



Permanent Mission of
Bosnia and Herzegovina
to the United Nations, New York



GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG
Permanent Mission to the United Nations

Recentering Citizens in Peace and Political Progress

Evidence from Bosnia and Herzegovina: relevance for a wider international agenda

Event Overview

- **Format:** Research presentation and roundtable discussion
- **Date:** Monday, October 26, 2026
- **Time:** 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. ET
- **Location:** United Nations Headquarters, New York City, Conference Room 9
- **Co-organized by:** the Permanent Missions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Luxembourg to the United Nations in collaboration with the United States-Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council
- **Theme:** Citizen-informed evidence and cooperation across divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and their relevance for inclusive, nationally owned peacebuilding in divided and post-conflict societies.
- **Research partnership:** Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs, Institute for Development Impact (IDI), University of Luxembourg, and University of Sarajevo

Background and Rationale

Thirty years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, a central question for peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and other divided societies is how citizens' priorities and experiences can inform institutions capable of sustaining peace and political progress. Public debate often focuses on constitutional disputes and competing political positions, while evidence of what citizens want and how people already cooperate across divisions receives less attention.

Recent research in BiH offers a more differentiated picture. Citizens hold significant differences over territory, representation and sovereignty, yet share stronger expectations for equal rights, impartial institutions and accountable governance. Cooperation across communities is also common in professional, civic and institutional life, but it can stall when political backing shifts, decisions depend on other authorities, or funding and institutional knowledge are lost. These findings are relevant to the United Nations' emphasis on inclusive, nationally owned peacebuilding and effective institutions.

Evidence Informing the Discussion

Two bodies of research on citizen-informed pathways for peaceful institutional progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina were completed in 2026. Alongside a student-led peace initiative, they have direct relevance to domestic policy and public debate, and real weight for the wider international conversation.



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- **Citizen preferences and constitutional reform:** University of Luxembourg (CONSENT BiH) drew on interviews, focus groups, and a nationally weighted online survey of 2,009 citizens. The research finds stronger common ground on how institutions should function than on how political authority should be organized. The research also identifies meaningful disagreement and variation within communities on more contentious constitutional choices.
- **Cooperation across divisions:** Research led by Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs in partnership with the Institute for Development Impact (IDI) explored practical cooperation within BiH that often receives little public attention. Research with the Armed Forces, businesses, academia, civil society, and the BiH diaspora identified conditions that help cooperation succeed, as well as recurring obstacles to translating joint work into institutional decisions and lasting results.
- **Students' Peace Declaration:** Led by the University of Sarajevo and the EUPeace Alliance, the Students' Peace Declaration was signed in 2025 with representatives of 103 institutions at the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH. The Declaration now has more than 156 signatories across Europe and affirms commitments to peace, social justice, democratic values, intercultural dialogue and academic cooperation.

Purpose and Objectives

The event will bring citizen-informed evidence and a youth-led initiative into dialogue with Member States, the United Nations, and policy and research communities. The discussion will:

- Present where citizens share institutional priorities, where differences persist, and what these findings mean for reform in BiH and beyond.
- Examine what allows cooperation across divisions to translate into durable public decisions and institutional action.
- Consider how citizen and youth participation can strengthen nationally owned peacebuilding in BiH and other divided or post-conflict societies.

Guiding Questions

The guiding questions, which matter beyond BiH, are:

1. How can citizen-informed evidence reveal shared priorities for progress amid persistent political disagreement?
2. What enables everyday cooperation to become lasting institutional action, and where does that process break down?
3. How can national and international partners better incorporate citizens' and young people's perspectives into peacebuilding?

Format and Participation

The discussion will include opening and closing remarks by the two co-sponsoring Permanent Missions, short presentations of the research findings and the student-led Peace Declaration, a moderated exchange among invited speakers and an opportunity for audience questions. Participants will include representatives of Member States, relevant United Nations entities, academic institutions, civil society and youth initiatives.

Research and civic partners involved in the initiative include the Yale Jackson School of Global Affairs, Institute for Development Impact (I4DI), the University of Luxembourg, the University of Sarajevo, the United States-Bosnia and Herzegovina Exchange Council and other contributing organizations.

- **Remarks by**

- H.E. Dr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations
- H.E. Ms. Véronique Dockendorf, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations
- Ms. Elizabeth Spehar, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding and Peace Support
- Ms. Mo Bleeker, Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, and Assistant Secretary-General, Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect

- **Presentation of Research and Initiatives**

- Dr. Josip Glaurdić, Full Professor in Political Science, Université du Luxembourg (up to 12 minutes)
- Dr. Catherine Panter-Brick, Bruce A. and Davi-Ellen Chabner Professor of Anthropology, Health, and Global Affairs, Yale University (up to 7 minutes)
- Dr. David Simon, Senior Lecturer and Assistant Dean for Graduate Education; Director, Genocide Studies Program, Yale University (up to 7 minutes)
- Mr. Imran Pašalić, Center of Research and Development, former President of the Student's Parliament of the University of Sarajevo (up to 7 minutes)

- **Q&A**

- **MODERATORS:** **Ms. Andrea Pozderac**, Institute for Development Impact (I4DI)
Mr. Mak Nurkić, Yale University- Peacebuilding Fellow at the Jackson School of Global Affairs