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Second foreign language	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	2	2
My environment	3	3	3	–	–	–	–	–	–
Society	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
Democracy and human rights	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
History	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	1
Mathematics	2	3	3	5	4	4	4	4	4
Nature and society	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–
Nature	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–
Biology	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	2
Geography	–	–	–	–	–	2	2	1	1
Physics	–	–	–	–	–	–	1	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Technical education	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Computer science	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	1	1
Art education	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Music	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical education and health	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Compulsory electives	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	2
Religious instruction	–	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Head teacher class	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>

Source: EQA/OKO, 2009. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. \* Bosniak, Serbian or Croatian.

The Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) project initiated in 2002 by UNICEF was created to address the quality of teaching by changing the teaching practices to focus on children rather than teachers and encourage child participation. Training centres and practice classrooms were established in each canton, region and district throughout the country to ensure improved school management and ongoing professional development. The training centres have been used for training the coordinators, school directors, educators, trainers, teachers, special education advisers and parents (if and when appropriate), as well as serving as resource centres and libraries. Consistent with the aim of promoting child-centred teaching and learning approaches, the project also included a supply component to equip schools with round tables, chairs, bookshelves, display boards, books and teaching aids. By the end of 2007, 97% of lower primary school teachers and 58% of upper primary school teachers had received basic or advanced child-centred methodology training. By 2008, over 100,000 children were in child-friendly classrooms in 500 elementary schools across the country. (UNICEF, May 2010).

The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006 showed that 98.4% of children of primary school age attended primary school in 2006, including 98.3% in the Federation and 98.7% percent in the Republika Srpska (RS). Overall, 90.7% of children of the primary school entry age were attending grade one (91.6% in the





Federation and 90.8% in the RS). Out of all children starting grade 1, almost all pupils (99.8%) will eventually reach grade 5 (this number includes children that repeat grades but still eventually move up to reach grade 5). No significant differences with respect to sex, region and mother's education were observed. The net primary school completion rate was 86.6%, while transition rate to secondary school was 92.7%. (DEP & UNICEF, 2007).

Between 50,000 and 60,000 Roma live in Bosnia and Herzegovina; they represent the largest minority group and most vulnerable population in the country. Roma children are marginalized, underrepresented at all levels of schooling and have high levels of illiteracy. While half of Roma children are enrolled in primary school, only 15% attend regularly. Primary school completion rates for Roma are around 32%. (UNICEF, 2010).

The Federal Office of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina reports that at the beginning of 2009/10 there were 1,122 primary (basic) education schools in the ten cantons of the Federation, including 32 special education schools; out of the 1,090 regular schools, 702 offered the eight-year programme and 388 the nine-year programme. The total enrolment in grades 1-5 of regular schools was 125,134 pupils. In addition, in the 33 primary schools for children with special educational needs the total enrolment was 635 children and the number of teachers was 196. Out of the total enrolment of 234,388 students in regular schools (of whom 114,174 were girls), 130,158 were enrolled in the eight-year programme and 104,180 in the nine-year programme. The number of teachers and assistants in regular schools was 15,393 (of whom 10,650 were female), including 10,866 full-time teachers on a permanent basis and 1,654 full-time teachers on a temporary basis. A total of 10,231 teachers were in the eight-year programme and 5,162 in the nine-year programme. There were also 38 music and ballet primary schools, with an enrolment of 5,904 pupils (of whom 3,625 were girls) and 494 teachers (of whom 319 were female). (FOS, 2010).

## Secondary education

As mentioned, following the progressive introduction of the nine-year primary programme, general and technical-vocational secondary education in principle lasts three years (grades 10-12). Traditionally, secondary education is offered in four-year (grades 9-12) gymnasias, technical and related schools, art, religious and special education schools. Secondary vocational schools also offer two- and three-year programmes. At the end of three-year programmes students sit the final examination; certificates are also issued to students who have passed specific training modules. Upon completion of general and technical-vocational secondary education (four-year programmes) students sit the *matura* exams.

Under the European Union sponsored Vocational Education and Training (VET) Programme, in 2004 an expert group worked on streamlining of the Nomenclature of Professions, and the work of this group resulted in the proposed new Classification of Professions containing 13 families with a total of 100 professions. In the Republika Srpska, this proposal was adopted and is implemented since 2004, whereas the agreement on acceptance of the new classification of professions in the Federation and the Brčko District was signed in March 2006, and the implementation of the new nomenclature began in 2006/07.

The general secondary education (high school) weekly lesson timetable in the Republika Srpska is presented below:

**Republika Srpska. General secondary education (high school): weekly lesson timetable**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form			
	1	2	3	4
Serbian language and literature	4	4	4	4
First foreign language	2	2	3	3
Second foreign language	2	2	2	2
Latin	2	–	–	–
Sociology	–	–	–	2
Psychology	–	2	–	–
Philosophy	–	–	2	3
History	2	2	2	2
Geography	2	2	2	–
Biology	2	2	2	2
Mathematics	4	4	4	4
Physics	2	2	3	2
Chemistry	2	2	2	2
Computer science	2	2	2	–
Music education	1	1	–	–
Fine arts	1	1	–	–
Physical education	2	2	2	2
Democracy and human rights (82 periods in the fourth form)				
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republika Srpska, *Curriculum of the first year of high school*, Banja Luka, June 2011 (In Serbian). Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes. The school year comprises 36 weeks in the first three forms, and 32 weeks in the fourth form.

The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2006 showed that the secondary school net attendance rate was 79.3% in 2006. Children aged 17 represent the smallest percentage (67%) of all children of secondary school age attending secondary school. The largest percentage of children attend secondary school at the age of 15 (92.6%) but this significantly drops in subsequent years, specifically to 89.7% for 16-year-olds, 67% for 17-year-olds and 67.7% for 18-year-olds. There is a significant difference between rural and urban areas with 88.1% of children in urban areas attending secondary school in comparison to 73.9% in rural areas. Boys (77.9%) are less likely to attend secondary school in comparison to girls (81.1%). (DEP & UNICEF, 2007). Only 2% of Roma children enrol in secondary school and only 9% of those graduate. (UNICEF, 2010).

The Federal Office of Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina reports that at the beginning of 2009/10 there were 212 secondary schools (both independent and combined) in the ten cantons of the Federation, including gymnasia, technical education and related schools, vocational education and art schools, six religious schools and 13 special education schools. The total enrolment was 95,134 students (of whom 47,050 were girls) according to the following breakdown: 25,637 students



(including 16,272 girls) in gymnasias; 45,748 students (of whom 22,354 girls) in technical schools; 20,701 students (of whom 6,841 girls) in vocational schools; 1,815 students (of whom 926 girls) in religious schools; 943 students in art schools (of whom 540 girls); and 290 students (of whom 117 girls) in special education schools. The number of teachers and instructors in the 193 regular schools was 7,562 (of whom 4,209 were female and 366 were instructors), including 4,681 full-time teachers on a permanent basis and 619 full-time teachers on a temporary basis. There were also 74 teachers (of whom 42 were female) in special education schools and 168 teachers (of whom 60 were female) in religious schools. (FOS, 2010).

### **Assessing learning achievement nation-wide**

Since 2002 the former Agency for Standards and Assessment in Education of the Federation and the Republika Srpska has implemented several projects of external evaluation of learning achievements for primary school pupils, as well as for students of first and second forms in high school (secondary education). Projects related to primary school had the goal of determining students' achievements standards for given subjects, whereas in high schools the project was implemented with the goal of assessing the condition in evaluated subjects, student, teacher and school introduction to external evaluation, and the school's self-evaluation based on handbooks prepared by the Agency. Comparative analysis of results of students tested in 2007/08 and the results from students tested in 2002/03, as well as monitoring achievements trends, have shown a positive achievement trend in mother language (improvement according to levels of students' accomplishments), whereas no improvement was recorded in mathematics for 2007/08. Measurements have shown that the physics and biology results from the final grade of primary school are rather homogenous concerning gender, which is not the case with chemistry, where girls achieve better results than boys. Physics results show that only 1% of students achieve high levels of ability, whereas chemistry results 2% of such students. Biology results are a little better, with 4% of students achieving high results. (EQA/OKO, 2009).

The country participated in the 2007 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). The sample was comprised of 181 classes from 150 primary schools, for a total of 4,329 final grade primary school students. Only 1% of students have attained the advanced, highest level of mathematics knowledge, whereas the international average stands at 2%. Some 10% of students in Bosnia and Herzegovina attained the high level, as opposed to the international average of 15%. Medium level was achieved by 42% of students, the international average being 46%. Most students (77%) showed a low level of knowledge, 74% being the international average. As for the cognitive domain, students achieved best results (score of 478) from applying knowledge and skills whereas lowest results are achieved from knowledge (score of 440). In assignments where judgment is graded, the average score was 452. Only 2% of students attained the advanced, highest level of knowledge in the area of science, whereas the international average is 3%. Some 14% of students in the country attained the limit of high level of knowledge (international average is 17%) and 47% attained the medium level of knowledge (international average is 48%). Most students (80%), attained the low level (78% is the international average). The analysis of average students' achievements in the science group of subjects and cognitive domain, shows that the country does significantly worse than the international average in all domains. Students are almost equally good or bad in biology, chemistry, physics and



geography. The highest score was achieved in geography (469) and chemistry (468), which is worse compared to the TIMSS average of 500 points. The lowest scores were achieved in physics (463), while the biology score was 464 points compared to the TIMSS average of 500 points. As for the cognitive domain, students scored best (486) in applying knowledge and skills. The worst score was from judgment (452). In assignments where knowledge is tested, the score was 463. It is interesting that students score best in the cognitive domain of applying knowledge and skills both from natural sciences and mathematics. (*Ibid.*).

Secondary analysis of TIMSS 2007 found that Bosnia and Herzegovina was below the international average in terms of the percentage of students stating they 'liked to be at school'. Reasons for this perception of schools can be found in the outdated curricula and methods of knowledge transfer. Other reasons include poor conditions in schools; inadequate buildings; poor hygiene conditions; and lack of technical equipment such as computers. The third set of reasons for this reluctance to attend school concerns poor safety conditions, whether in school or on the way to school. (UNICEF, 2010).

## Teaching staff

Teachers are educated at eight public universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and two private higher education institutions. There are several teacher education faculties within each university. Faculties of teacher education prepare primary teachers (and sometimes subject teachers for upper primary schools) while subject teachers for secondary schools are prepared at non-teacher faculties for the relevant subject discipline as are most subject teachers for upper primary schools. Non-teacher faculties sometimes have a department for teachers. Teachers who teach subjects in vocational schools are prepared at the same higher education institutions where students are prepared for the corresponding vocations with no specific teacher training departments or courses provided. However, before they can teach they are obliged to pass an examination in the methodological-didactic group of subjects at another institution that provides relevant courses. The process for passing this exam varies substantially from one school to another. A general problem in secondary vocational schools is that teachers of vocational subjects come from non-teacher faculties and have little or no training in the educational sciences, psychology or teaching methods.

Developments in pre-service teacher education form part of the general changes to higher education due to the implementation of the Bologna process. Currently, studies at both teacher and non-teacher faculties are organized in three cycles, with faculties opting for either a 3+2+3 or a 4+1+3 pattern. The intention is that bachelor's of arts holders may only work in a class as teaching assistants alongside a qualified teacher. Master's degree holders may work as a teacher in a school (once they have passed the licensing examination). There are both differences and similarities when comparing the pre-Bologna programmes with current study specifications. Generally speaking, the essence of the study programme has remained the same with minor differences. (ETF, January 2010).

Pedagogic standards and norms govern the standards for educational and occupational competences of teachers, teaching quotas and working quotas for all employees at schools and conditions of work, as well as the numbers of children at

preschool institutions and of pupils in classes at primary and secondary schools. These norms and standards are based on the general standards contained in the state-level laws. The grading, promotion and acquisition of occupational titles of educators, teachers, professors and expert associates at preschool institutions, primary and secondary schools and boarding schools are regulated in rulebooks adopted by the competent educational authorities in the Republika Srpska, the cantons and the Brčko District. In-service training and the professional development of teachers are regulated in a set of regulations and by-laws. Professional development includes both individual and group activities. Teachers are required to attend expert seminars in their area of expertise, organized by the Pedagogic Institutes on a regular basis and at least once per year. A mandatory certification of teachers in democracy and human rights at secondary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been introduced, pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding signed by all ministers of education in 2006. Only teachers who possess certificates recognized by the competent ministry of education may teach the subjects of civic education, democracy and human rights at secondary schools. (MCA, 2008).

In Republika Srpska, the law stipulates an obligation for in-service professional development for teachers in primary, but not in secondary education. The route to obtaining a licence is regulated by a statute currently being developed for licensing pre-primary, primary and secondary teachers. Pedagogical standards regulate teacher conditions of service. All employees in educational institutions have a 40-hour working week. A class teacher spends 24 hours a week in the classroom (and related activities). An additional 12 hours are prescribed for the preparation and marking of class work and four hours for other duties (professional training, teacher duties, administrative duties, etc.). Teachers are directly accountable to the school principal and also to an advisor from a pedagogical institute responsible for a given area. Teachers have a certain level of autonomy in school. They are free to decide on up to 30 % of the curriculum, using the materials and technical resources they prefer. (ETF, January 2010).

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## Web resources

Agency for Development of Higher Education and Quality Assurance:  
<http://hea.gov.ba/> [In Bosniak, Serbian, Croatian and English; some information in English. Last checked: December 2011.]

Federation Ministry of Education and Culture, Bosnia and Herzegovina:  
<http://www.fmon.gov.ba/> [In Bosniak. Last checked: December 2011.]

Ministry of Civil Affairs: [www.mcp.gov.ba/](http://www.mcp.gov.ba/) [In Bosniak, Serbian, and Croatian; some information in English. Last checked: December 2011. Access to the site is restricted.]

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