



# Economic and Social Council

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## Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Seventieth session

### Summary record of the 37th meeting

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Friday, 1 October 2021, at 3 p.m.

*Chair:* Mr. Abdel-Moneim

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Consideration of reports (*continued*)

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*Third periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina (continued)*

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports** *(continued)*

**(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant** *(continued)*

*Third periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina (continued)* (E/C.12/BIH/3; E/C.12/BIH/Q/3; E/C.12/BIH/RQ/3)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina took places at the Committee table.*
2. **The Chair** invited the delegation to continue replying to the questions raised by Committee members at the previous meeting.
3. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that over 80 per cent of the employable population of 1.4 million was in work. There had been a 0.7 per cent decrease in the size of the labour force and a 4 per cent reduction in total employment in the first quarter of 2021 compared to the previous quarter.
4. **Mr. Rizvo** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his country was on a migration route for people wishing to enter European Union member States. In most cases, migrants were unable to cross the border into the European Union, became stranded in Bosnia and Herzegovina and therefore had to be accommodated in temporary camps, where they received all necessary assistance and protection. More than 80,000 such migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, had been registered. Providing health care to migrant workers in a regular situation in the country was not a problem, since they were entitled to health insurance. However, the Government lacked resources to provide such services to migrants in transit and relied on funding from the European Union to do so. It was difficult to assess how the migrant situation would develop in the future, especially in the light of recent events in Afghanistan.
5. **Mr. Bošnjak** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that his country's decentralized form of governance had presented a challenge in terms of its response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The Government had nonetheless been successful in reducing the negative impact on the economy. After the first infection in early March 2020, the Council of Ministers had been quick to declare a state of emergency, and an advisory body comprised of representatives from the four regional health ministries had been established to coordinate measures to combat the pandemic.
6. Bosnia and Herzegovina was involved in the work of the Health Security Committee of the European Union to advance and coordinate COVID-19 recovery efforts and was part of numerous European working groups to help manage the response. All action was taken in accordance with the recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), which had cited Bosnia and Herzegovina as a positive example of a country with an effective COVID-19 response. The Government submitted all data related to the pandemic to the European monitoring system and made them publicly available. In April 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina had signed the Joint Procurement Agreement for medical countermeasures to reduce the cost and expedite the procurement of medicines. Furthermore, it had been one of the first countries to join the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility in September 2020 and had ordered 1.2 million vaccines. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the Government had paid for them in advance, the vaccines had been delivered very late and in small quantities, which had hindered vaccination efforts. The country had received €14 million under the EU4Health programme to fund vaccinations and mitigate the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. The Government's data currently showed that approximately one quarter of the population had been vaccinated, but the true figure was in fact higher, since the data did not include persons who had received vaccinations in neighbouring countries. While a campaign was under way to promote vaccinations, the rate of uptake remained relatively low, which had led to a surplus of available vaccines. The decentralized nature of the country's health-care institutions had posed a major challenge in terms of its COVID-19 response but, according to WHO, their actions had been coordinated effectively.

7. Bosnia and Herzegovina was not a developed country and could not afford a protracted lockdown. The balance between protecting people's health and mitigating the economic impact had therefore been tipped in favour of the latter. The high death rate from COVID-19 was due to a variety of factors, including a low vaccination rate, especially among the elderly, and the fact that those affected by the disease went to hospital only once they had become seriously ill.

8. **Ms. Šahinpašić** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that vaccination plan for the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been proposed by the Federal Ministry of Health and the Public Health Institute and adopted in January 2021. Vaccines were administered free of charge and on a voluntary basis to everyone, regardless of whether or not they had health insurance. Bosnia and Herzegovina had been granted an emergency International Bank for Reconstruction and Development loan, which was a new instrument offered by the World Bank Group through an accelerated procedure to respond to the pandemic and assist with recovery. The funds were being used to strengthen the health-care system through the procurement of medicines, laboratory equipment and tests, and to enhance the social protection system by making additional funds available to social welfare beneficiaries and providing equipment to social protection institutions. Persons particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, including the elderly, persons with disabilities not related to war and civilian victims of war, received direct payments.

9. The health-care system in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was based on the Bismarck Model and was heavily reliant on contributions from registered employed persons. The fact that many people only used the system when they were in desperate need of treatment posed a significant challenge. In the Federation, the development strategy adopted for the period 2021–2027 established goals for the health-care system, namely to: ensure health care for all citizens of the Federation; increase health insurance coverage; raise awareness of healthy living and encourage healthy lifestyle choices; promote reproductive health, particularly among young people; continuously improve health-care services; and enhance vertical and horizontal coordination with the system, especially in times of crisis. Better targeted funding was a key part of efforts to achieve those goals.

10. **Ms. Tanović** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina implemented the recommendations of the Ministry of Health crisis board to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The measures were revised every fortnight and inspections were carried out to ensure compliance with them. According to the records of the Federation authorities, the inspections had resulted in a total of 3.5 million marka (KM) in fines being levied. Despite constant appeals to the public and businesses, the number of offences suggested that compliance was generally poor.

11. **Ms. Pekez** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that vaccinations in Brčko District were free of charge. However, as at the end of September 2021, less than one fifth of the population had received the first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine and only 15 per cent had received the second.

12. **Mr. Kličković** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that health care in the Republika Srpska had been available for everyone, including those without health insurance, since the declaration of the state of emergency. Anyone could receive treatment, even if their employers failed to pay contributions. COVID-19 treatment centres had been set up in various locations. Hospitals across the region, including the University Clinical Centre in Banja Luka, where infection rates were highest, had entire units dedicated to the treatment of COVID-19 patients. In addition to the cost of treatment, the Republika Srpska had allocated a budget of KM 48.6 million for protective equipment.

13. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the Ministry of Civil Affairs had taken action in follow-up to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child concerning the coverage of preschool education. The governments of Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had launched a joint programme to increase the coverage of preschool education by 2022. In recent years, the proportion of children enrolled in preschool centres had increased to 20 per cent.

14. Around 35 per cent of children were currently living in poverty. Local authorities in the country's two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika

Srpska – and in Brčko District provided child allowances to help families on low incomes to meet their children's needs. Within the context of the ongoing fiscal reform, the State planned to harmonize child benefits across Bosnia and Herzegovina. To that end, steps were being taken to identify the real needs of children and families living in poverty. Republika Srpska and Brčko District had central funds for child protection activities; however, in the Federation, the amount of financial assistance provided through child benefits was determined on the basis of the average salary in each canton, which could vary considerably. Around 20 per cent of the financial aid disbursed in the Federation was drawn from cantonal budgets, with the remainder drawn from the federal budget.

15. With the support of international organizations, the State was currently implementing various projects to address child begging. In collaboration with civil society, the police and social work centres, the public authorities currently operated eight day-care centres that provided support to children in street situations, including services aimed at reintegrating them into the school system. The entities cooperated extensively in that regard. Municipal and cantonal authorities provided a guaranteed income to new mothers on maternity leave in the form of financial benefits, calculated as a percentage of the average salary in the mother's canton or municipality of residence.

16. According to a study conducted by the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees in early 2011, of the roughly 40,000 Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were around 4,600 families in need of support. Thanks to the continuous efforts of the authorities to combat the exclusion of Roma over the previous decade, 1,100 Roma families had been allocated housing. Moreover, through public employment programmes, hundreds of Roma had gained employment or become self-employed. Special reskilling courses would be organized in 2022. However, ensuring that Roma communities had access to social protection remained a challenge, since many Roma families were not registered in the social security system. In the past, many Roma children had lacked birth certificates; however, the authorities had taken steps in that regard, and currently the only Roma children without birth certificates in Bosnia and Herzegovina were from other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

17. Various programmes had been rolled out to provide unregistered Roma with access to health care, including reproductive health services for Roma women. Information campaigns on immunization and preventive health care specifically targeted at Roma had been conducted; however, Roma communities had shown little interest in them.

18. With the support of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, Roma mediators had been working on integrating Roma children into the education system. However, it was common for Roma to take their children out of school, as their communities frequently migrated around Europe. The Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees monitored and took action on complaints of discrimination against Roma submitted by individuals or Roma organizations. A framework plan on the educational needs of Roma and an action plan on Roma had been adopted.

19. **Ms. Saran** (Country Rapporteur) said that she would be grateful if the delegation could explain why the poverty line had been lowered from an income of KM 416 per month in 2011 to KM 389 per month in 2015 and clarify whether it had been changed since then. She would also welcome further information on the current poverty levels in Bosnia and Herzegovina and on any measures taken to reduce poverty. It would be useful to learn how the State party measured economic inequality and to receive updated information on the current level of such inequality across the country and on any steps taken to reduce it, including by means of social transfers and taxes.

20. She would like to hear about measures taken to curb the reported rise in air pollution in the country. She would also be grateful for further information on the measures taken to address regional disparities in access to health care, the chronic underequipment of medical facilities and the discriminatory effects of out-of-pocket payments borne by patients. More details would be appreciated of the COVID-19 immunization programme, including clarification of the criteria for priority vaccination and the exact level of vaccination coverage across the country. What steps had been taken to ensure that the public had access to accurate information on the disease, and were medical professionals provided with sufficient personal protective equipment? She also wished to know what measures had been taken to mitigate

the disproportionately harsh socioeconomic impact of the pandemic on disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

21. It would be useful to receive further information on the impact of the recent fiscal consolidation measures taken by the State party, particularly the Reform Agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina 2015–2018 and the socioeconomic reforms planned for the period 2019–2022. It would also be interesting to learn why no assessments had been conducted into the impact of fiscal austerity measures on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights by the population.

22. With regard to labour rights, she would be interested to learn how the notion of “minimum services” was defined in the two entities and in Brčko District and how the right to strike of workers required to perform minimum services was upheld. Lastly, she would welcome additional information on any steps taken to address the situation of workers who did not have access to social security benefits or health insurance because their employers had failed to register them with the competent authority or had neglected to pay the appropriate social security contributions.

23. **Mr. Hennebel** said that reports received by the Committee indicated that very few persons who had been subjected to sexual violence during the conflict of 1992–1995 had received reparation, that assistance was not provided systematically to the victims, and that children born of rape were not given institutional support and had to overcome numerous obstacles to the recognition of their status. He wished to know what steps the State party planned to take to address those issues and whether it would consider establishing an effective comprehensive reparations programme for the victims of sexual violence and children born of rape.

24. **Mr. Emuze** (Country Task Force) said that he would be interested to learn about the measures taken by the State party to ensure that asylum seekers and migrants who were not housed in State reception centres, as well as homeless persons, had access to health care and shelter, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

25. **Mr. Amarti** said that the question of refugees and migrants appeared to be of central importance in the State party. While he understood that the migrants who arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina formed part of mixed migration flows and that managing such flows in line with international standards was a major challenge for States, he wished to remind the State party of its obligations under articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Covenant and to draw attention to the Committee’s statement on the duties of States towards refugees and migrants under the Covenant (E/C.12/2017/1), particularly the paragraphs relating to the prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of nationality or legal status.

26. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the entity and cantonal governments were tasked with fiscal consolidation. The outbreak of COVID-19 had necessitated the adjustment of all budgets, and funds that could no longer be allocated to specific activities had been transferred, inter alia, to companies that had suffered on account of the lockdown. All budgets for 2020 had allocated funds to activities aimed at combating the COVID-19 pandemic, and the most recent statistics indicated that there had been a slight growth in budgetary revenue. Possible priority areas for the redistribution of public funds included education, health, social protection, pensions and support for vulnerable groups. Unfortunately, the increase in social benefits had failed to keep pace with the rise in prices.

27. When trade unions announced a strike, it was essential to guarantee the sustained provision of minimum services in the areas of, for example, education, health care and public services. Some strikes had persisted for some time owing to the social partners’ failure to complete the bargaining process and to agree on wage levels.

28. The minimum wage was calculated on the basis of the current average wage. Persons living below the poverty threshold comprised individuals who had no property and no source of income. They benefited from social support, such as access to food and clothing, and basic financial assistance. Families that included persons with disabilities, persons who were unable to work or persons who suffered from a serious disease had access to disability benefits and third-party care.

29. As the Federation, Republika Srpska and Brčko District had different fiscal systems, each government defined its own social minimum on the basis of the average wage.
30. Air pollution in urban areas had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. A key anti-pollution project involved the replacement of household heating systems that used coal and petroleum-based derivatives with environmentally acceptable systems. Another consisted of thermal insulation of public institutions and apartment blocks. The level of exhaust fumes was currently below the European average and relatively strict rules were imposed, but even stricter rules were necessary to achieve the required reduction in emissions.
31. **Mr. Kličković** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the public authorities of Republika Srpska had allocated KM 48 million between the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and the end of July 2021 for protective equipment and medication for health-care professionals. Furthermore, certified health insurance was not required to obtain access to health care during the pandemic.
32. Women on maternity leave were entitled to allowances equivalent to their average salary during the year prior to their maternity leave. All other social benefits were paid regularly, but stricter control procedures had been implemented during the pandemic by a team of experts established by the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Republika Srpska.
33. The right to strike of workers required to provide minimum services was not prohibited but, for example, the staff of a water supply company on strike for better pay or working conditions would be required to continue ensuring minimum water supply services. Institutions that provided public services were required to agree on minimum service procedures prior to any strike. It was illegal for an authority to deny trade union rights, including the right to strike.
34. With regard to the provision of compensation for victims of torture, including rape, initial legislative steps had now been taken in that direction.
35. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the staff of a number of companies that had closed down in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been unable to exercise their rights owing to non-payment of employer contributions. The government of the Federation had supported the companies by ensuring that all staff members could either retire with a pension or receive compensatory benefits for the missing years. All such cases had been registered and the government would continue to approve compensation funds. The companies' problems had frequently been the result of inadequate bankruptcy procedures, since liabilities arising from non-payment of contributions had been omitted.
36. Institutions throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina had displayed solidarity in reallocating resources during the pandemic to achieve greater equality of health-care services, although it had occasionally proved difficult to maintain the same level of equipment in remote medical centres. Patients had sometimes been compelled to pay for their own medication or other products, but they could subsequently file compensation claims, especially for essential products, with the institutions concerned.
37. The Federation, Republika Srpska and Brčko District each had their own system of support for victims of rape and legal framework for awarding reparations to victims of torture, including rape. The governments all provided financial compensation to victims through administrative procedures. Reparations had also been awarded in recent criminal proceedings in the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the rulings could not be enforced in some cases because the perpetrators lacked resources. Out-of-court settlements had also taken place.
38. **Mr. Rizvo** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that about 80,000 migrants had been officially registered during the past four years. That number did not include migrants who had not requested assistance. There were five temporary reception centres for migrants and a sixth would be opened shortly. They were managed, in collaboration with the authorities, by the International Organization for Migration, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations

Population Fund. They also conducted outreach activities aimed at the 500 to 1,000 migrants who resided elsewhere and encouraged them to move to the reception centres.

39. Migrants who contacted the authorities were automatically provided with accommodation and other assistance for two weeks, during which time they were encouraged to reflect on their asylum claim. Between 95 and 98 per cent of the migrants disappeared and left the country during that period. Those who remained submitted an asylum request, but about 95 per cent of them disappeared during the processing of the request.

40. Many migrants came from countries without any record of political or religious discrimination or torture and often had passed through at least five safe third countries, in violation of international refugee law. Investigations conducted with international partners had revealed many cases of transnational organized crime, involving criminal groups paid huge sums to smuggle people through various countries. The authorities did not engage in any form of discrimination against them, but, in collaboration with United Nations agencies, endeavoured to ensure that they received all necessary support and protection.

41. **Ms. Shin** said she would appreciate information concerning measures to compensate victims of the ethnic cleansing and mass rape of the 1990s, which had undoubtedly left deep scars.

42. **The Chair**, speaking as a member of the Committee, said he would be interested in hearing about any aspects of retroactivity involved in handling such actions.

43. **Ms. Đjuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the Law of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Principles of Social Protection, Protection of Civilian Victims of War and Families with Children enabled victims of wartime rape to file for compensation of about €350 per month. Similar rights were guaranteed in Republika Srpska and Brčko District. All victims could seek rehabilitation in centres providing mental health and psychological support. Employment, access to housing and enrolment in educational institutions was also facilitated for victims and their family members. Ministries and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported the rights of rape victims and helped them to surmount their sense of stigmatization. As victims were unwilling to speak publicly about the trauma resulting from rape, associations in which they could communicate in private had been established.

44. **Ms. Shin** drew attention to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security and the nine subsequent resolutions, which focused on a survivor-centred approach. The Security Council had also recommended the adoption of a national action plan to achieve the goals of the resolution.

45. **Ms. Đjuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the government of the Federation was drafting a law that recognized the need for an action plan to support children born of wartime rape.

46. **Mr. Caunhye** (Country Task Force) said that the Committee was deeply concerned about reports of persisting segregation in education in the State party and would welcome statistical data, disaggregated by ethnicity and region, on the number of monoethnic schools and schools that continued to operate under the two-schools-under-one-roof system, as well as the number of students attending each type of school. The delegation should also indicate which legislative and administrative measures had been taken to prevent and eliminate all forms of school segregation based on ethnic or linguistic criteria, disabilities or special educational needs. Additional information was needed on progress towards inclusive education, including on teacher training and budget allocations.

47. Reaffirming the crucial importance of common core curricula to the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance among ethnic groups, he said that it was unfortunate that the main school curricula in the State party had retained a strong ethnic element. It was also regrettable that history textbooks continued to retain significant ethnic bias, despite the adoption of guidelines on history textbooks aimed at promoting tolerance and mutual understanding. The Committee would appreciate more information on the current situation in respect of common core curricula, harmonized textbooks and relevant teacher training. It would also be interesting to learn more about measures taken to promote interaction among students from different ethnic backgrounds during and outside normal school hours.

48. It appeared that gaps in access to education between children from marginalized groups and others remained significant. He would be grateful for statistical data on school enrolment and attendance rates of asylum-seeking and refugee children living in reception centres, NGO-run shelters and informal settlements, and on school enrolment, attendance, completion rates and academic performance of Roma children. Additional information was also needed on measures taken to improve access to education for children living in rural areas and unregistered refugee and asylum-seeking children. More details on mechanisms for monitoring the quality of education and action taken to improve educational outcomes, in particular for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, would be appreciated. Could the delegation explain what had been done to guarantee access to inclusive education for children with disabilities aged 3 to 6 years, taking account of the specific challenges facing their parents or carers?

49. He would be interested to find out what the State party had done to mitigate the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, in particular with regard to children from low-income households, children living in remote areas and children with disabilities. Had they been provided with the facilities and equipment to access e-learning?

50. Turning to cultural rights, he said that it would be interesting to learn of measures adopted in recent years to implement the 2008 Cultural Policy Strategy, including steps taken to enable and encourage the various ethnic groups to preserve, promote and develop their culture, language, religion and traditions. He wished to know what the State party intended to do in respect of the seven cultural institutions whose legal status had not been resolved. Information was needed on measures taken to ensure the enjoyment of cultural rights by persons with disabilities, including any action to implement the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled. He enquired whether the strategy for the advancement of the rights and status of persons with disabilities in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the period 2016–2021 had yielded any improvements in access to educational, cultural and sports facilities for disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups. Could the delegation elaborate on measures taken to ensure that information and telecommunication technology were accessible and affordable for disadvantaged and marginalized segments of the population?

*The meeting was suspended at 5.15 p.m. and resumed at 5.35 p.m.*

51. **Mr. Kličković** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that the relevant entity- and canton-level authorities had issued detailed instructions for the introduction of remote and online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Preschool facilities had either operated at reduced capacity or – in areas where most businesses had suspended their activities during the lockdown – closed altogether, as children had been cared for at home. In-person instruction had resumed at the beginning of the 2021/22 academic year, but provisions were in place to return to technology-enabled forms of instruction should the situation deteriorate. Additional resources had been made available for the procurement of mobile technology to ensure that all children, including those from disadvantaged and marginalized backgrounds, could participate in remote learning.

52. **Ms. Vujadin** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, as of January 2019, all migrant children living in temporary reception centres in Una Sana Canton had been provided with access to education, which involved three to four hours of teaching per day delivered by one of four primary schools located at the Sedra, Borići and Bira centres. Following the closure of the Sedra and Bira centres, the children had been relocated to the Borići centre, where they continued to attend school. Teachers working with migrant children had been specially trained by the Save the Children organization. The activities were funded by the European Union and implemented in cooperation with international partners.

53. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that data had revealed that only 35 per cent of Roma children completed primary education, the remainder having either dropped out or having never been enrolled. A range of programmes had been designed to promote enrolment and attendance of Roma children to close that gap. Roma teaching assistants supported the education authorities in identifying unenrolled children and promoting their integration into education and, although progress was slow, enrolment rates among Roma



children had increased to 70 per cent. The local authorities, Roma organizations and Roma teaching assistants also engaged with parents to identify and remove barriers to enrolment, including economic barriers. Children from deprived backgrounds were provided with textbooks, transportation and – in some schools – meals free of charge. Roma teaching assistants worked at the community level, accompanying families, monitoring children's progress and providing educational support, where needed. Projects to increase the attractiveness of school attendance by promoting extracurricular activities were implemented in cooperation with the Roma Education Fund.

54. **Mr. Bošnjak** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that, in 2020, enrolment rates had stood at 87 per cent for primary schools and 76 per cent for secondary schools, with a drop-out rate of 3.8 per cent at the primary level. Secondary school drop-out levels had increased during the pandemic and currently stood at 5 per cent. In 2020, 97 per cent of children enrolled had completed primary education, as compared with 87 per cent of those enrolled in secondary education. Since children were not required to self-identify as belonging to a given ethnic group, there were no disaggregated data on enrolment and completion rates for Roma children. As a result, education statistics did not provide an accurate reflection of their situation. Nevertheless, as a result of scholarship and mentoring schemes and effective community work, the secondary school enrolment rate for Roma children had increased to 50 per cent, with 75 per cent of those graduating. Enrolment of Roma in higher education and employment levels among young Roma had also increased.

55. During the COVID-19 pandemic, particular efforts had been made to ensure continued access to education for children from disadvantaged or marginalized groups, children living in remote areas, migrant children and children with disabilities. One of the greatest, and in some cases unsurmountable, challenges had been to make online learning inclusive for children with severe disabilities. Studies had shown that children in Bosnia and Herzegovina lagged behind their peers in other countries when it came to key competences, including foreign languages, mathematics and digital and creative competence. Different projects had therefore been introduced to reform teacher training in primary and secondary education, with a focus on learning outcomes.

56. There was no segregation in education and any form of discrimination in education was strictly prohibited by law. Interaction between children of different ethnicities was promoted through extracurricular activities such as sports, competitions and other group activities. The Civil Service Agency had prepared common core curricula, along with implementation guidelines for teachers, and guidelines on inclusive education. The common core curricula comprised 70 per cent common content and 30 per cent school-specific content. The development of quality standards was under way.

57. No conclusion had been reached on exactly how many institutions would qualify as cultural institutions of significance to Bosnia and Herzegovina. It was a delicate issue, on which the Parliamentary Assembly would take a final decision. Cultural matters fell within the purview of lower levels of government, while the Ministry of Civil Affairs was responsible for State-level coordination. A decision regarding the legal status of the cultural institutions in question was keenly expected as a precondition for State support for their work.

58. **Ms. Saran**, expressing her gratitude to the State party delegation for having attended the dialogue in person despite the difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, said that she welcomed, on behalf of the Committee, the delegation's enthusiastic and sincere responses.

59. **Ms. Đuderija** (Bosnia and Herzegovina) said that her delegation was grateful for the opportunity to engage with the Committee to report on the progress made and the challenges faced. The Committee's recommendations provided valuable input in support of her country's efforts to fulfil its obligations under the Covenant.

*The meeting rose at 6 p.m.*