



DRAFT AGENDA<sup>1</sup>

# **WESTERN BALKANS COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024**

## **Fact-finding Meeting Bosnia and Herzegovina – Republika Srpska**

**24 October 2023**

**Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Courtyard by Marriott Hotel

Prvog krajiškog korpusa 33

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided

<sup>1</sup> This is not a meeting of an official OECD body

The [OECD](#) is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experience, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

Since 2000, the [OECD South East Europe Regional Programme](#) has been closely collaborating with economies of the region to foster growth, investment and employment through reforms that support competitiveness and private sector development. The programme addresses regional and national needs, capacities and reform priorities while translating OECD standards and best practices into actionable advice for South East European (SEE) economies (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo\*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia).

#### ■ WHAT IS THE COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK?

Drawing on key OECD tools and standards, the [Competitiveness Outlook](#) publication series is the most comprehensive assessment of economic performance, governance and regulation in the six Western Balkan (WB6) economies. It covers 15 key policy areas that are interrelated and make up five thematic cluster: (1) Business environment; (2) Skills system; (3) Greening; (4) Digitalisation and technology; (5) Connectivity and infrastructure.

The Competitiveness Outlook seeks to provide the region's policy makers with a multi-dimensional benchmarking tool, enabling them to compare performance against regional peers as well as OECD good practices, and to design future policies based on rich evidence and actionable policy recommendations.

#### Contacts

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The last edition was launched at the [Leaders Meeting of the Berlin Process Western Balkans Summit](#) in July 2021 where several Heads of State and Government lauded that the OECD Competitiveness Outlook's policy recommendations serve *"as guidance and inspiration for pursuing an ambitious, inclusive and sustainable reform agenda in the Western Balkans"*.

#### ■ THE MEETING

While the meeting will provide an overview of **Republika Srpska's assessment status for all five thematic clusters** of the Competitiveness Outlook's, it will in particular **focus on the business environment cluster**, comprised of the (1) trade; (2) investment; (3) access to finance; (4) tax; and (5) state-owned enterprises policy dimensions.

The meeting aims to achieve **two main objectives**:

- 1) **Closing information gaps**: The discussions will focus on obtaining any remaining information necessary to enhance the understanding of the provided inputs, particularly for the business environment cluster. This will help fill any information gaps and provide a more comprehensive assessment.
- 2) **Identifying achievements, challenges, and policy priorities**: The meeting will facilitate discussions among participants to identify and discuss key achievements and challenges, notably related to the business environment in Republika Srpska. Additionally, potential policy options will be explored, allowing for an exchange of ideas and perspectives on how to address the identified challenges and further enhance competitiveness.

#### ■ WHO WILL BE THERE?

The meeting will bring together Republika Srpska's Competitiveness Outlook Co-ordinator, **policy makers** who contributed to the government self-assessment (in particular Dimension Contact Points) and representatives of the Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics. Meeting participants will also include representatives of the EU Delegation and **non-government stakeholders** such as NGOs, private-sector, academia representatives.

**24 OCTOBER 2023**  
**FACT-FINDING MEETING**  
**COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT HOTEL**

**Objective** *The objective of the meeting is two-fold: firstly, to gather necessary data and insights to bridge any existing information gaps in the selected key policy areas identified by the OECD; and secondly, to identify and discuss notable achievements, challenges, and potential policy options within these areas. By achieving these objectives, the meeting aims to enhance understanding, facilitate informed decision-making, and contribute to the overall improvement of competitiveness in the relevant policy domains.*

**08:30-9:00**      **REGISTRATION AND WELCOME COFFEE**

**9:00-9:20**      **OPENING REMARKS**

- **Ms. Nataša Žugić**, Director, Institute for Standardisation and Metrology of Republika Srpska, Competitiveness Outlook entity co-ordinator for Republika Srpska
- **Ms. Biljana Barović**, Political Advisor, EU Office in Banja Luka, EU Delegation to Bosnia and Herzegovina
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

**9:20-9:30**      **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVE AND PROCESS**

The fourth edition of the Competitiveness Outlook will provide Western Balkan policy-makers with a multi-dimensional benchmarking tool to compare their performance across 15 policy dimensions and enable them to design future policies based on rich evidence and actionable policy recommendations. The publication draws on inputs and feedback from both government and non-government stakeholders, which contributes to the versatility and relevance of the assessment. During this intervention, the OECD will provide a short recap of the Competitiveness Outlook methodology and familiarize stakeholders with the 2024 assessment process.

- **Mr. Martin Kohtze**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

*Questions and answers*

**9:30-10:05**      **COMPETITIVENESS OUTLOOK 2024: DATA GAPS – BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

The OECD will present the main data gaps across all 15 policy areas covered by the 2024 *Competitiveness Outlook* assessment. Discussions will focus on the 5 policy areas that constitute the *Competitiveness Outlook's* Business Environment cluster: (1) **Investment policy and promotion**; (2) **trade policy**; (3) **access to finance**; (4) **tax policy**; and (5) **state-owned enterprises**.

- **Mr. Ali Fuad Turgut**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division

### ***Tour de table of Dimension Contact Points***

The *Competitiveness Outlook 2024* dimension contact points from Republika Srpska will be invited to provide an update on the data collection and assessment process, highlighting issues that they have encountered. They will be given the opportunity to ask questions, clarify any doubts and acquire insights on the data collection process.

#### **Moderators:**

- **Ms. Nataša Žugić**, Director, Institute for Standardisation and Metrology of Republika Srpska, Competitiveness Outlook entity co-ordinator for Republika Srpska
- **Mr. Matija Lojpur**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

#### **Tour-de-table**

- **Republika Srpska Institute of Statistics representative** (TBD)
- **Competitiveness Outlook 2024 Dimension Contact Points**

10:05-10:20

COFFEE BREAK

10:20-11:35

**KEY CHALLENGES & POLICY SOLUTIONS – BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA – REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

The objective of this session is to **identify priority areas and explore possible policy interventions** to further improve the business environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general and in Republika Srpska in particular. An open discussion will contribute to the fact-finding process by providing valuable information for policy development and decision-making to enhance the overall business climate and foster competitiveness.

#### **Moderator:**

- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

#### **Presenters:**

- **Mr. Ali Fuad Turgut**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Martin Kohtze**, Project Manager, OECD South East Europe Division
- **Mr. Matija Lojpur**, Policy Analyst, OECD South East Europe Division

*Open discussion*

11:35-11:45

**CLOSING REMARKS**

- **Ms. Nataša Žugić**, Director, Institute for Standardisation and Metrology of Republika Srpska, Competitiveness Outlook entity co-ordinator for Republika Srpska
- **Mr. Umur Gökçe**, Economic Advisor, OECD South East Europe Division

11:45-12:45

**NETWORKING LUNCH**