

INDIA-BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA RELATIONS

Political Relations :

India and Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) enjoy warm and friendly relations. BiH regards India as a great multi-cultural and multi-religious democracy; an objective that BiH aspires to become. BiH has shown keen interest to further develop and strengthen bilateral cooperation in all fields, including economic and cultural. Nostalgic references are still made to the days of former Yugoslavia when deep friendship between Nehru and Tito characterized relations between the two countries. Pt. Nehru and Indira Gandhi still remain household names in the country. India recognized BiH in May 1992 and initiated the process of establishment of diplomatic relations. Ambassador of India in Budapest is concurrently accredited to BiH and the first Ambassador presented his credentials in 1995. BiH opened its resident mission in Delhi in 1997.

The first ever visit by a Bosnian Foreign Minister took place in May 2003. FM Mladen Ivanic visited India and had meetings with PM, EAM, Commerce Minister as also Minister for Tourism & Culture. An interactive session with CII was also held. BiH Minister for Justice as well as Minister for IT and Transport visited India to sign Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and Air Services Agreement in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Assistant Minister of BiH, Mr. Edin Dilberovic, visited India for 2nd Foreign Office Consultations in April 2011. Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mr. Mirko Sarovic, visited India in October 2012 to participate in the International Seminar on Energy Access. Foreign Minister, Dr. Zlatko Lagumdzija, accompanied by a business delegation, visited India in March 2013 and met with EAM, MOS for External Affairs and Minister of New and Renewable Energy. Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH, Mr. Mato Franjicevic, who is the Co-Chair of the Joint Trade and Economic Committee from the BiH side, led a delegation to India in December 2016 and held a meeting with the Co-Chair from the Department of Commerce in India. Dr. Ahmet Santic and Dr. Suad Arnautovic, members of Central Election Commission of BiH, visited India in January 2017. An MoU between Election Commission of India and Central Election Commission of BiH was signed during the visit.

From India, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Preneet Kaur, accompanied by a high-level CII business delegation, visited BiH in July 2012. She held discussions with Chairman of Presidency, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Treasury, and for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations. *The first ever visit at the Cabinet Minister level took place in July 2016* when Shri Suresh P. Prabhu, Minister of Railways, visited BiH. He had meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mr. Mirko Sarovic, with Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Amer Kapetanovic, and as also with the Prime Minister of Federation of BiH, Mr. Fadil Novalic. He also met with Mr. Mirsad Isakovic, Member of BiH-Asia Parliamentary Friendship Society. Dr. Nasim Zaidi, Chief Election Commissioner, visited BiH in September - October 2016 to oversee local elections as Head of Mission of Association of World Election Bodies.

India and BiH also hold Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs). The first round of FOCs was held in December 2002 in Sarajevo, the second round in New Delhi in April 2011 and the third round in Sarajevo in April 2014.

In May 2014 BiH witnessed its worst floods in recorded history whereby 70% of the population were affected. An amount of USD 100,000 was given as financial assistance by GOI to be spent on relief and rehabilitation of the flood affected victims. BiH is also grateful for the presence of Indian police observers numbering around one hundred officers, that were part of United Nations Mission in BiH (UNMIBH), which has since been wound up.

The two sides have signed the following MOUs / Agreements :

- Agreement on Trade Cooperation signed in 2002.
- Agreement on Establishment of Joint Business Council signed in 2003, between Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH and FICCI.
- Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement signed in 2006. The exchange of instrument of ratification was done in 2008.
- Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty [MLAT] signed in 2009.
- Air Services Agreement signed in 2010.
- Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons between India and BiH, signed in 2012.
- MOU between CII and Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH, signed in 2013.
- MOU on Cooperation between Election Commission of India and Central Election Commission of BiH, signed in 2017.

Commercial Relations:

The bilateral trade figures are given below:

	BiH's Exports		India's Exports		Total Trade	
	2015	2016	2015	2016	2015	2016
Euro Million	1.3	2.9	53.8	68.4	55.0	71.2

Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation provides the institutional framework for intergovernmental discussions on economic cooperation. The second Joint Committee Meeting took place in Delhi in September 2006 when status of trade & economic cooperation was reviewed. The meeting also identified Agriculture, Energy, Construction (of Railway lines), Information Technology and Air Transport as the major areas where cooperation could be furthered. To facilitate business, the EXIM Bank and the Investment Guarantee Agency had entered into an MOU in June 2004 and a Protocol was signed at the conclusion of the JCM. Third Meeting of the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Sarajevo on September 25, 2012. Areas identified include hydel power, agricultural processing, mining, timber & furniture and IT. A meeting of the Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee was held in India in December 2016, during the visit of Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH, Mr. Mato Franjicevic, when he met with Joint Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ms. Anita Praveen.

Some Indian companies have made investments. As the privatization process continues, opportunities for securing a manufacturing foothold exist in fields as diverse as textile, automobile components, metal processing, energy, wood processing,

mining, food processing, tourism, pharmaceutical and infrastructure projects on BOT basis.

A leading Indian company - the Ispat Group has made a 51 % equity investment in November, 2003 in the only coke and fertilizer plant - Global Ispat Koksana Industrija with an investment of approximately US\$ 10 million. This is located at Lukavac, Tuzla Canton, and a team of 15 Indians from Ispat Group are located there. Arcelor Mittal has acquired a steel mill in Zenica and some mining sites in Republika Sprska (one of the two entities in BiH) with a total investment of approximately US\$ 200 million.

Cultural Relations:

India regularly organizes cultural events in Bosnia & Herzegovina. There are two associations, BiH - India Friendship Society based in Sarajevo and BiH-Indian Association based in Mostar, which organize various cultural events regularly. India was the Focus Country in the 7-week long prestigious Sarajevo Winter Festival from 12 - 16 March 2015. During the course of India's participation an array of activities, viz., Yoga & Ayurveda presentations and workshops, Santoor concerts by well known artists Pt. Bhajan Sopori and his troupe (sponsored by ICCR), a photo exhibition themed 'Vibrant India', and a documentary film festival were organized. International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated in Sarajevo on 21 June 2015. Performances of Bhangra, a folk dance from North India, were organized in Sarajevo and Mostar on 22-23 November 2015. *IDY was celebrated in the cities of Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka in June 2016 and in June 2017*; cultural festivals were simultaneously organized in the three cities. *India inaugurated the prestigious Sarajevo Winter Festival in February 2017*, with performance on the theme 'The Dance of Weaves – Silk in India', by the troupe of Ms. Pratibha Prahlad, world renowned Bharatnatyam dancer. The theme of the Festival was 'Sarajevo Substance – Silk Road Art', which focused mainly on Silk Road countries. India also presented opening and closing performances at the inauguration of the famous *Dukafest Cultural Festival* in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska, held on 17 June, 2017.

BiH has been allotted five slots under ITEC programme. Government of BiH takes advantage of this training by sending its employees to India under this programme. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH also sends its diplomats to attend the PCFD courses organized by the Foreign Service Institute of Ministry of External Affairs of India.

Indian Community:

About 30 Indians primarily working for Ispat and Mittal Steel comprise the Indian community in BiH.

Useful Resources:

The Embassy brings out a bi-monthly publication 'Amrit' which can be perused at the Embassy's website : www.indianembassy.hu

Website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH is : www.mvp.gov.ba

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInHungary>

Facebook page of Cultural Centre:
<https://www.facebook.com/ICCBudapestHungary>

Twitter : <https://twitter.com/IndiaInHungary>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EOIBUDAPEST1>

August 2017