



RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

10 July 2013

BIH104469.E

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Passports, including issuing procedures in and outside the country; entry requirements for citizens of neighbouring former Yugoslav republics (2009-June 2013)

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1. Overview

Sources indicate that Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) issues biometric passports (Bosnia 25 June 2013; EU 9 Nov. 2010, 53). According to the website of the Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDDEEA), the agency responsible for the personalization and technical processing of Bosnia and Herzegovina's travel documents (Bosnia n.d.a), Bosnia and Herzegovina began issuing biometric passports on 15 October 2009 and as of 3 July 2013, had issued over 1.5 million biometric passports (Bosnia n.d.b).

Bosnia and Herzegovina's biometric passport reportedly includes a contactless chip containing the holder's photograph, signature and fingerprints (ibid.). According to IDDEEA, the passports are the "latest generation" of biometric passports, known as extended access control (EAC) passports, which "include more digital certificates and special protection of fingerprints compared to the previous generation of biometric passports" and comply with EU regulations (ibid.).

2. Physical Descriptions and Samples

Biometric passport covers are blue with inscriptions in gold; inscriptions vary depending on whether it is a civil, diplomatic or service passport (ibid.). The IDDEEA website provides descriptions and sample photos of the passport covers, endpaper, title page, data page, and inside pages (ibid.), which are attached to this Response. In correspondence with the Research Directorate, an official at the Embassy of Bosnia and

Herzegovina in Ottawa provided a sample copy of the biometric passport, which is also attached to this Response (ibid. 25 June 2013).

3. Issuance Procedure

3.1 Issuing Authorities

Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities: the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska, which is largely Serb (Freedom House 2013). The Brcko district formally belongs to both entities (ibid.). Passports are issued by the Cantonal Ministries of Interior in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by the Ministry of Interior in Republika Srpska, and by the Public Register in Brcko District, according to the applicant's place of residence (Bosnia n.d.b). The Cantonal Ministries of Interior of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina are located in Una-Sava, Posavina, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Bosnian Podrinje, Central Bosnia, Herzegovina-Neretva, West Herzegovina, Sarajevo and Canton 10 (Bosnia n.d.c). The official at the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Ottawa said that passport issuance in Bosnia is administered at police stations (Bosnia 25 June 2013). Passports for citizens residing outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as diplomatic passports, are issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while service passports are issued by the Ministry of Civil Affairs (ibid. n.d.c).

3.2 Procedure

According to instructions about passport issuance that were sent to the Research Directorate by the embassy official, the embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina issues biometric passports to its citizens who have resided abroad for more than three months, or in cases in which passports were expired, destroyed, damaged, stolen or lost (Bosnia n.d.d.). Requests for biometric passports must be made in person (Bosnia 25 June 2013; ibid. n.d.d.; ibid. n.d.e), and the applicant is photographed and fingerprinted on site (ibid. 25 June 2013).

Biometric passport applicants are required to have a unique identification number (JMB) that is recorded in a central database (ibid. n.d.d). Bosnian citizens who have an identity card issued after 2003 already have their JMB registered in the central database (ibid. n.d.d). Applicants whose JMB is not in the database can apply to have it registered by filling out a form and submitting original documents of their birth certificate and certificate of citizenship, both of which must have been issued within the previous six months prior to application (ibid. n.d.e). The embassy official said that the applicant must either get the documents in Bosnia or arrange a power of attorney for someone to get them on the applicant's behalf (ibid. 25 June 2013).

According to the instructions sent by the embassy official, in addition to a recorded JMB in the central database, applicants are required to provide a valid Bosnia and Herzegovina identity card or other official document proving their identity, residence and citizenship of Bosnia and Herzegovina, their former passport, if applicable, as well as proof of their legal residence and address abroad (such as a driver's license) (ibid. n.d.d). There is also a passport issuance fee of C\$182, plus a shipping fee of C\$20 for passports issued at the embassy in Ottawa (ibid.; ibid. 25 June 2013). According to the embassy official, the issuance procedures are the same whether within Bosnia and Herzegovina or abroad, but the passport fee is cheaper in Bosnia

and Herzegovina (ibid.). The issuance process reportedly takes one to two months (ibid.; ibid. 25 June 2013).

3.2.1 Procedure for Minors

Minors under the age of 18 years must also apply for their passport in person accompanied by one or both of their parents or legal guardians (ibid. n.d.d; ibid. n.d.e). If accompanied by one parent, there must be written consent by the other parent signed and certified by a public notary as a witness (ibid.; ibid. n.d.d). If there are custody issues, then court documents must be provided (ibid.). Both the child and parents must have a registered JMB in the database (ibid.). The child's application must include the same documents as the adult, as well as their birth certificate and certificate of citizenship (issued within six months prior to application), and the parents' valid ID or passport (ibid.). The issuance fee for children over the age of seven is the same as for adults, while the fee is C\$115, plus C\$20 for shipping, for children under seven (ibid.).

3.3 Validity Period

Passports for adults and children over the age of seven are valid for five years, while passports for children under seven years old are valid for three years (ibid. n.d.d).

4. Entry Requirements for Citizens of Neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republics

According to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, citizens of EU member countries, Montenegro, Croatia and Serbia do not require a visa and can enter Bosnia with a passport or a valid identity card that proves their identity and citizenship (Bosnia n.d.f). Citizens of Macedonia carrying any type of passport (regular, regular biometric, service/official biometric, or diplomatic biometric) do not require a visa for a stay of up to 90 days (Bosnia n.d.g).

According to an EU Progress Report of 2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina has not recognized Kosovo as an independent state and has no official relations with them (EU 10 Oct. 2012). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs website indicates that citizens of Kosovo require a visa for the purpose of entry, exit or passing through Bosnia and Herzegovina and must travel with an UNMIK [UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo] passport (Bosnia n.d.g). However, sources indicate that UNMIK stopped issuing travel documents for Kosovars in 2008, after Kosovo began issuing their own passports (SE Times 31 July 2008; KosovaLine 23 July 2008). Furthermore, an EU Progress Report of 2011 says that remaining UNMIK passports expired in December 2011 (12 Oct. 2011, 52). According to a Rulebook published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, citizens who reside in Kosovo can apply for a visa at the Diplomatic and Consular Missions of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Skopje, Podgorica and Belgrade (Bosnia 16 Mar. 2012, Art. 2). The Rulebook indicates that the visa sticker is affixed to a special form, rather than on a passport or travel document (ibid., Art. 8).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as

to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

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Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: Attempts to contact an official at the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) were unsuccessful. An official at the Consulate of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Chicago could not provide information.

Internet sites, including: *Balkan Insight*; Bosnia and Herzegovina — Consulate in Chicago, Embassy in Berlin, Embassy in Canberra, Embassy in London, Embassy in Washington, DC, Ministry of Interior; ecoi.net; Factiva; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; UN — Refworld

Attachments

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina. N.d. Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange of Bosnia and Herzegovina (IDDEEA). "Biometric Passport." (Sections on Passport Covers, Passport Endpaper, Passport Title Page, Passport Data Page and Passport Inside Pages) <http://www.iddeea.gov.ba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=88&Itemid=75&lang=en> [Accessed 3 July 2013]

2. Bosnia and Herzegovina. N.d. Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Ottawa. Passport sample. Document sent to the Research Directorate on 25 June 2013 by the Consular.