



# Public Administration Reform (PAR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina

## Capacity Assessment of Education and Training in Public Administration

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### Reform without knowledge!?

Bosnia and Herzegovina needs PAR for various reasons. A reformed and modern public administration is expected to improve the overall performance of the government. The process of joining the EU requires public administration functioning in accordance with European administrative standards. Also, a reformed public administration is seen as a development tool, especially when it comes to the burning issue of economic development.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has initiated PAR. Political leaders formally committed themselves<sup>1</sup> to PAR; the public administration legal framework is in place; the key reform institutions have been established (civil service agencies and Public Administration Reform Coordinator Office); the functional review of public administration has been conducted; the key strategic documents have been adopted and published (PAR Strategy and Action Plan I); and the international community introduced a number of PAR related projects.

However, the success of PAR in Bosnia and Herzegovina is primarily determined by the political will of top-level decision makers, the available finances and the know-how of those responsible for its implementation. The problem is that Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have a regular, qualitative supply of necessary knowledge and skills. After investigating components that usually define/form/characterize the education and training system in a country (civil service system and the recruitment philosophy; legal framework; funding; institutional framework; trainers; type, design, content and implementation of education and training; pre-service education; international assistance), several major problems were identified in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Namely:

- Inadequate and poorly implemented legal framework
- Weak institutional framework
- Lack of human resources
- Lack of budgetary funds
- Lack of academic programs in public administration
- Dependence on international assistance

The Law on Civil Service in the Institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CSL BiH) is one of the many Bosnian legal acts that are not fully implemented after their adoption. This in particular applies to those provisions related to the education and training of civil servants. The Final Report on System Review of Public Administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina (System Review) and interviews with stakeholders suggested that CSL BiH and a few other bylaws failed to create an adequate and sustainable system for public administration education and training.

The institutional framework for education and training in public administration is made up of central (civil service agencies) and peripheral (human resources units within individual institutions) units. While civil service agencies (CSAs) are established and functional (although understaffed), the peripheral units seem to be quite underdeveloped and underestimated. As a result, the system is not capable of identifying its real needs for education and training.

The financial aspect of education and training is also quite neglected both on the level of the central administration and that of the entities, together with the Brcko District. Although there is no precise data at the moment, it is certain that more than 95% of the funds for education and training in Bosnia and Herzegovina actually

### Summary

Successful reform processes depend on knowledgeable and skilled reformers equipped to manage all phases thereof. Public administration reform (PAR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina was initiated without either a functional or a sustainable education and training system – the two pivotal sources of knowledge and skills needed for work in public administration. Education and training are taken for granted and perceived and treated as any other segment of public administration that will be the subject of the forthcoming reform. The position of this policy proposal is that education and training are key preconditions for a successful PAR, and the issue of capacity building of the system of civil servants education and training must therefore be addressed immediately and systematically.

<sup>1</sup>The Council of Ministers and Entity governments have subscribed to the Five Pledges to improve Public Governance.

come from international agencies' aid. Another problem is the lack of a strategic approach to these investments. It is common for selected civil servants to be sent abroad for expensive studies, but without any idea of how to put their increased capacities in the service of PAR. It is beyond doubt that such a large amount of problems requires a well-elaborated strategic approach in order to be resolved. The question is whether the PAR Strategy and Action Plan I, as key strategic documents of PAR, are up to the task.

**What is offered by the PAR Strategy and Action Plan I**

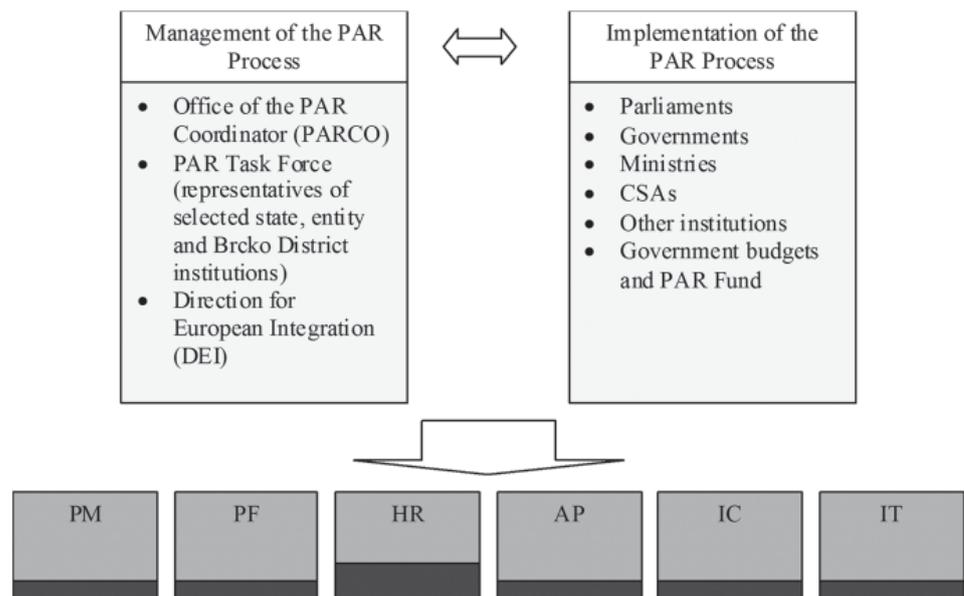
The "training and development" is one element of the PAR Strategy. Problems of public administration education and training are recognized and a number of relevant activities and actions are included in the Action Plan I of the PAR Strategy. Out of the total of 143 actions, 242 activities and 480 measures covering six core policy areas (policy-making and coordination capacity, public finance, human resources management, administrative procedure, institutional communication and information technology) of public administration, education and training are the subject of 12 actions, 21 activities and 58 measures. The establishment of the Institute for

Public Administration and the provision stipulating that of 3% of the civil servants salary budget must be allocated for training are just examples of these education and training interventions. However, the totality of education and training efforts are unevenly divided among six intervention areas, with an overall impression that they are, as all other elements, only subjects of PAR and not its necessary preconditions.

**New Approach to Development of Education and Training in Public Administration**

If successfully implemented, PAR will introduce a new system for education and training in public administration. However, it must be recognized that education and training are not only the subject of PAR, but also one of the major preconditions for its successful implementation. New administrative knowledge and skills are needed at the beginning of the PAR process. Therefore, a kind of re-positioning is recommended. In order to set up this new approach, all education and training activities should be extracted from intervention areas, concentrated within one additional intervention area of highest priority and immediately supported with appropriate strategic documents (Strategy on education and training in public administration), a

Figure 1 Public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Position of education and training in public administration



Legend: PM – Policy-making and coordination capacity; PF – Public finance; HR – Human resources management; AP – Administrative procedure; IC – Institutional communication; IT – Information technology; ■ - portion of education and training actions and activities; ■ - portion of other actions and activities



strengthened legal and institutional framework (Law on education and training of civil servants, Institute for Public Administration) and a set of operational measures that will help in bridging the gap between the given situation in education and training and directions set up by the PAR Strategy and Action Plan I.

### Operational measures

The set of operational measures presented here is based on the examination of the current situation in the area of education and training in public administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the analysis of relevant regional and European practices. The operational measures are:

- Operational measure 1: Working group on education and training in public administration
- Operational measure 2: Two-year postgraduate program in public administration in BiH
- Operational measure 3: One-year specialized action training in HRM
- Operational measure 4: Draft Law on education and training of civil servants in (the Institutions of) Bosnia and Herzegovina

The aim of the **Working group on education and training in public administration** (Work-

ing Group) is to: (1) ensure communication and coordination between all institutions involved in public administration education and training (CSAs, international agencies, universities and faculties, NGOs); and (2) to ensure communication and coordination of all education and training institutions with the governments in BiH and with PARCO. It will act as an advisory, monitoring and advocacy body that will contribute to adequate positioning of the education and training in public administration in the context of the PAR.

The primary aim of the **postgraduate program in public administration** is to provide a central place within the higher education system in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the academic study of public administration. Also, a more specific aim of the first/pilot program is related to preparations for the establishment of the Institute for Public Administration (Institute) as foreseen by the PAR Strategy and Action Plan I and supported by all CSAs in BiH. The program will be responsible for educating a group of experts/scholars who will be professionally engaged at the Institute, either as employees or external associates (managers, trainers, researchers and consultants). A similar approach to the establishment of education and training institutions has already been applied by Slovenia and Serbia.

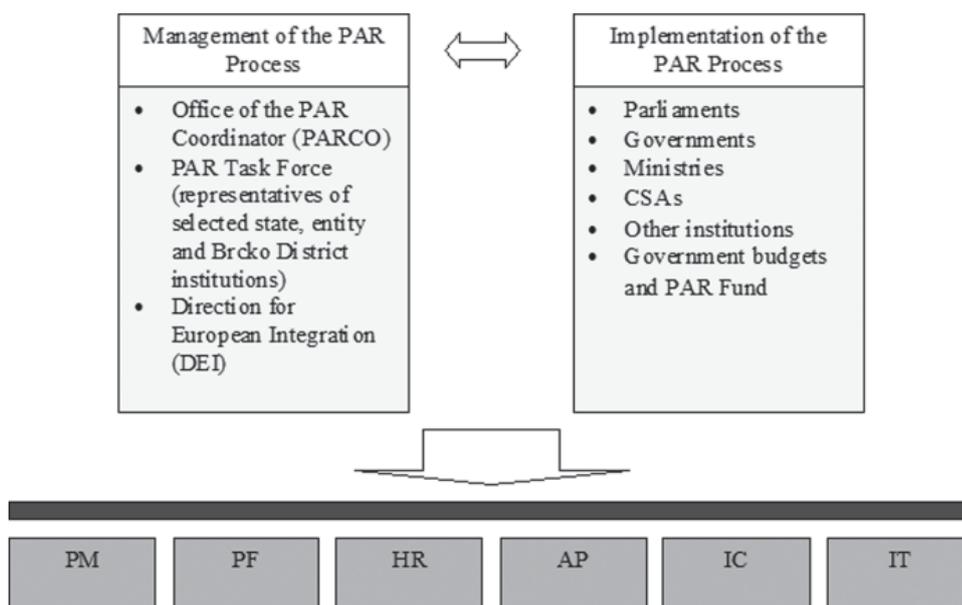


Figure 2 Public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Proposal for re-position of education and training in public administration

Legend: PM – Policy-making and coordination capacity; PF – Public finance; HR – Human resources management; AP – Administrative procedure; IC – Institutional communication; IT – Information technology; ■ - education and training actions and activities; □ - other actions and activities



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### One-year specialized action training in

**HRM** will address one of the biggest obstacles for the proper functioning of the system for education and training in public administration – the weakness of its peripheral units, i.e. personnel units within institutions. The "learning by doing" concept lies behind this operational measure. The program will be a kind of the action training, which is a rather practical approach to managerial development that integrates formal training sessions and informal coaching with on-the-job problem solving. The value of the action training approach is that "it involves learning while problem solving and problem solving while learning".

### Draft Law on education and training of civil servants in (the Institutions of) Bosnia and Herzegovina

will be an advocacy tool for a sustainable system of education and training in public administration in BiH. The present legal framework is made up of the CSL BiH and additional bylaws that are poorly implemented. To draft a law on education and training of civil servants will be a unique opportunity to collect and legally frame in one place all existing bylaws, regulations and recommendations related to the matter. The potential of such a law is enormous; it could lead to a solution for many problems identified by this and other investigations. Moreover, both the theory and practice of public administration reforms and modernizations say that their success is proportional to the attention they paid to education and training. BiH could be one of only a few countries in the world to acknowledge this fact by regulating it with a law. There is no need to emphasize the value of this act in the context of the international image of our country and its ongoing negotiations on EU membership.

### Key sources

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