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**Consideration of reports: reports submitted by States parties
in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant**

Replies of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the list of issues in relation to its third periodic report* **

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* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.

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Reply to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the list of issues (E/C.12/BIH/Q/3)

1. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is a treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 16 December 1966, which entered into force on 3 January 1976, and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) ratified and acceded to the ICESCR on 1 September 1993. It obliges its parties to work for the approval of economic, social and cultural, including labour rights, the right to health, the right to education and the right to adequate standard of living.

2. The BiH High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council takes judicial statistics from the Case Management System (CMS). Cases are recorded in the CMS according to appropriate statutory grounds. The ICESCR is not envisaged as separate statutory grounds in the CMS, which is why it is not possible to provide data on cases involving violations of the ICESCR. In accordance with the structure of judiciary, police agencies and other bodies in BiH, the following institutions to deal with human rights training have been established: BiH Civil Service Agency, RS Civil Service Agency, FBiH Civil Service Agency and FBiH and RS Judicial and Prosecutorial Training Centres. In December 2016, the BiH Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees (BiH MHRR) adopted Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Programme for Human Rights Education in BiH in accordance with UN Human Rights Council Resolutions no. 15/11 and 24/15. In 2017, the BiH Council of Ministers (BiH CoM) adopted the Action Plan for Human Rights Education for Journalists and Media Professionals in BiH (2016/2019), which was created within the World Programme for Human Rights Education. Accordingly, in cooperation with the BiH MHRR, the BiH Civil Service Agency held a seminar for spokespersons and information officers of BiH institutions in September 2018. The BiH Civil Service Agency adopted the Action Plan for Human Rights Education (2016–2019).

Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

3. The BiH CoM established the Proposal of the Law on Amendments to the Law on the Ombudsman for Human Rights of BiH, proposing a decision to ensure independence in the financing of this institution and envisages that this institution should be responsible for the national preventive mechanism. The Draft was submitted for adoption to the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, but was returned to the Joint Committee on Human Rights to harmonize the position on the name and mandate of the national preventive mechanism. The Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH maintained its “A” accreditation status.

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

4. In BiH, poverty is measured by household consumption and not by household income, using the Household Budget Survey. In the last ten-year period, this Survey was conducted in 2011 and 2015, and is expected to be conducted in 2020. Poverty is defined by equivalent household consumption expenditures that are below the standard threshold, which is set annually at 60.0% of the median monthly equalized household expenditures. In its publications, the BiH Statistics Agency does not provide the ratio of the richest decile and the total income of the poorest 40% of the population (Appendix: Table 1: Poverty Measures in BiH 2011 and 2015).

5. According to the latest available data of the BiH CB concerning the 2018 Report on Operations of the Consolidated General Government of BiH, the share of tax public revenues (indirect, direct and other tax revenues) in total public revenues was around 53.4%. The share of tax public revenues in GDP in the same year was about 22.6% (Appendix: Table 2).

6. Tax rates on corporate profits and personal income tax rates in both entities, as well as in the BiH BD, are 10%. The VAT rate is 17% (Appendix: Table 3)

7. The percentage of the total revenue from income tax collected from the richest decile the population is not available (Appendices: Table 4 and Table 5).

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

8. Related to the BiH 2015–2018 Reform Agenda, Fiscal Consolidation aims to ensure a stable macroeconomic environment but, for stable, positive real growth in the medium and long term, it is necessary to implement a series of structural reforms in the areas of labour legislation, public administration reform and women employment policy for the purpose of economic empowerment of the family, reform of social benefits, reform of the health sector and the rule of law.

9. When drafting strategic documents and action plans in BiH, consultations are held with numerous actors of the society, starting from NGOs, international experts to respected members of the academic community.

Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

10. The Agency for the Prevention of Corruption and Coordination of the Fight against Corruption monitors the implementation of the 2015–2019 Anti-Corruption Strategy and the accompanying Action Plan. The Entities, BDBiH and the cantons implement their own anti-corruption strategies and action plans in accordance with the general principles set out in the national Anti-corruption Strategy, which include appropriate anti-corruption policies and better access to justice. The RS Anti-Corruption Strategy with the Action Plan was adopted for the period 2018–2022. In June 2019, the Action Plan of the RS Ministry of Internal Affairs for the implementation of the RS 2019–2022 Anti-Corruption Strategy was adopted. In 2019, the RS Ministry of Internal Affairs drafted: Instructions on how to report suspected corruption and other irregularities through the “Report Corruption-APK” application and Instructions on how to report corruption and ensure the protection of persons who report corruption in the RS Ministry of Interior.

11. The FBiH implements the 2016–2019 Anti-Corruption Strategy and the BiH BD implements the 2018–2019 Anti-Corruption Strategy. In order to improve access to justice, the BiH HJPC adopted the BiH HJPC 2018–2019 Action Plan on Fight against Corruption, the Code of Judicial Ethics and the Code of Prosecutorial Ethics. The BiH HJPC has taken steps to develop a new form for submitting personal financial statements by the judicial office holders and verify them.

Reply to paragraphs 7 and 8 of the list of issues

12. The Parliamentary Assembly of BiH (BiHPA) adopted amendments to the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination in line with European standards in terms of improving the definition and basis of discrimination, procedural procedures for protection against discrimination, a stronger role of the Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH as a central institution for protection against discrimination and more efficient cooperation with civil society organizations. The BiH is obliged to give its opinion on the legal acts and by-laws regarding their compliance with the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination.

13. The Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH draws up reports on incidents of discrimination that are being considered by both Houses of the BiH PA. Monitoring of implementation of the Law was entrusted to the BiH, which prepares annual reports on manifestations of discrimination with the proposal of legislative and other measures considered by the BiH CoM and the.

14. All institutions in BiH are required to include civil society organizations, based on the adopted regulations at all levels of government, during the process of adoption of laws and policies, and an electronic platform for consultation with civil society organizations and other interested subjects has already been established at some levels in BiH.

15. Articles 13 and 14 of the BiH Election Law provides that national minority members are entitled to representation in a municipal council or municipal assembly and city council or city assembly proportional to the percentage of their participation in population according to the last census in BiH (paragraph 1), that number of national minority members elected directly to the municipal council or municipal assembly and city council or city assembly are determined under the statute of particular municipality or city and that

members of all national minorities which make up to 3% of the total population of a municipality are guaranteed at least one seat (paragraph 2).

16. Article 42v, paragraph 2 of the RS Election Law provides that the number of members of national minorities who are directly elected to the municipal or city assembly is determined by the statute of the particular municipality or city in accordance with the BiH Election Law.

17. The BiH CEC issued the Decision on calling and holding the 2016 Local Elections, in which the number of guaranteed seats for members of national minorities was determined.

18. The enforcement of judgments (i.e. *Sejdić-Finci v. BiH*, *Pilav v. BiH* and *Zornić v. BiH* and *Baralija v. BiH*) by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) is still pending as it requires amendments to the BiH Constitution and the constitutions of both Entities, as well as amendments to the election laws in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination based on ethnicity and guarantee full exercise of active and passive suffrage.

19. The Office of the Agent of the BiH CoM before the ECtHR prepares an overview of the unenforced judgments of the ECtHR with proposals for specific legislative or other measures to meet this obligation.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

20. The Constitution of BiH provides that “immigration, refugees and asylum policy and regulation” is one of the ten exclusive responsibilities of state authorities (Article III, (1), (f) of the Constitution of BiH).

21. In accordance with the Constitution, Article 12 of the BiH Law on Ministries and Other Bodies of Administration defines the competence of the MHRR to care of the rights and issues of refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in BiH after determining their status.

22. BiH is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and the rights and obligations under Articles 3 to 34 of the Convention and the Protocol accorded to refugees and persons under subsidiary protection are contained in the valid legislation in BiH.

23. The Strategy in the field of migration and asylum and the Action Plan for the period 2016–2020, adopted by the BiHPA, define strategic goals and one of them is ensuring the rights to persons under international protection and the principle of integration which includes ensuring an environment that will contribute integration of their integration in BiH society.

24. In accordance with Article 78, paragraph (4) of the Law on Asylum, the MHRR is obliged to provide refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in BiH with access to the following rights: information on rights, accommodation, work, education, health care, social assistance and assistance when inclusion in BiH society. This Law provides that, after consultations with the BiH Ministry of Security (MoS) and the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs (MCA), the MHRR adopts delegated legislation on the manner of exercising the rights of refugees and foreigners under subsidiary protection in BiH.

25. In accordance with the aforementioned Article of the Law on Asylum, in 2017 the MHRR adopted the following pieces of delegated legislation that ensured access to the exercise of rights:

- Rulebook on the manner of exercising health insurance for persons granted international protection in BiH;
- Rulebook on accommodation, mode of operation, functioning and house rules in the “Salakovac” Refugee Reception Centre in Mostar;
- Rulebook on the manner of exercising the right to education of persons who have been granted international protection in BiH;
- Rulebook on the manner of exercising the right to social assistance to persons who have been granted international protection in BiH; and

- Rulebook on the manner of exercising the right to work of persons who have been granted international protection in BiH.

26. Access to these rights is realized in cooperation with the competent entity and cantonal ministries in BiH in accordance with the rulebooks. These rulebooks are directly applicable at lower levels of government, and funds for the enjoyment of rights under these rulebooks are appropriated in the Budget of the Institutions of BiH/BiH MHRR.

27. Article 76 of the Law on Asylum also provides for the right to accommodation in a centre for asylum seekers, primary health care, access to primary and secondary education, as rights in connection with which additional questions have been asked in the recommendations.

28. The Centre for Reception and Accommodation of Asylum Seekers, as a specialized institution intended for the reception and accommodation of persons who have expressed their intention to apply for asylum in BiH, operates within MoS. The centre is located in Delijaš, Trnovo Municipality. As an alternative solution for the accommodation of asylum seekers, the refugee centre in Salakovac, Mostar, which is managed by the BiH MHRR, is used based on the signed protocol between BiH MoS and the BiH MHRR BiH, which is in force since 15 May 2018.

29. Temporary reception centres established in Una-Sana Canton are not managed by this organizational unit of MoS. The decision on designating facilities for temporary reception centres for accommodation of migrants, which was issued by the BiH CoM at the 167th meeting held on 11 March 2019, has established the temporary reception centres for accommodation of migrants in the Una-Sana Canton (Sedra in Cazin, Miral in Velika Kladuša, Borići and Bira in Bihać), which have been given for temporary use to the BiH Service for Foreigners' Affairs according to the decision. Access provided for in Article 76 of the Law on Asylum is governed by the relevant legislation, which regulates the areas to which the particular right refers. Vučijak, the location to which migrants from Una-Sana Canton were transferred had not been designated as a temporary reception centre for accommodation of migrants by the BiH CoM. Vučijak, the location where migrants stayed, was closed in December 2019. The migrants were re-located to temporary reception centres in Sarajevo Canton.

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

30. The 2017–2020 Action Plan for Resolving the Problems of Roma in the Areas of Employment, Housing and Health is being implemented and there have been no recorded cases of discrimination against Roma. The BiH MHRR is in the process of drafting a new APR.

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

31. After the 2018 General Elections, the BiH Gender Equality Agency (BiH GEA/MHRR) sent a Recommendation for equal representation of both sexes in the CoM to the political parties that won seats in the Parliament of BiH, the rotating chairpersons of BiH PA HoR and the CoM Commission for Preparation of BiH Election. In the mentioned Recommendation, the BiH GEA recalled gender equality domestic and international standards and invited the mentioned entities to propose, i.e. to take into account equal representation of both sexes when deciding on members of the BiH CoM. Further, the BiH GEA submitted a recommendation to the rotating chairpersons of both houses of the PA BiH (House of Representatives and the House of Peoples) to take into account equal representation of both sexes when electing chairs of commissions of these houses. In addition, the BiH GEA/MHRR sent a recommendation to the Caucuses of Peoples in the BiH PA House of Peoples and the Caucuses of Representatives in the BiH PA HoR to take into account equal gender representation in proposing members of commissions of both houses, as well as joint commissions, in accordance with Article 20 of the Law on Gender Equality providing that equal representation exists when one of the sexes is represented at least in the percentage of 40%. Since 2018, "Women in Elections in BiH" Project, funded by the Government of Sweden and implemented by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in partnership with UN Women BiH, the BiH Central Election

Commission, the BiH Gender Equality Agency, the Gender Centre of the FBiH Government, the Gender Centre of the RS Government and the BiH PA, has been aiming to contribute to a better and high-quality life of citizens through greater participation of women in public life. This Project provided support through workshops and various training in strengthening women in public life and closely cooperated with the “Strengthening the Role of Local Communities in BiH” Project, which worked at the local community level to strengthen women’s inclusion in society. The Project produced a brochure entitled “Strategic Approach to Success of Female Candidates in Election Campaigns” which states that, in addition to not having certain political skills, women candidates face additional obstacles, such as gender prejudices of the electorate, which is particularly pronounced in local elections, where the electorate gives preference to male candidates when casting votes and, as a result, there is a loss of 16 to 30% of the seats, which would otherwise belong to women.

32. Women are still the underrepresented gender in decision-making positions in politics and, especially, in the legislature at all levels of government in BiH. The BiH PA HoR consists of representatives of 14 parties and coalitions. A total of 42 seats are held by 33 men and 9 women, which is 21.4% of seats held by women in the 8th BiH PA HoR. Regarding the representation of women in certain parties and coalitions, the situation varies a lot. On the one hand, there are three cases where the representation of women reached 50 %, while in one coalition the representation of women is 40%, as prescribed by the BiH Law on Gender Equality. On the other hand, it is symptomatic that the three parties that have the most seats in the BiH PA HoR have the lowest representation of women: 11%, 16% and 20%.

33. At the level of the FBiH Parliament HoR, out of a total of 98 representatives, only 28 are women (28.5%); at the level of the RS National Assembly, out of a total of 83 representatives, only 18 are women (21.6%), which significantly violates the legal obligation to have 40% of the underrepresented sex in political positions.

34. In cantonal assemblies, women make up an average of 31% of all representatives. Compared to the results of 2014 General Elections, when the average representation was 18%, this is a significant increase of 13%. Out of a total of 7497 certified candidates on candidate’s lists, 41.6% or 3119 were women and the election results showed that a total of 518 seats were won by 142 women (27.4%). A woman was never elected in the Presidency of BiH and at some point the RS President and the FBiH Vice President were women.

35. According to the data available to the RS Gender Centre, after the 2016 local elections in the RS, 184 political entities participated in 64 constituencies, in 6 cities and 58 municipalities, with 5,819 or 41.53% women and 8,192 or 58.46% men. The percentage of women leading candidate lists was 12.60%. A total of 209 candidates ran for mayors (58 municipalities and 6 cities), of which 200 were men and 9 were women, i.e. the percentage of women was 4.31%. Women were elected mayors in 5 municipalities in the RS, which made 8%. When it comes to the position of president of the municipal / city assembly, women were in this position in 7 or 10.93% municipalities. A total of 203 or 16.23% women and 1048 or 83.77% men were elected councillors.

36. According to the data available to the RS Gender Centre, 42.1% of women and 47.9% of men are delegates in the RS National Assembly, the RS president is a woman and 2 vice presidents are men. The chairman of the House of Peoples is a woman, 2 men and 1 woman are vice presidents. The Secretary General of the RS House of Peoples is a woman and out of the total number of delegates, 23 or 82.15% are men and 5 or 17.85% are women.

37. According to the latest available data, as of December 31, 2018, women and men are represented in the BiH judiciary system, as follows:

- 60% of all judges and prosecutors in the judiciary system are women;
- Of the total number of all heads of judicial institutions, 48% are women.

Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues

38. The Strategic Plan for Rural Development of BiH was adopted in 2018 and provides the basis for the implementation of rural development policy in BiH. The plan sets out programs, measures and other activities to achieve rural development goals and establishes

a monitoring and evaluation mechanism and approximate amounts of funds needed and spending procedures. The Strategic Plan is harmonized with the BiH GEL and recognizes that gender equality issues are intertwined with issues in the field of agricultural and rural policy and provides for measures to support gender equality.

39. Every year, BiH marks International Girls in ICT Day with the aim of promoting and supporting women to engage in this field because their representation has been extremely low so far.

Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues

40. According to the data of the Labour and Employment Agency, on 31 August 2019, in BiH, there were 406,848 persons on the records of employment Institutes and services in BiH. Compared to the previous month, the number of unemployed persons decreased by 361 or 0.06% persons. Of the total number of jobseekers, 233,146 or 57.31% were women. Unemployment increased in the FBiH by 965 persons (0.31%), while it decreased in the RS by 1,070 persons (1.20%) and in the BD BiH by 156 persons (2.06%) (Appendix: Table 11).

41. The largest number of registered unemployed persons are people with the third level of education/skilled workers – 31.45% and workers with secondary education – 28.17%. According to the data of the BiH Statistics Agency, in July 2019, the number of employed persons in BiH was 821,791, of which 351,714 were women. Compared to June 2019, the number of employed persons increased by 0.1%, and the number of employed women decreased by 0.2%. The registered unemployment rate for July 2019 was 33.1% and, compared to June 2019, it remained unchanged.

42. In December, a total of 16,589 persons were struck off from the records of employment services. Of this number, 9,651 people were employed. At the same time, employment was terminated for 10,493 people, while employers reported the need to hire 5,235 new workers in this period.

43. In 2019, the Public Fund for Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons continued with regular activities in accordance with the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation, Training and Employment of Disabled Persons, which primarily include:

- Allocation of financial incentives to disabled persons and employers through Public Calls for components of employment and self-employment, as well as the component of economic support; through these components, in 2019, the Fund supported 188 disabled persons with a total of BAM 571,000.00;
- Refund of contributions for employed disabled persons, in accordance with the Law; for this purpose, the Fund allocated a total of BAM 4,348,612.84 in 2019, for a total of approximately 1250 disabled people employed.

44. In accordance with the adopted RS 2016–2020 Employment Strategy and the 2019 Employment Action Plan, the Employment Service has defined active policy measures as key activities whose main goal is to contribute to raising the level of activity in the labour market, stimulating employment and increasing overall employment. Certain measures and activities are being implemented with the aim of faster inclusion of young people in the labour market. These activities are mostly implemented through the Centres for Information, Counselling and Training (CISO Centres) and Job Search Clubs that offer young people counselling, information and career guidance services, all with the aim of a painless transition in the labour market and faster employment, as well as providing professional assistance in raising the competencies of active job searching.

45. The Employment Institute has implemented several projects for co-funding the employment of young people without work experience, i.e. projects for gaining work experience in the profession. The main goal of these projects is to enable young people to gain work experience in the profession, which makes them more competitive in the labour market. Acquiring work experience directly increases the possibility of faster inclusion in the workforce as, mostly, the work experience is a requirement for getting a job and in this way a faster process of labour and social integration of young people is enabled. The 2019 Employment Action Plan envisages inclusion of all job seekers in the counselling process, which implies designing individual employment plans as well as profiling, i.e. ascertaining the level of employability.

46. The individual employment plan is the basic instrument in working with the unemployed and the basis for the inclusion of persons in active employment policy measures. The aim is to define occupations in which mediation will be employed, activities that the person will take and measures in which he/she will be involved in order to find employment or increase employability.

47. Employment programs intended for young people under the 2019 Employment Action Plan include:

“Program to Support Employment of Young People with a University Degree as Trainees in 2019”.

48. Changes were made to the Program in the number of persons and the amount of funds, so the total value of the Program is BAM 4,974,626.40 for the employment of 770 persons, as follows:

- Persons with higher education without work experience – children of fallen soldiers: 120 persons and the amount of BAM 1,074,626.40, of which the amount of BAM 683,830.59 was spent for employment of 79 persons as of 31 December 2019;
- Persons with higher education without work experience: 650 persons and the amount of BAM 3,900,000, of which the amount of BAM 3,363,564.10 was spent for employment of 572 persons as of 31 December 2019.

49. The implementation of the 2018 Program continued and the 2019 “*START-UP Srpska*” prepared with financial support by the Government of the Republic of Serbia was a measure that paid additional attention to young people through development of entrepreneurship and job creation and had an impact on reducing unemployment.

50. Following the changes, the total value of the 2019 Program is BAM 4,452,683.02.

51. The total funds for the implementation of the “*START-UP Srpska*” Program in 2018 and 2019 amounted to BAM 8,052,683.02, namely BAM 3,600,000 in 2018 and BAM 4,452,683.02 in 2019. As of 31 December 2019, 229 unemployed persons started their own business through the Program: 114 persons applying to the 2018 public call and 115 persons applying to the 2019 public call.

52. As of 31 December 2019, the spent funds amounted to BAM 7,384,196.27: (in 2018) BAM 3,514,222.27 and (in 2019) BAM 3,869,974.00.

53. As of 31 December 2019, there were a total of 87,037 unemployed persons (active job seekers) in the records of the RS Employment Institute, which was 8,968 or 9.3% persons less compared to the same period in 2018 when 96,005 unemployed persons were registered.

54. In 2019, a total of 44,069 people from the unemployment register were employed, which was 750 or 1.7% more than in 2018, when 43,319 people were employed. In 2019, in the total number of registered unemployed persons, persons with the third level of education had the largest share, 32.01%. This was followed by persons with secondary education, with a share of 31.68%, unqualified persons with a share of 19.97%, while the participation of persons with the seventh level of education was 12.05%.

55. The trend of a slight increase in the number of women in the total number of unemployed persons from previous years continued in 2019. Their share ranged from 48.81% in 2016 to 52.54% in 2019. The analysis of employment on a monthly basis shows that the largest number of employed persons was in September, April and October, while the smallest number of persons was employed in January and December (Appendix 6 and Appendix 7).

56. The implementation of active employment policy programs and measures is one of the regular activities of the Employment Institute of BiH BD and the FBiH Employment Institute, which aims to reduce the unemployment rate by supporting employers’ programs for employment of persons from the register. In the previous period, the institutes implemented the active measures envisaged by the program of activity, as well as the measures of the active employment policy of the BiH BD Government, which were funded from the budget of BiH BD.

57. Employment of persons of all target groups from the active records of the Institute is a program task aimed at employment / self-employment of unemployed persons who find an employer, as well as support to employers who hire persons with an emphasis on long-term employment. This program task had good support from employers, which was seen in their applying in large numbers. The Institute incurred a financial obligation in the total amount of BAM 341,730 owed to 46 employers, based on the employment of 58 people in 2018. The BiH BD Employment Institute found job for 185 people through active employment measures, as shown in a table (Appendix 8).

58. The FBiH Employment Institute and the BiH BD Employment Institute gave presentations for students in final grades of primary and secondary schools to inform them on occupations. Students were familiarized with the current situation in BiH labour market with a special emphasis on unemployment and surplus and deficit occupations, which had a preventive effect, i.e. helped them to make adequate decisions on the choice of educational programs and employment. The number of unemployed persons in the BiH BD was by 4076 persons less as of 31 December 2019 (Appendix: Tables 9 and 10).

Reply to paragraph 15 of the list of issues

59. The minimum wage in the RS was initially governed by the General Collective Agreement and it was jointly determined by parties to the general collective agreement and was published in the Official Gazette and varied:

- In 2006, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 27/06) BAM 205.00;
- In 2008, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 85/07) BAM 250.00;
- In 2009, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 127/08) BAM 320.00;
- In 2010, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 40/10) BAM 370.00.

60. Since 2016, the minimum wage has been regulated by the Labour Law, which provides that the decision on the minimum wage is made by the Government of the Republika Srpska at the proposal of the Economic and Social Council. Based on that, the growth of the minimum wage is visible in the following amounts:

- In 2017, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 02/17) BAM 395.00;
- In 2018, Decision on the minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 02/18) BAM 410.00;
- On 01/08/2018 Decision on modification of the decision on minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 69/18) BAM 440.00;
- In 2020, minimum wage (Official Gazette of RS, 03/20) BAM 520.00.

61. According to the Labour Law of BiH BD, no minimum wage was set in BiH BD until 1 January 2020. Article 93, paragraph (1) of the new Labour Law of BiH BD, which was adopted on 24 December 2019 and entered into force on 1 January 2020, provides that the minimum wage, conditions and manner of its adjustment are determined in delegated legislation and may not be lower than the minimum wage on which compulsory insurance contributions are paid in the Entities of BiH. There are no cases where pays are below the minimum wage.

Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

62. Article 120 of the Labour Law provides that a worker is entitled to a salary in accordance with delegated legislation and the employment contract. Workers are guaranteed equal pay for equal work or equal pay for work of equal value that they earn with the employer. Work of equal value is work for which the same level of professional

work is required, i.e. education, knowledge and skills, in which the same contribution has been given with equal level of responsibility. A decision of the employer or an agreement with an employee that do not comply with this article is null and void. There is no state of limitations on the right to request a declaration of invalidity. The worker is entitled to compensation for the damage he has suffered as a result of the application of a void employment contract. The employer may not pay the employee a lower salary than the one determined in accordance with delegated legislation and the employment contract.

63. The Labour Law provides that an employer will be fined in the amount of BAM 2,000 to 12,000 for a misdemeanour of denying or reducing a salary or salary compensation due to him by law, collective agreement, and rulebook on labour and employment contract or does not pay the salary within the prescribed deadlines. The responsible person at the employer will also be fined in the amount of BAM 200–1,200.

64. The FBiH Labour Law and the BiHBD Labour Law guarantee workers equal pay for equal work or equal pay for work of equal value that they earn with the same employer. Work of equal value is work for which the same level of professional work is required, i.e. education, knowledge and skills, in which the same performance has been achieved with equal level of responsibility. An employer's decision or an agreement with an employee that does not comply with this article is null and void.

Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

65. Occupational safety in the RS is regulated by the Labour Law and the Law on Occupational Safety and Health, which applies to all employees and all employers. The supervision in the field of occupational safety is performed by the RS Administration for Inspection Affairs.

66. According to the data available to the Labour Inspectorate of BiH BD in the period 2014–2019, there were a total of 696 injuries at work. In most cases, injuries at work occurred due to a lack of general control over work process. Measures taken by Labour Inspectors in order to reduce the risk of injury to workers at work are inspecting of work equipment, provision and use of personal protective equipment, training of workers for safe and healthy work and other measures and actions prescribed by the Law on Occupational Safety and Health. The Law provides for an obligation of employers to provide preventive measures for safety and protection of workers' health when organizing work and work process and to identify risks and dangers at the workstation and workplace. The employer is obliged to train any worker in safe and healthy work, to acquaint him with all types of risks at the job in which he is placed and to provide him with appropriate means and equipment for personal safety at work.

67. In the period 2014–2020, the Labour Inspectorate performed a total of 5,377 inspection visits, of which violations of labour legislation were found in 2,618 cases. The violations mainly related to hiring workers without a previously concluded employment contract or registering in the pension fund and health insurance fund and there were also violations of other employment rights such as denial of workers' vacation rights, salary rights and salary compensation, non-compliance with the provisions of the law regarding overtime work, rights in case of termination of employment.

Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

68. The Labour Law of the Entity and the BiH BD prescribes that, if an employee considers that his employer has violated a right from his employment, the employee may demand from the employer the exercise of that right. Submitting a request to the employer is not an obstacle for the employee to seek protection of the violated right before the competent court. The employee may also address the inspector for the purpose of conducting an inspection. It also prescribes that, if he considers that his employer has violated a labour right of his, the employee may demand from the employer to exercise that right. The employee may file a motion for amicable settlement of the labour dispute or a lawsuit in the competent court. Irrespective of the procedure for protection of rights initiated by the employee with the employer or other competent authorities, the employee may turn to the labour inspector for protection of rights.

69. In the period 2014–2020, a total of 579 reports were submitted to the Labour Inspectorate of BiH BD by employees, in which they state that their employer violated some of their labour rights. The largest number of cases refers to non-compliance with the law in the event of termination of employment, whether the employer did not dismiss an employee in accordance with the law or did not respect some other rights in the event of termination of employment.

Reply to paragraphs 18 and 19 of the list of issues

70. In the Entities and the BiH BD, the Labour Law provides that a trade union is an independent, democratic and autonomous organization of workers which they voluntarily join to represent, act for, promote and protect their professional, labour, economic, social, cultural and other individual and collective rights and interests. The Law provides that workers have the right to organize and join a union of their own free choice, in accordance with the union's statute and rules, and that a union is established without any prior consent of any authority. Further, workers are free to decide on their withdrawal from the union. The Law on Civil Servants provides that a civil servant has the legal right to establish or join a trade union or professional association and the right to strike in accordance with the law. According to the Law on Civil Servants, a fine in the amount of BAM 2,000 to 12,000 will be imposed on the employer for a misdemeanour if it prevents or hinders the organization of a trade union.

Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues

71. Funds for the employment of persons with disabilities are continuously provided through Entity funds, and new strategies for improving the position of persons with disabilities have been adopted on the basis of the BiH Disability Policy.

72. Social security of persons with disabilities in the RS is characterized by established social insurance in the sector of pension and disability insurance and health insurance in case of illness, injury at work and occupational disease, termination of employment, old age, reduction and loss of ability to work and death. The rights of disabled veterans and families of fallen soldiers of the RS Army are defined in the Law on the Rights of Veterans, Disabled Veterans and Families of Fallen Soldiers of the Defensive-Liberation War of the Republika Srpska. The RS Government provides disability allowance through the budget, taking into account the cause and degree of disability and these are tangible benefits that are paid on the basis of the losses suffered during recognized participation in the Defensive-Liberation War. The current pension system legally establishes security in the event of permanent loss of working ability (disability pension) and the concept of professional rehabilitation, additional training and retraining for those insured persons who have remaining abilities. In the health insurance system, based on economic policy measures, employers have taken responsibility for ensuring safety in the event of illness for more than thirty days. This system has developed other instruments that advance social security through the provision of medical rehabilitation, orthopaedic devices, medical supplies etc. Social insurance in the RS is characterized by limited capacity and linking the level of social security with the financial capabilities of the system. Social protection in the RS is defined by the Law on Social Protection, the Family Law and the Law on Child Protection. Persons with disabilities (in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) include persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal footing with other members. As the social security of persons with disabilities is divided among different sectors, it is differently regulated and defined. Therefore, it is necessary to define social security criteria that will be an agreed RS policy on this matter. They should be binding on all sectors and their actors and guarantee equal levels of service quality to all persons with disabilities, regardless of the sector in which they enjoy the right to security. The criteria should enable the enjoyment of the right to social security by all persons with disabilities in the RS in a public, transparent and professional manner and to respect the condition, opportunities and utilization of all resources of persons with disabilities and their social and work environment. Social services aim to improve living standard of population, especially vulnerable individuals and groups. The needs of people with disabilities are complex and very often require a

multisectoral and multidisciplinary approach. The services must be provided by qualified and competent staff trained to work with these persons and working conditions that allow access to persons with disabilities and respect for the diversity of their needs. In the field of social protection, security and support, the following goals have been set: to ensure minimum social security for persons with disabilities according to equal criteria, regardless of the causes of disability; to improve child protection in accordance with the needs of children with disabilities; to deinstitutionalize placement of persons with disabilities; to improve the conditions and quality of accommodation of persons with disabilities in social care institutions; to develop various social services that meet the needs of persons with disabilities and to provide protection for persons with disabilities in emergency situations caused by natural disasters.

Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

73. In October 2019, the BiH GEA/MHRR drafted and published a recommendation to employers and competent bodies regarding gender equality in labour and employment, which draws attention of employers in the private and public sector, as well as the competent administrative bodies and the BiH public, that putting women workers in a disadvantaged position based on their gender and gender specific characteristics, such as pregnancy and motherhood, is a type of direct discrimination based on gender, which is legally prohibited and punishable. The recommendation calls on competent authorities, with a special focus on inspection services, law enforcement agencies and judiciary to step up efforts to protect the rights arising from employment for women, mothers and pregnant women, as well as to train staff to work on cases of gender discrimination. The Ministry of Finance and Treasury of BiH provided updates on the number of men who used parental leave in BiH institutions. The data showed that the percentage of fathers who use parental leave increased to 11% in 2018, compared to 2014, when it was less than 1%.

Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

74. The Entity Law on Social Protection in BiH provides for the following entitlements: basic permanent allowance, attendance allowance, support of the equalization of opportunities of children and youth with disabilities, placement in a social care institution, placement in a foster family, home care aides, day care, one-time cash assistance, counselling. These entitlements ensure assistance to persons who are in need due to various circumstances (incapacity for work and insufficient income for support, old age, disability, inadequate family circumstances etc.). Some categories of persons with disabilities, especially persons with the most severe form of disability, cannot meet basic needs. Namely, these are persons with disabilities who are not placed in a social care institution or other institution at the expense of budgetary funds or a foster family and it is necessary to provide them with personal disability benefits as financial assistance, which together with other social and child protection entitlements would improve their position.

75. The RS 2017–2026 Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities, as one of the goals in the field of social protection, envisages ensuring minimum social security for persons with disabilities according to equal criteria, regardless of the causes of disability. One of the activities to achieve this goal is to improve the rights of persons with disabilities through the introduction of disability benefits, which is also a step in reducing placement of persons with disabilities in institutions and support for the families of persons with disabilities. The exercise of the entitlement to personal disability allowance in 2018 was regulated by the following decision of the RS Government: the Decision on Approving the Placement of Funds for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities by Paying Personal Disability Allowance and in January 2019 a new decision was issued to regulating exercise of the entitlement to personal disability allowance. Since the determination of the entitlement to personal disability allowance is a matter that has to be regulated by law, the Law on Social Protection has been amended.

76. The RS Law on Child Protection in the RS prescribes the following entitlements: financial assistance for baby supplies, maternity allowance, child allowance and increased allowance for children with disabilities, refund of paid salary compensation during maternity leave, refund of paid salary compensation during work with half-time for

increased care of a child with developmental disabilities, meeting the developmental needs of children, pronatal policy allowance for third-born and fourth-born children. The RS 2018–2020 Program of Economic Reforms and the Memorandum concluded between the Union of Employers’ Associations and the RS Government stipulates the obligation of the RS Government to fully refund the costs of gross salary to employers – beneficiaries of refunding of salary compensation under current law. According to the RS Law on Child Protection, in 2019 employers- beneficiaries of refunding of salary compensation under this law received the refunds in the amount of 80% of gross salary, after payment of salary compensation. The Draft Law on Amendments to the RS Law on Child Protection provides for new relieving of employers’ obligations and creates better conditions for their operation and business environment. The proposed provisions of this Law provides that in 2020, employers - beneficiaries of refunding of salary compensation under valid law will get refund of the salary compensation in the amount of 100% of the gross salary, after payment of salary compensation to the employee. This legal solution will reduce the costs of maternity leave for all employers. In addition to the stated reason for the passage of amendments to the RS Law on Child Protection, there is also the fact that certain categories of unemployed persons, parents -caregivers or caregivers who care for children with disabilities or persons with disabilities are not able to get a job and in this way provide themselves and their families with means to meet their basic needs. The 2017–2026 RS Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities introduced a new entitlement in the field of child protection “allowance for a parent -caregiver or a caregiver”. Prescribing this entitlement in this Law will indirectly improve the minimum social security of children with disabilities. The novelty in the field of child protection is that this allowance will be paid to a parent -caregiver or a caregiver who care for children with disabilities 24 hours a day. This allowance paid to a parent -caregiver or a caregiver will improve the position of their families, the support for the biological family would be improved and the introduction of the entitlement for children with disabilities works for the reduction of placement of children with disabilities in social care institutions. This would improve the financial situation of children with disabilities and the children would stay in their families. The development of foster care in the RS is based on experts’ capacity building in this field, improvement of competencies and training to assess the general suitability of foster families for high quality foster care and tasks of foster parents in meeting specific needs of beneficiaries. The best interest of the child, the need for new knowledge, the creation of a support network, education, promotion of foster care and motivation are the basic characteristics of the process of foster care development in the RS, which will be essential in the future. The ethical and professional task of all public institutions and individuals working in the field of protection of children without parental care is to provide adequate protection to children growing up in risky circumstances and, in that sense, to find the right measure between the right of every child to grow up in their own family and an obligation of the society to protect the best interests of the child. Designing and developing an adequate model and system of social care for children, especially children without parental care, is a challenge for the community, experts and professionals dealing with these issues, so that working with children without parental care, despite the current level of development of supporting sciences and activities, very often contains numerous questions and concerns. The RS National Assembly adopted a proposal for the 2015–2020 Strategy for Improving Social Protection of Children without Parental Care, according to which the area of foster care implies providing financial, institutional and personnel preconditions for placement in families based on raising the quality of existing and establishing new models of family care services for children without parental care.

77. According to the RS Labour Law, during pregnancy, childbirth and child care, a woman has the right to maternity leave for a period of one year continuously, and for twins and every third and subsequent child, for a period of 18 months continuously. This period represents the maximum length of maternity leave. The legislator provides for the possibility for the child’s parents to agree that maternity leave, after 60 days from the day of the child’s birth, will continue to be used by the child’s employed father instead of the mother. What should be emphasized is that the father of the child/children is exclusively a subsidiary beneficiary of the right to maternity leave. Therefore, he exercised the right, instead of the mother (his wife), under the same conditions that apply to the use of maternity leave and is entitled only to the remaining part of the unused maternity leave of the woman. This means that the child’s father can use the maximum remaining nine or 15

months of leave (28 + 60 days - the woman had to use beforehand). The father of the child/children who is not employed cannot be a beneficiary of the right to maternity leave. During the use of maternity leave, a woman is entitled to a salary compensation equal to the average salary she earned during the last 12 months before the maternity leave. It follows from the above provision that when determining the salary compensation for maternity leave, the salaries earned by the woman in the last 12 months are taken. The compensation is adjusted monthly with the growth of average salary in the RS, which practically means that the percentage increase in average salary in the RS according to the RS Statistics Institute will result in the same percentage correction (increase) in salary compensation. In the event that a woman has not earned a salary for all of the last 12 months, the salary compensation is equal to the salary she would have earned if she had been at work. Also an adoptive parent or the person to whom the competent guardianship authority has entrusted the child for care has the right to salary compensation during maternity leave. Salary compensation during maternity leave is paid at the expense of the RS Public Fund for Child Protection. The calculation and payment of salary compensation is done by the employer at the same time as the calculation and payment of salary of other workers. After paying the salary, he submits a request for a salary refund to the RS Public Fund for Child Protection.

Reply to paragraphs 10, 23 and 24 of the list of issues

78. In BiH, there are still difficulties in the reintegration process in BiH in the areas of health and social protection, employment and education of displaced persons and returnees. In order to overcome obstacles in exercising the rights of displaced persons and returnees, the BiH MHRR held several meetings with members of the Committees for Return of the FBiH Parliament and the RS National Assembly and relevant ministries, as well as joint human rights conferences with the BiH PA Joint Commission on Human Rights. The measures within the implementation of the 2015–2018 Action Plan of the Reform Agenda in the field of social protection should contribute to the reduction of the number of poor people, a sustainable pension system and the improvement of the social and child protection system. In this way, social protection is regulated in terms of eliminating inequalities in the level of coverage and assistance provided to system beneficiaries. The establishment of the Unified Register of Beneficiaries of Non-Contributory Benefits is a significant step. Further, one of the reform measures is paying contributions for missing pensionable years of service, which is carried out through the Law on Taking over the Funding of Unpaid Contributions in the Pension and Disability Insurance Fund for Employees in Companies with Majority of Capital Stock Owned by the State. In that way, it will be possible to facilitate retirement and solve the disadvantaged situation of a large number of workers who have lost their jobs and do not have any income or health insurance.

79. In order to provide housing for the most vulnerable displaced persons and refugees from the region, significant projects funded by donors and loans are underway: the State Housing Project (SHP) in connection with the Regional Housing Program, the “Closing of Collective Centres and Alternative Accommodation by Providing Public Housing Solutions Project – CEB 2” Project, Housing Reconstruction Project – OPEC, Reconstruction Project for Housing Units of Refugees funded by the Saudi Development Fund – SFD, Government Assistance Program to Support the Return of Croats from the Republic of Croatia to BiH, aimed at rebuilding and reconstruction of housing units and other measures to support the implementation of Annex VII to the GFAP.

80. According to the 2009–2019 Revised Strategy for the Implementation of Annex VII to the GFAP, 14,370 housing units were renovated. By the end of the implementation of these projects, about 4,000 more housing units will be renovated. In the previous implementation of Annex VII to the GFAP, fulfilling strategic commitments, BiH was mainly focused on resolving the issue of return of refugees and displaced persons and reconstruction of housing. Recently, more funds have been provided from the budget funds of BiH institutions and Entities for the sustainability of return through the reconstruction and construction of utility and social infrastructure and electrification.

81. The RS Strategy of Social Housing Development is being developed within the “Closing of Collective Centres and Alternative Accommodation by Providing Public Housing Solutions Project” (CEB 2).

82. In the territory of the RS, the total value of the Project is € 29,178,194.00, of which € 18,169,413.00 are loan funds and € 11,008,781.00 are contributions from local communities through land, buildings, payment of permits, approvals and other costs related to construction and infrastructure. In the RS, the Project is implemented in 15 local communities through 18 projects:

- 3 projects involve the rehabilitation and upgrading of specialized institutions – social and geriatric institutions in the cities/municipalities of Derventa, Doboje and Trebinje and 180 accommodation units will be provided;
- 15 projects involve the construction of housing units (cities/municipalities of Foča, Gradiška, Kozarska Dubica, Prijedor, Doboje, Modriča, Bijeljina, Bratunac, Zvornik, East Novo Sarajevo, Sokolac, Rudo, Višegrad and Trebinje) and 514 apartments will be provided. The total number of families that will be provided with housing in the RS is 694.

Reply to paragraph 25 of the list of issues

83. BiH has significant water resources and it is certain that water can be one of the important development resources and that it has a significant effect in the fight against poverty. Although access to water through water supply systems in BiH is satisfactory, the poor are in a more difficult position in this regard as well. Most of the 20 % of poor households, which includes even the poor in urban areas, are not connected to the public water supply system. The main reasons for difficulties in the functioning of water companies are high losses in the system (up to 80%), low collection (below 50 %) and low tariffs, as well as their organizational fragmentation at the municipal level, resulting in poor financial indicators. There is no systematic monitoring of water quality and implementation of standards, except in some larger municipal water supply companies.

Reply to paragraph 26 of the list of issues

84. In the reporting period, training continued on the basis of the Family Planning Training of Trainers Manual, developed by UNFPA and the Public Health Partnership, in cooperation with the relevant ministries of health. Four modules have been created to include contraception, legislation, counselling and adult education techniques and are intended for family physicians and nurses. Through the Training of Trainers, 20 future trainers were trained to train family physicians in family planning. In addition, a brochure for patients on contraception was developed (in collaboration with UNFPA). The physicians who underwent the training are obliged to provide promotional and educational material to patients, after consulting with patients. Laws and delegated legislation aimed at improving health care and health insurance for persons with disabilities, which enables that health care is provided on equal footing in the entire territory of the RS, were adopted in the field of health care. The greatest attention is paid to the Rulebook on Access to Medical Devices, which regulates the area of procurement of aids and equipment necessary for movement of persons with disabilities. Networks of counselling services that would provide specific counselling services for parents with children with disabilities and for all other beneficiaries needing counselling and support related to disability were partially established in community-based rehabilitation centres (CBRCs) and community-based mental health centres (CBMHCs). The RS Strategy for Improving the Social Position of Persons with Disabilities (2017–2026) in the field of health care and insurance sets the following goals: to ensure equal access to entitlements to and services of health care for persons with disabilities; to improve the conditions and quality of accommodation of persons with disabilities in health care institutions; to promote all forms of active participation in the rehabilitation and recovery of persons with disabilities and to design, implement and monitor health prevention programs in the field of disability. Objective: Ensure equal access to health care rights and services for persons with disabilities is planned through the following activities: providing a minimum package of health care for persons with disabilities, providing professional and other conditions for early diagnostic procedures and early interventions for children with disabilities, providing orthopaedic aids and resources necessary for movement of persons with disabilities and providing more diverse opportunities for procurement of orthopaedic aids and medical devices and their

maintenance and servicing, as well as providing dental care for persons with disabilities and establishing development counselling centres within which specific services that would provide counselling for parents who have children with disabilities and for other users who need advice and support related to disability, providing conditions for children with the most severe forms of disability so as to be allowed to be accompanied by their parents / guardians during hospitalisation, organizing continuous training of family medicine teams and other specialists in the field of healthcare of women with disabilities, reproductive and sexual health, family planning and other specific areas, ensuring equal access to healthcare services for women with disabilities. Objective: Improve conditions and quality of accommodation of persons with disabilities in health care institutions is planned through the following activity: providing accommodation in hospitals for persons with disabilities according to their specific needs. Objective: Promote all forms of active participation in the rehabilitation and recovery of persons with disabilities is planned through the following activity: improving the program in support of rehabilitation and the rehabilitation program of persons with disabilities. The RS 2016–2020 Program for Early Growth and Development of Children defines program activities of the RS Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the RS Ministry of Education and Culture and the RS Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports to achieve the goals set by the Program. The activities of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teams will be aimed at strengthening the family through economic and social support by the community and the development of activities that encourage responsible and healthy parenting, strengthening the integrated approach to the healthcare and social protection sector, upbringing and education by the implementation of integrative programs of early growth and development, training of professionals and parents, providing accessible and high-quality services to future parents, during pregnancy and childbirth, new-borns, and stimulating the proper growth and development of children, with a special emphasis on children under three, improving early detection and intervention, increasing the coverage and availability of preschool education and education to all children with an individual approach and continuous monitoring of growth and development, with an emphasis on the importance of a healthy diet, the importance of immunization, healthy habits and a safe environment in which children live.

85. In order to improve physical accessibility in institutions where health care is provided to wheelchair users, a new Rulebook on Conditions for Starting a Health Institution, which clearly and precisely defines the minimum conditions for starting a health institution, was adopted under the Law on Health Care.

86. The RS Law on Health Protection provides that continuous training is a special type of professional development of health workers, which is organized in order to acquire knowledge and skills in order to follow and apply modern scientific achievements. The Law defines that the Minister will prescribe the types, program and duration of continuous training in a rulebook, which has been done in the Rulebook on Conducting Continuous Training in the RS, after which a system has been established to achieve continuity in training of family medicine teams and specialists in women's healthcare, reproductive and sexual health, family planning and other specific areas. The RS Strategy for the Promotion of Sexual and Reproductive Health (2019–2029), in which special attention was given to the improvement of sexual and reproductive health of persons with disabilities, was adopted.

Reply to paragraphs 10, 27 and 28 of the list of issues

87. The competent educational authorities have a different attitude regarding education in the mother tongue. However, the educational authorities have undertaken significant activities related to the harmonization of the common core curricula in schools based on learning outcomes. By constantly improving curricula and by their implementation the educational authorities are trying to eliminate any type of discrimination and segregation in schools. At the same time, quality of education is significantly improved and a system of inclusive education for children with disabilities is being introduced. The number of "two schools under one roof" in the Federation of BiH has been reduced by half.

88. In the RS, there is no discrimination in access to education at any level. There are no segregated schools in the RS, the so-called "two schools under one roof". Mon ethnic schools prevail only in communities where such a composition of the population prevails.

Curricula in primary schools are based on learning outcomes, while in secondary schools they involve the application of modular methodology based on learning outcomes.

89. The RS has no issue of children's dropping out of school. The dropout rate in primary school is low – 0.04% to 0.05%, which is in line with European recommendations, below 10%. Dropping out mainly involves Roma students, who have turned 15 and whose legal obligation to attend classes has ended. The percentage of dropouts from secondary school ranges from 1% to 2% in relation to the total number of students attending secondary school. The most common reasons for leaving are personal, social, financial and other reasons, transfer to another school, expulsion from school based on unjustified absences or failing grades, illness, moving abroad, family troubles, marriage and pregnancy. Free textbooks for all grades are provided for Roma children: the RS Government provides free textbooks for the first and second grades for all children and the local community provides free textbooks for other grades for Roma. The Government provides transport for all children living at more than 4 km far from school.

Reply to paragraph 29 of the list of issues

90. The BiH Strategy of Cultural Policy, as a framework document, was adopted in 2008. Responsibilities in the field of culture lie at the entity and cantonal and BiH BD levels, so most of the obligations of the Strategy relate to measures and activities to be taken at these levels. The 2011–2015 Action Plan and the 2017–2018 Action Plan were adopted. The authorities responsible for the activities are: the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs, the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the FBiH Ministry of Culture and Sports, the RS Ministry of Education and Culture, the BD Government, cantonal ministries of culture, municipalities and cities.

91. The legal status of seven cultural institutions in BiH remains an outstanding issue. In the previous period, the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs managed to coordinate the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding to support the work of cultural institutions of common importance and interest of BiH for the period 2016–2018. The Memorandum was signed by several municipal and cantonal institutions and was largely complied with. The activities of the RS Ministry of Education and Culture in this period are directly related to the implementation of the RS 2017–2022 Culture Development Strategy. It is a document aiming at creating conditions for smooth work and development and professionalization of culture and art and artists alike, strengthening and popularizing creativity, artistic production and cultural heritage and then participating actively in the development of audiences as an integral, inseparable part of the socio-cultural chain. This document emphasizes international cooperation and internationalization, i.e. the presence of our artists on the international and cultural scene, as well as the concept of providing opportunities for all institutions, organizations and artists in the RS so as to be actively involved in developing high quality and creative programs through cooperation with local communities. The goal of strategic document is to get involved in the active development of high quality and creative programs, through cooperation with local community units. The basic intention of this strategic document is to create in a unique way a framework and direction of movement for further action in culture, necessary for the implementation of cultural policy, i.e. for decision makers, but also for all those who create culture. It is important to mention that the Law on Culture, which systematically regulates the general interest in culture and the performance of cultural activities, rights, obligations and responsibilities of all entities in culture, as well as other issues of importance for RS culture, came into force in 2018.

92. The RS Ministry of Education and Culture is clearly committed to the social inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized groups of the population, by allocating funds from program grants to finance projects that contribute to encouraging and strengthening social cohesion and inclusion. The Ministry allocates funds in its budget for the work and functioning of the Special Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired of the RS, an institution intended for general education, information and meeting the cultural needs of people with special needs. It is important to note that the Agreement on International Cooperation of Organizations and Public Institutions in RS dealing with the issue of blind and partially sighted persons in the field of education and culture was signed. The agreement was signed between the Public Institution Centre for Children and Youth with Developmental Disabilities "Budućnost" Derventa, the Association of the Blind RS

and the Public Special Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired RS, whose goal is to raise the quality of life and greater inclusion of blind and partially sighted people life.

93. The Special Library for Blind and Visually Impaired Persons of the Republika Srpska participated in the international symposium on the Marrakesh Treaty in Zagreb, in the international conference on the Marrakesh Agreement in Podgorica and hosted events for children with disabilities twice in cooperation with the RS Union of the Blind and the "Future" Centre for Children and Youth with Disabilities of Derventa.
