



# Cultural Exchange: BiH's mission (im)possible

Emina Čosić

Evidence shows that mobility of culture professionals and cultural product is the unavoidable ingredient, or „a means to an end“<sup>1</sup> to acquire cooperation and cultural exchange. This also means social cohesion, where cultural exchange and mobility in culture contribute to economic development, increased human capital and artistic production. For EU based practitioners and theoreticians if there is no mobility in culture; cultural exchange is impossible, hence, development of culture jeopardized.

This is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina; mobility is extremely low and sporadic throughout BiH. For example, as a consequence there is a whole new generation of young people in BiH that have more knowledge and understanding about customs, values, standards, norms etc. from Germany, Australia, England than fellow countryman in the other entity/canton or even municipality.<sup>2</sup> For the current policy makers, this might seem as trivial information, however, these young people, will be the backbone of BiH's society in every respect. As it is now, this generation is completely oblivious to the "others" in their country. The only way forward to remedy this serious issue is through systematic and coherent "get to know each other" thorough mobility for culture.

The current BiH policy and resources for culture do not provide significant support for mobility in general, and even less for mobility within BiH. A case in point is presented through the utilization of the civil society organisations active in cultural activities. **From the funding allocated for Culture through Federal Ministry for Culture and Sports only about 5-8% goes to non-profit organisations**<sup>3</sup>. The overall allocation of funding for civil society shows that only 11% goes to cultural organisations and

events. Even then, organisations that have obtained funding through public sources do not use them for cross-country cooperation or mobility. Responses from **organisations** that have received funding from one of the ministries for culture on entity level, explain that they **did not get funded for joint projects across administrative boundaries or mobility funds**.<sup>4</sup> Most of the time their activities and mobility is taking place with the same entity. When they have opportunity to move, most reported that **mobility is more likely towards the neighbouring countries rather than to the other entity**.

## Fiefdoms and Baronies in Culture of BiH

BiH is highly decentralized, however the management of cultural policy is extremely centralized on the existing administrative levels; the Entity/Canton level. One of the earliest reports on Culture in BiH by Landry described „Each canton takes a fiefdom or barony which will not take on broader regional or national responsibilities [... failing to see] that having influence over a more powerful larger patch is better than having a lot of power in a smaller patch that has no influence.“<sup>5</sup> In fact the fragmented institutional framework has enabled enormous differences in spending on culture, where not all cantons and regions have the capacities to offer cultural contents marginally close. The image 1 speaks best about the concentration of resources and development of regions in BiH, broken down by entities, cantons, and municipalities.

Analysis shows that the scarce resources provided by entity levels are primarily directed towards the urban centres, with it limiting further coverage of cultural activity across BiH. There is no

## Summary

This policy brief presents the findings and recommendations from the research entitled "Cultural Mobility in Bosnia and Herzegovina" conducted within the Policy Development Fellowship Program 2012/13, funded by the Open Society Fund of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH).

The study explores the active policies for mobility in cultural affairs for exchange of cultural products and contents across BiH. It provides a short review of the EU policy framework for Culture and specifically the mobility outlining the need for BiH alignment with the major EU policy objectives. It further looks at the budgets for culture and their distribution structurally and territorially, as well as feeds the findings with the experiences from the organizations that obtained those public funding for their projects. The study shows that the current policy framework for culture, and distribution of funding to the CSO sector, inadequately address cultural cooperation and exchange. The BiH framework omits the most important factor – that is mobility as a precondition for substantial cooperation locally, regionally and internationally. Furthermore it shows that the CSO sector is underutilized its role for cultural exchange and mobility. It concludes with the recommendations for mainstreaming mobility in cultural affairs on all levels of governance and provides a model of how it may be achieved.

<sup>1</sup> European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research GmbH Mobility matters /Programmes and Schemes to Support the Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals in Europe available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/er-carts/executive\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc/er-carts/executive_summary_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> An analysis of the youth policy from 2010 found out that only about 12% of young people from Federation of BiH travels to the Republika Srpska. Additionally, there is tendency that more students are traveling to the neighboring and EU countries to study than internally.

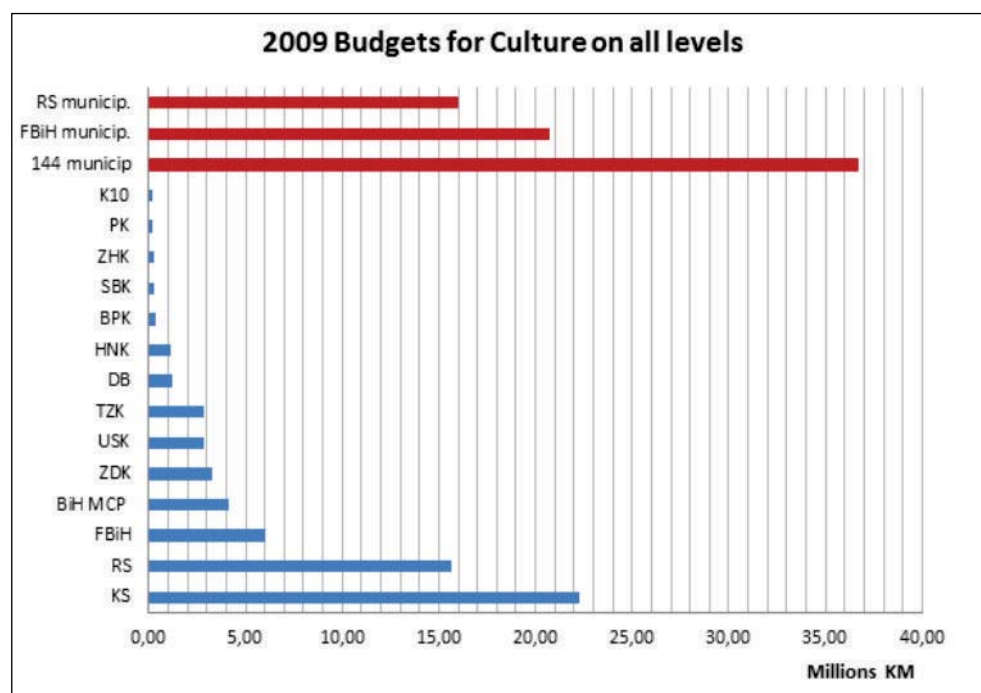
<sup>3</sup> Mikic Hristana, Kreativne Industrije u Bosni i hercegovini: Mogucnosti i Perspektive razvoja - Analiticki izvjestaj, Centar za kreativne Ekonomije 2012.

<sup>4</sup> See full Study on Cultural Mobility in Bosnia and Herzegovina on [www.osf.org.bih](http://www.osf.org.bih)

<sup>5</sup> Landry, Charles. *Cultural Policy in Bosnia Herzegovina: Experts Report - Togetherness in difference: Culture at the crossroads in Bosnia Herzegovina*, MOSAIC project; Steering Committee for Culture CDCULT (2002) 17B, September 2002.

**Image 1**

Source: MDGF Draft Report



overarching national/state level mobility fund that could serve the purpose of filling the gap towards creation of cross entity nationwide project. The smaller the administrative unit, the more closed the coverage of operation in the field of culture is. The civil society organisations are underutilized in its role in the current and future development of cultural activities. When cooperation and mobility is present, it is *ad hoc* or through the support of international donors. Additional challenges are the lack of transparency of funding allocation as well as the lack of transparency of those organisations that have obtained support.

Bosnia and Herzegovina will have to move fast in enabling and promoting cultural exchange and mobility of individuals in this sector. Mobility and exchange has to be the integral part of every development strategy.

The policy option 2. Mainstreaming mobility at the local/municipal level of governance in the current political and administrative structure is the most feasible. Primarily this is because it does not interfere with competencies on the cantonal and entity levels, and even less on the state level, which in the recent past has been subject to political friction and obstruc-

### Policy options

POLICY OPTIONS	RESULTS
<p><b>1. Remaining at the Status Quo</b> The current policy and practices for cultural development in the context of mobility and cooperation remains unchanged with the risk of further societal alienation and stagnation.</p>	<p>Cultural affairs will have a limited opportunity to offer more quality contents to the society, because of the limitation of like institutions and organisations to place their efforts together and exchange contents and expertise. Cultural activities fall deeper into the administrative borderlines due to the withdrawal of foreign donors that so far have supported cross-entity activities. The funding from the EU will not provide support to internal cooperation, market and mobility exchange and mobility of persons and products of culture is a necessary precondition to the creation of a more cohesive and tolerant society.</p>
<p><b>2. Mainstreaming mobility on local / municipal level of governes to devise strategies and financial support with clearly identified benchmarks.</b></p>	<p>Mobility and cooperation has to becomes truly integral part of in culture, exchange and cooperation would multiply and provide space for enrichment of cultural programmes on the municipal level, in particular the rural and marginalized areas. Mobility becomes the principal value on the lowest levels of governance and contributes to further decentralization of cultural managment, along with higher level for accountability and monitoring and transparency in distribution of funding.</p>
<p><b>3. Estabilishing a fund for mobility on the state level coordinated by the Ministry of Civil Affairs</b></p>	<p>The establishment of a fund for mobility on the state level would secure the establishment of an efficient mechanism for mobility and cultural cooperation throughout the whole territory of BiH, and for projects particularly aiming to have statewide partnership and coverage. At the same time this fund could be fused with current resources designated to support projects applying at the EU level (Culture, Media and FP7 frameworks) and secure the necessary domestic co-financing.</p>



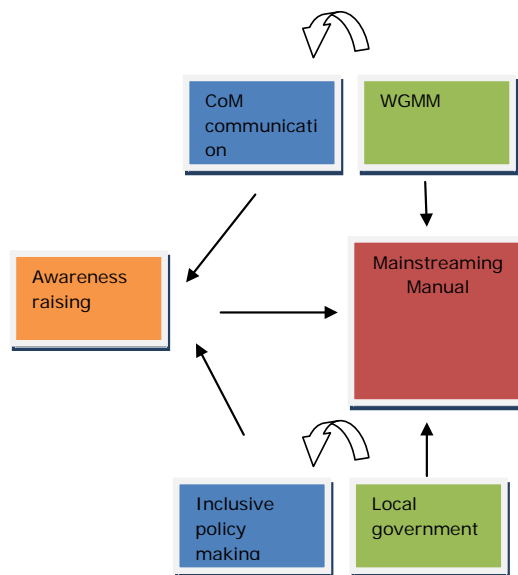
tion. Furthermore it requires no changes to existing legislation or institutional setup, but a change of practice in distributing funds. In order to increase the level of cooperation and cultural exchange in BiH it is necessary to mainstream mobility into the strategic policy planning on all levels of governance, focusing on the local levels of governance as main actors. The local level's significance in this regard is evident from the contribution it makes to culture (see image 1 for funding on local level). Furthermore, taking into consideration the strategic objectives for further decentralization for management of culture, it will play an even greater role in the future.

### The way forward

In order to enable the mainstreaming of cultural mobility at the local level, a model for policy action needs to be established that would improve the entire mechanism for the distribution of funds for culture-related activities. The model should establish a coordinating body engaging local governments to develop Guidelines for Mainstreaming Mobility at local level.

In order to commence with this task a Working Group for Mobility Mainstreaming (WGMM) should be established which would create the *Guidelines for mobility in culture*. Members of WGMM should come from ministries and institutions responsible for culture, labour, education, media, foreign affairs, at all government levels including representatives of civil society and academia. The commencement of the working group would be in line with the already recommended measures on the state level.<sup>6</sup>

The policy intervention envisages two main, closely interlinked axes of action: vertical and horizontal (see Image 2 for a graphic illustration). Regarding the vertical component, a two-way policy and planning communication process needs to be in place for mainstreaming mobility into local development strategies. Also the local strategic planning will be integrated into higher governmental policy frameworks. The main task for achieving this will be on the shoulders of the WGMM and its members. The WGMM would formulate the vision and the strategic goals for mainstreaming mobility, as well as elaborating

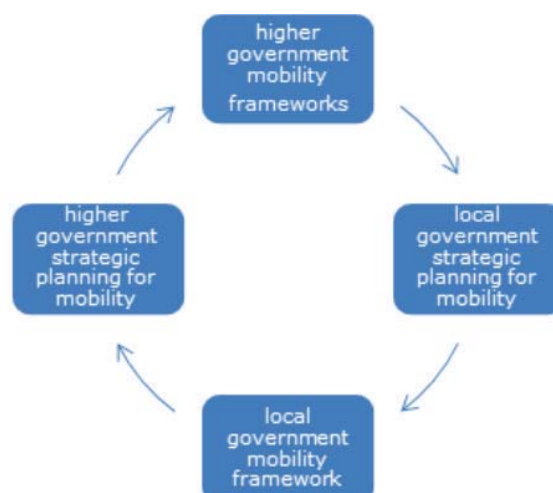


**Image 2:**  
Intervention strategy for mainstreaming of mobility

the main principles for mainstreaming such characteristics, its structure, tools and practices. Further on, the WGMM would be able to draft guidelines of mainstreaming mobility into local development planning and address BiH Council of Ministers to adopt them as *Communication on mainstreaming mobility to benefit cultural affairs*. Adoption of this communication would not be a legislative change but would be more along the lines of recommendations for local communities. Policy intervention has both vertical and horizontal components that are mutually dependent and mutually reinforcing of each other; processes, activities and results feed into each other across the vertical and horizontal linkages in cyclical dynamics. Policy intervention ensures that the top-down policy filters to the local level, while bottom-up needs from the local level are met by the policy-making processes (see Image 3).

<sup>6</sup> Action Plan for implementation of the BiH Strategy of Cultural Policy states under priority 1.1. the necessity of enhancing coordination regarding the culture-related activities.

**Image 3:**  
Mainstreaming dynamics





**Emina Ćosić, independent researcher**, has extensive experience in action based research. She is the former director of the Centre for Refugee and IDP Studies of the Institute for Social Science Research at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Sarajevo, and current associate. She is a member of ACIPS Steering Board. Her work was primarily focusing on topics relevant for the BiH reforms, European integration process, migration and human resources. She is a graduate from the Regional Masters Degree in Human Rights and Democracy, from the Centre for Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies in Sarajevo, and her B.A in Philosophy and Art History, she obtained at the University of Louisville, USA.



A "Policy Development Fellowship Program" has been launched by the Open Society Fund BiH in early 2004 with the aim to improve BiH policy research and dialogue and to contribute to the development of a sound policy-making culture based on informative and empirically grounded policy options.

The program provides an opportunity for selected fellows to collaborate with the Open Society Fund in conducting policy research and writing a policy study with the support of mentors and trainers during the whole process. Ninety fellowships have been granted in three cycles since the starting of the Program. All policy studies are available at [www.osfbih.org.ba](http://www.osfbih.org.ba)

In regards to the guidelines to be devised by the WGMM, it will rely on consultative processes across BiH and taking local needs into consideration. The WGMM, will secure that transparency and accountability with respect to spending on culture are ensured. In this regard the current practices must be revised to address the weaknesses in the field of objectives for funding distribution, criteria for selection, selection committees as well as monitoring and evaluation phases. The process of the establishment of the Working Group for Mainstreaming Mobility on Municipal Level, by the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, should be initiated immediately.

#### **Further steps to be taken immediately on all governance levels**

Entity Ministries for Culture: The Federal Ministry for Culture and Sports, and the Ministry for Education and Culture of Republika Srpska need secure an analysis of cultural exchange and mobility within their entity, and identifying solutions for removing obstacles to mobility. This task would enable a better definition of the needs for both entities, and feed into the participation and preparation of guidelines for cultural mobility.

Entity and Cantonal Ministries for Culture: Create multiannual financing programmes for culture. The current financial support is for a maximum of one year. Additionally, the public call for applications must ensure sufficient (that is more than currently fifteen days) timeframe for preparation of project proposals. A multi annual planning framework will enable better utilization of the funding as well a better quality of projects.

All levels distributing funds for cultural activities need to establish cycles for funding distributions, particularly in relation to transfers for civil society organisations. Establishing a cycle for calls for applications will enable better planning for applicants.

Introduce and promote joint project initiatives between different administrative levels, horizontally and vertically. Cooperation of several municipalities or different levels of administration in a joint call for applications will certainly contribute to both mobility and cultural exchange, but also enable clustering funds together for a

greater impact. Furthermore, all levels should introduce cooperation on joint projects as criteria for financial assistance. This is particularly important on the state and entity levels, and would provide incentives for organisations and their beneficiaries to structurally engage in exchange, cooperation and mobility.

Implement the criteria for transparency in the distribution of funds and selection of projects, including the criteria established through the Agreements on Cooperation with CSO sector. Towards this end, announcements for public calls for applications need to better advertised, using widely accepted media for information such as: websites, social-media, daily newspaper and news web portals.

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