



## **COUNTRY REPORT ON CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA SINCE THE LAST PRESIDENTS CONFERENCE**

Elections for the President of the Bar Association of the Republic of Srpska (hereinafter: the Bar) were held at the Electoral Assembly on April 23, 2021. Dalibor Mrša, attorney at law, from Banja Luka, was elected President of the Bar Association of the Republic of Srpska.

For detailed information, Bosnia and Herzegovina has two entities, the Republic of Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as two bar associations, the Bar Association of the Republic of Srpska and the Bar Association of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These bars achieve very good and close cooperation, primarily due to certain regulations that are common to both entities, and in general due to the closeness of the legislation.

In the period since taking office, numerous contacts have been made with the Minister and representatives of the Ministry of Justice of Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Council of Europe and the Center for Education of Judges and Prosecutors, after which the process of educating Bar members continued. As of the implementation of the project Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina - JUFREX 2, which process is now proceeding smoothly according to the planned activities.

At the same time, the process of holding a series of seminars organized by the Bar in accordance with the Rulebook and program of permanent general and special training of lawyers, legal associates and trainee lawyers, all within the planned revenues and expenditures and decisions of the Bar's Executive Board.

The intention of the new management is to enable the members of the Bar to be constantly educated within the Bar, and that this process does not include only lawyers, but also legal associates and trainee lawyers, which is why the Ministry of Justice submitted a proposal for a Framework Agreement on Education. Partnership resulted in effective results in this process.

This primarily means that the intention of the Bar is to take over the training process for performing activities in the field of youth crime and criminal protection of children and juveniles, which would be authorized to issue certificates to our members who are interested in youth crime and criminal law, protection of children and minors.

Domestic and international legal acts on advocacy provide for the obligation of continuous professional development of lawyers.

The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990) require professional bar associations to provide appropriate education and training for lawyers and their constant acquaintance with the ideals and ethical duties of the profession.

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe of 25 October 2000, known as "Freedom to practice law", asks the bar associations to set the highest possible standards of professionalism of lawyers. In this regard, the bars should take all necessary measures and provide a high level of professional legal training and continuous education of lawyers through the development of legal skills, sense of ethical issues and the necessary knowledge for the protection of human rights.

The efforts of our Bar are directed in that direction, especially due to the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a complex state union with many regulations that often change, and as a logical consequence of these changes are changes in judicial attitudes, which potentially leads to a dose of legal uncertainty. Due to all that, it is necessary to constantly professionally improve our members.

On the other hand, the legal profession must preserve its autonomy and independence, because lawyers are the guardians of basic human rights and freedoms, as well as the basic democratic principle of "rule of law". Lawyers guarantee the basic foundations of a democratic society and have an extremely important role in the judiciary and in the rule of law, and both of these functions are the very foundations of a democratic society.

Therefore, it is necessary to keep the legal profession "untainted" from any influence of politics, individual or collective interests that would turn the legal profession into a mere provision of commercial services, which would equate the legal activity with other activities, i.e. services offered on the market on which the Bar especially insists.

Our Bar has good cooperation with all bar associations in the region, in addition to the Bar Association of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the Bar Association of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro and Northern Macedonia, but also very good cooperation and communication with international bar associations – CCBE, IBA, UIA of which we are members.

In the period from 27-29 May 2022 our Bar organizes a regular annual event called the Days of the Bar of the Republic of Srpska.

The President of the Bar Association of the Republika Srpska, as well as the presidents and representatives of the Bar Associations of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Northern Macedonia, Slovenia and Croatia will speak about the importance and role of advocacy, education and the challenges this activity faces. The arrival of high-ranking officials, as well as representatives of the judiciary of the Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina are expected.

