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## TWINNING PROJECT

### Enhancing the role of parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration context



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#### 1.4 Administrative cooperation and regular coordination of the EU activities

**Context:** Any political cooperation among Parliaments can only be successful if the necessary preparatory work, support and follow up activity is adequately and continuously provided and organized by the administrative level.

**Role:** Regular cooperation, exchange of information, preparatory and follow-up actions.

##### Participation and scope of activities:

Secretaries (General) of the BiH Parliaments meet at least every half a year to discuss relevant issues and especially to prepare the Conference of Speakers. The main communication channels among the Parliaments are to be provided by the EU units (EU adviser in case of the BDA). EU units are responsible to establish and operate regular cooperation framework with one another especially with the aim to prepare properly the cooperation at political levels. EU units are to communicate via electronic communication channel and the focal points of the network of EU units to be developed also meet regularly, at least quarterly.

#### 1.5 Other, ad hoc cooperation

**Context:** Within the framework of the cooperation mechanism, other actors can intervene and other forms of cooperation might arise on an ad hoc basis in relation to the EU issues (e.g. roundtables with civil society, thematic hearings, other communication activities of BiH Parliaments, etc.).

### 2. PUBLICITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE EU ACTIVITIES

All BiH Parliaments are to strive to achieve more publicity and transparency for EU issues. Possible means for this are among others: press events (press conferences and press releases), conferences on EU *acquis* chapters and other important topics, e.g. on the possible use of IPA funds, for the public with the involvement of politicians, written summary of minutes of the meetings, communication via the electronic EU resource centre to be set up within the PABiH in cooperation with the other BiH Parliaments, public hearings.

After the meetings held at different levels the BiH Parliaments inform the media and the general public on the state of play.

### 3. CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

A yearly or semester based calendar of activities related to the cooperation mechanism is to be prepared and possibly endorsed by the Speakers of the BiH Parliaments in order to enable a better preparation of activities concerning EU issues and to foster the general cooperation among BiH Parliaments.

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## CONCEPT

### *on the cooperation mechanism for the Parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina\* in the tasks of the EU integration process*

The Speakers and Deputy Speakers of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska and the Brčko District Assembly commit themselves to take measures for the establishment and development of the cooperation mechanism for the Parliaments of BiH in the tasks of the EU integration process based on the recommendations of the EU funded Twinning Project for enhancing the role of parliaments in the EU integration context according to the Concept presented hereby. The Speakers and Deputy Speakers initiate in their Parliaments that the respective bodies of their institutions take part in the cooperation according to this Concept.

#### INTRODUCTION

A system of informal cooperation between the BiH Parliaments in relation to the EU integration process is to be established based on mutuality, common work and consensus agreements and actions respecting the constitutional structures. As a fundamental principle this system is not to interfere in any way with the constitutional set-up and competences of the Parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Continuous cooperation is to be established in the form of regular meetings as well as continuous political and professional coordination and exchange of information, based on horizontal and vertical linkage among the Parliaments at different levels.

The five elements of the cooperation mechanism for BiH Parliaments in EU integration context are: the Conference of Speakers, the Parliamentary Forum for EU Integration, the cooperation of sectoral committees, administrative cooperation and regular coordination of the EU activities, and other, ad hoc cooperation.

The cooperation mechanism to be established now provides an appropriate framework for the current challenges of the European integration process. It can be fine-tuned further on in light of the different phases of the accession process.

#### 1. SYSTEM OF THE COOPERATION MECHANISM

##### 1.1 Conference of Speakers of the BiH Parliaments

**Context:** Speakers and Deputy Speakers as the highest representatives of their institutions are to meet on a regular basis discussing issues of common interest especially related to the European integration.

**Role:** Political guidance, strategic orientation, coordination of parliamentary agendas.

##### Participation and scope of activities:

The participants are the Speakers and – due to the constitutional structure of BiH Parliaments – Deputy Speakers.

\*In this Concept the term "Parliaments of Bosnia and Herzegovina" refers to the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska and the Assembly of the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in conformity with the scope of the *Twinning Project Enhancing the role of parliaments in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the EU integration context*.



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The Conference of Speakers gives the primary impetus for all political and administrative cooperation and set up the blueprint how the BiH Parliaments cooperate in the EU integration process. The Conference of Speakers takes initiatives to facilitate the cooperation of the sectoral committees of the Parliaments.

The Conference can adopt legally not binding documents which concern only the participating Parliaments.

#### Regularity of meetings:

At least once a year, and after achieving the candidate country status twice a year, or more often when specific questions appear, or when issue of strategic importance arises.

#### Venue of meetings:

The meetings are hosted by either the PABiH or the PFBiH, NARS, BDA based on rotation.

#### Preparation/support of the work:

In order to prepare the Conference, the Secretaries (General) of BiH Parliaments should meet for preparatory meeting and agree on the draft agenda.

### 1.2 Parliamentary Forum for EU Integration

**Context:** In order to develop the positions of BiH at different stages of the EU integration process as well as to ensure the implementation of EU related policies and the EU law approximation with the same result in the entire territory of the country close coordination and cooperation are needed among the Parliaments as well. This is to be provided by the Forum of the EU integration committees, i.e. the Forum of the parliamentary bodies dealing with EU issues on an everyday basis.

**Role:** Focal point of political level cooperation in EU matters, ensuring detailed discussion on the tasks related to the EU integration process, coordination on BiH positions and implementation of BiH tasks, exchange of information on oversight activities on respective executive bodies, provision of publicity to the general public.

#### Participation and scope of activities:

The members of the Forum are the members of the Committees on European Integration of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, of the Parliament of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the Brčko District Assembly and Speakers or their representatives of the cantonal assemblies. Moreover, representatives of the Directorate for European Integration and the Delegation of the EU to BiH are permanently invited to attend the meetings, and depending on the agenda other institutions can also be invited.

The activities of the Forum focus on the coordination of the actions of the Parliaments of BiH in EU matters, and provide the possibility for exchange of best practices and consultation among its members. The Forum deals with: general issues related to European integration; specific issues of EU related policies; preparations on the agenda of meetings of the Stabilisation and Association Parliamentary Committee and briefing after the meetings; progress in the implementation of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA); EU Country Reports on BiH and the BiH contribution before its submission to the EU institutions; resolution on Country Report on BiH adopted by the European Parliament; coordination and monitoring of progress of the legal approximation tasks; coordination and monitoring of the implementation of policies and legal regulations related to the



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European integration; progress of the implementation of the Programme for the Integration of BiH into the EU; accession negotiations; use of funds of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA).

The Forum can adopt legally not binding documents (e.g. statements, conclusions, guidelines), which concern only the participating Parliaments.

#### Chairmanship and venue of the meetings:

The meetings are chaired by the President/Chairman of the Committee on European Integration of the host institution and co-chaired by the Chairman of the Joint Committee on European Integration of PABiH.

The venue of the meeting is either the PABiH or the PFBiH, NARS, BDA based on rotation.

#### Regularity of meetings:

The Forum meets quarterly, preceded by a preparatory meeting of the Collegium of the Presidents/Chairmen of the Committees. In case of necessity extraordinary meetings of the Forum can be convened.

#### Preparation/support of the work:

A Collegium composed of the Presidents/Chairmen of the Committees on EU Integration of the Parliaments coordinates the activities of the Forum, decides on the agenda of the forthcoming meeting, on the convocation of the meetings and on any organisational matters. The decision of the Collegium is always taken by consensus.

On behalf of the administration of the Parliaments the secretaries of the Committees on European Integration, later the colleagues of the EU units to be established ensure the professional support of the activities especially the preparation and follow-up activities of the meetings.

### 1.3 Cooperation of sectoral committees

**Context:** Sectoral committees have an important role to play when specific policy areas and legislative issues are tackled, which concerns specific parts of the EU *acquis*.

**Role:** Coordination in the implementation of the legal approximation tasks ensuring timely and harmonized adoption of legal acts required by SAA/Programme of Integration and avoiding conflicting or ambiguous actions and regulations.

#### Participation and scope of activities:

Meetings among the sectoral committees of BiH Parliaments are to be based on the competences related to the policy areas of the discussion.

The meeting of sectoral committees can adopt legally not binding documents (such as conclusions and guidelines), which concern only the participating Parliaments.

#### Regularity of meetings:

When specific issues concerning their competences are to be discussed upon the initiative of any committee or the Speakers of the Parliaments.

#### Preparation/support of the work:

The secretaries of the respective sectoral committees in collaboration with the colleagues of the EU units ensure the professional support of the activities especially the preparation of the meetings.