



RESILIENCE



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RESILIENCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina



General overview

- Bosnia and Herzegovina is quite a unique place in Balkan and Europe, where on a relative small place (51 129m²) compounded of 3,395.547 inhabitants, you can find all three monotheistic religions (Muslims (50,7%), Orthodox (30,75%), Roman-catholic (15,19%), Jews and the others.
- Three larger ethnic communities (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) are often defined by a distinct religious system as the main cultural distinguishing factor.

Political and educational division

- The political divisions of Bosnia and Herzegovina were created by the Dayton Agreement, comprising two entities:
- the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), with mostly Bosniaks and Croats, and the Republika Srpska (RS) with mostly Serbs – each governing roughly one half of the state's territory. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina itself has a federal structure and consists of 10 autonomous cantons.
- The political division implies the educational divisions as well.

RESILIENCE Bosnia and Herzegovina within Western Balkan's educational context

- The dynamics of higher education in the region of the Western Balkans with a population of almost 25 million unfortunately still remains on the margins of contemporary higher education studies. The regional higher education has never been the subject of systemic research; there is both a lack of data and a lack of prior studies.
- Across the region under scrutiny it is possible to detect a generally accepted belief in the need to follow the Western example in order to recover from isolation and reconstruct the post-conflict society and economy.
- In the general westwards orientation the perception of Europe assumes an especially central role. It is seen as something external to the Western Balkans. The relationship of 'us and Europe' is strongly present in the talks. The peripheral identity of the region is often expressed with common references like "these lands of ours".

A peculiar BiH case of higher education system

- BiH is considered by far ***the most complex*** country in the Western Balkans regarding the organisation of higher education, mainly due to the complexity of its system of government.
- This arrangement applies to the area of higher education, which is in the jurisdiction of the 14 units altogether: the RS, the BD, and, in the case of FBiH 10 cantons, and some limited competences at the level of FBiH and BiH.
- Therefore, ***a peculiar case*** of the under-regulation of higher education in the Balkan region is Bosnia and Herzegovina. In one of the political units – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina – the regulatory competencies over higher education are unclearly divided and dispersed between small cantons (10 of them) and upper levels of governance. In these unclear conditions, the universities often emerge as the policy makers and policy implementers at the same time (***very important for the RESILIENCE***)

Religious roots of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Past and future

- Sarajevo was first placed on the map of academic centres in this part of Europe in 1573, with the signing of Gazi Husrevbey's Waqfname (Endowment). Today, Gazi Husrevbey's Library is, as an associate member, the oldest institution within the University of Sarajevo. Following the departure of the Ottoman administration and the arrival of Austria-Hungary, the Sharia Judicial School was founded in 1887, the National Museum in 1888, the Catholic Seminary of the Vrhbosna Archbishopric in 1890. The Eastern Orthodox Seminary of Sarajevo was upgraded to an institution of higher learning in 1892. Today, the National Museum is an associate member of the University of Sarajevo and the Faculty of Catholic Theology and Faculty of Islamic Studies are a full member.

Religious roots of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Past and future

- The earliest university-type establishment, or in contemporary terms, research infrastructure in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as asserted earlier, were established as religious institutions.
- In developing Resilience in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we will undertake to interpret more precisely the role played by religion in this decisive recasting of higher education in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Faculty of Islamic Sciences and the Catholic Theological Faculty are fully incorporated within University of Sarajevo.

Some future directions

- Various research studies shows “the substantial idiosyncratic characteristics of higher education systems in the Western Balkans compared to the more stable European regions.
- In-depth knowledge of local societies, history, ideas, norms, values and beliefs is crucial for both the further investigation of higher education and proper identification of the problems.
- Also when the recommendations of foreign actors are diffused into the region, they inevitably meet the ideas and attitudes of the local policy and academic communities. If based on erroneous assumptions or ignorance of indigenous practices, such recommendations are doomed to fail altogether or at best fail to deliver the desired outcomes.”

Some future directions

- Concisely:
- Due to a complex political architecture, and aiming the integration into European research Space various governmental stakeholders need to be addressed;
- Existing religious research infrastructure should be ulteriorly developed and optimized;
- Necessity of creating regional networks;
- Additional emphasis to the existing best practices of institutional interreligious linkage;

Thank you

**for your
kind
attention!**



This project has
received funding from
The European Union's
Horizon 2020 Research
and Innovation Programme
under Grant Agreement
No. 871127