

ODNOSI BOSNE I HERCEGOVINE I SJEVERNOATLANTSKOG SAVEZA

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Pregledni naučni rad

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Sažetak

Odnos Bosne i Hercegovine i Sjevernoatlantskog saveza (NATO-a) mijenjao se vremenom. Sjevernoatlantski savez pruža podršku stabilnosti, funkcionalnosti i demokratičnosti Bosne i Hercegovine. S institucijama Bosne i Hercegovine, Sjevernoatlantski savez radi na unapređenju uzajamno korisnog odnosa. Bosna i Hercegovina i Sjevernoatlantski savez zajedno rade na reformi sektora odbrane i sigurnosti u Bosni i Hercegovini, razvijajući odgovornost i transparentnost odbrambenih institucija Bosne i Hercegovine i osiguravajući demokratsku kontrolu nad Oružanim snagama Bosne i Hercegovine. U Bosni i Hercegovini djeluje NATO Štab Sarajevo, čija je osnovna misija zasnovana na partnerstvu. Nato Štab Sarajevo ima dobru saradnju s Oružanim snagama Bosne i Hercegovine kako u oblastima razvoja snaga, obuke i propisa, tako i u planiranju i izvođenju aktivnosti obuke.

Ključne riječi: *NATO, stabilnost, funkcionalnost, demokratičnost, NATO Štab Sarajevo, partnerstvo*

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1. Uvod

Početni odnosi između Bosne i Hercegovine i Sjevernoatlantskog saveza datiraju iz kasnih 1990-ih i ranih 2000-ih godina. Organizacija Sjevernoatlantskog ugovora, pod nazivom i Sjevernoatlantski savez, poznat je po skraćenici NATO (eng. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation), predstavlja međunarodnu organizaciju vojno-političke prirode. Potpisivanjem Sjevernoatlantskog ugovora (Washingtonskog ugovora) 1949. godine između država nekadašnjeg zapadnog bloka osnovan je Sjevernoatlantski savez (u daljnjem tekstu NATO). Sjevernoatlantsko vijeće (eng. North Atlantic Council) predstavlja jedino tijelo NATO-a formalno uspostavljeno Sjevernoatlantskim ugovorom, na osnovu kojeg crpi svoje ovlasti. Politički centar NATO-a i sjedište Sjevernoatlantskog vijeća je u Briselu, u Belgiji. U sastavu NATO-a su 32 države. Bosna i Hercegovina ima svojstvo kandidata za članstvo.

Bosna i Hercegovina se kroz svoju sigurnosnu politiku opredijelila za aktivnu međunarodnu saradnju kako na političkom tako i na sigurnosnom i ekonomskom planu. Vanjska politika Bosne i Hercegovine usmjerena je ka očuvanju i unapređenju trajnog mira, sigurnosti i stabilnog demokratskog i sveukupnog državnog razvoja i doprinosa međunarodnom miru i sigurnosti.² Iako je pristupanje NATO-u deklarirani ključni strateški cilj vanjske politike BiH, potvrđen Zakonom o odbrani BiH, brojnim parlamentarnim deklaracijama, odlukama i strateškim dokumentima vanjske politike Predsjedništva BiH, postoji snažan nesporazum među domaćim političkim elitama, konkretnije između lidera RS-a i FBiH-a, u vezi sa vanjskopolitičkim odnosom BiH prema NATO-u (Hasić & Džananović, 2023).

Primarni ciljevi Bosne i Hercegovine s NATO-om vezani su za vladavinu zakona, razvijanje saradnje sa euroatlantskim i europskim strukturama, demokratsku kontrolu Oružanih snaga, kao i obavještajno – sigurnosnog sistema, vojnu interoperabilnost, planiranje i budžetiranje odbrane, upravljanje ljudskim resursima i kriznim situacijama, javnu diplomatiju i reformu sektora odbrane. Uspostava mira i transparentnosti institucija predstavljaju misiju NATO-a.

Savez se, u ispunjavanju svojih zadataka, temelji na visokom stepenu koordiniranja i planiranja na političkom nivou, kao i na vojnom odbrambenom polju (Najetović, 2001). Države koje su pristupile NATO savezu postigle su pomak u skoro svim segmentima. Značajno su unaprijedile sigurnosne i

²Više pogledati: Prezentacijski dokument. Partnerstvo za mir. Decembar. 2006. , https://mod.gov.ba/files/file/nato/prez_dokum_hr.pdf, 16.10.2025.

institucionalne kapacitete. NATO je međudržavna organizacija koja nema vlastite oružane snage. Većina snaga koja je na raspolaganju NATO-u u potpunosti ostaje pod nacionalnim zapovjedništvom i kontrolom, sve dok države članice ne pozovu na izvršenje zadatka (Turković, 2006).

Bosna i Hercegovina proces pridruživanja najvećem vojno-političkom savezu obavlja još od 2006. godine potpisivanjem programa Partnerstvo za mir (eng. Partnership for Peace –PfP), koji predstavlja glavni indikator razvoja sigurnosnih odnosa države partnera i NATO-a. Na osnovu programa PfP razvija se i intenzivira vojna i politička saradnja u Europi, smanjuje se prijetnja miru i dodatno se jača stabilnost.

2. Razvoj odnosa Bosne i Hercegovine sa NATO-om

Bosna i Hercegovina godinama razvija bliske odnose s NATO savezom. Saradnja je nastala iz nastojanja da se zaustavi rat 1990-ih godina i intenzivirala je kroz različite partnerske programe. NATO je podržao nastojanja Ujedinjenih nacija (u daljnjem tekstu UN-a) da se prekine rat u Bosni i Hercegovini u periodu 1992. - 1995. godine. U Bosnu i Hercegovinu je poslije šest dana od potpisivanja Općeg okvirnog sporazuma za mir, 14. decembra 1995. godine poslao Multinacionalne snage za implementaciju sa mandatom UN-a (u daljnjem tekstu IFOR). Osnovna zadaća IFOR-a je bila dosljedna provedba vojnih elemenata Općeg okvirnog sporazuma za mir. IFOR-ova misija podrazumijevala je da se osigura prestanak neprijateljstava, kao i da se izvrši razdvajanje vojski i premosti teritorij između dva entiteta. U roku od godinu dana, IFOR je završio svoj zadatak, a u decembru 1996. godine zamijenile su ga manje Stabilizacijske snage (u daljnjem tekstu SFOR). Misija SFOR-a je unaprijeđena i obuhvatala je osim podrške napredovanja mirovnog mehanizma i podršku civilnim agencijama, koje su bile usmjerene na uspostavljanje trajnog mira.

Deklarirani cilj Bosne i Hercegovine je postizanje punog članstva u vojno-političkom savezu. Savez svojim članicama pruža sigurnost i nastoji postići stabilnost i sigurnost na cjelokupnom euroatlantskom području. Pomoću komplementarnih mehanizama odvija se saradnja Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a. Svrha tih mehanizama je povećanje interoperabilnosti bezbjednosno-odbrambenih kapaciteta države koja teži priključenju Savezu, kroz veoma zahtjevan proces izgradnje standarda i sistema vrijednosti koji je kompatibilan sa NATO članicama.³ Način priključenja NATO-u ima specifičnu, jasno definisanu proceduru. Integracija u NATO se u tehničkom smislu odvija kroz učešće u

³ Više pogledati: Partner. Mjesečnik o evroatlantskim integracijama, odbrani i vojsci. Broj 2, mart 2008., <http://www.mod.gov.me/files/1206620684.pdf>, 10.11.2025.

političko-vojnom programu Partnerstvu za mir (u daljnjem tekstu PfP) i u Akcionom planu za članstvo (Membership Action Plan - MAP). Bosna i Hercegovina je obznanila svoju namjeru da obavi promjene koje su potrebne da bi do sredine 2004. godine postala kredibilan kandidat za ulazak u PfP, program koji bi predstavljao korak naprijed za integraciju u NATO, kao i u Europsku uniju (EU). Promjene koje je Bosna i Hercegovina trebala izvršiti podrazumijevale su transformaciju Oružanih snaga u savremene, sposobne snage, koje su bogato opremljene. Osim toga, Bosna i Hercegovina trebala je na državnom nivou uspostaviti efikasnu komandu i kontrolu uz parlamentarni nadzor nad svim pitanjima koja se tiču odbrane.

Donošenje novih zakona u području odbrane 2003. i 2004. godine, kao i promjene koje su se dogodile u entitetskim ustavima svakako su osigurale jedinstven razvoj odbrambene strukture, s određenom podjelom odgovornosti između entiteta i države. U Bijeloj knjizi odbrane iz 2005. godine navedeno je da je proces reformi odbrambenog sistema Bosne i Hercegovine započeo 2003. godine osnivanjem Komisije za reformu u oblasti odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine. Proces reformi odbrambenog sistema Bosne i Hercegovine podstaknut je sa mnogim barijerama i odlukama za otklanjanjem takvih barijera koje su postojale među Vojskom Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine i Vojskom Republike Srpske. Barijere su se ogledale u nadležnostima države i entiteta Federacije Bosne i Hercegovine i Republike Srpske kada je u pitanju oblast odbrane, sastav i veličina koji su zagušili standarde, nepotpunost kontrole i komande na državnom nivou, nepotpunost transparentnosti, kao i ogromni finansijski troškovi koji su vezani za odbranu i neadekvatnost opreme (Smailhodžić, 2019). Radni okvir Komisije za reformu u oblasti odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine činili su principi koji se mogu rezimirati na način da je Bosna i Hercegovina iskazala želju da uđe u NATO, dok je NATO postavio uvjet da Bosna i Hercegovina treba imati jednu profesionalnu vojnu silu, jer struktura odbambenog sistema nije bila prihvatljiva. Bosna i Hercegovina je trebala ukinuti i služenje obaveznog vojnog roka. Sve bi to zadovoljilo uvjete koje je postavio NATO, a istovremeno i potrebe Bosne i Hercegovine.

Odnosi između Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a ostvaruje se partnerstvom, koje obuhvata ne samo savjetovanje već i podršku Bosni i Hercegovini u promovisanju mira, stabilnosti, provođenju procesa reformi i jačanju odbrambenih institucija. Odnos Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a je krajem 2004. godine doživio promjenu kada je NATO sve zadatke, koje se odnose na provođenje mira predao Snagama Europske unije i na taj način znatno smanjio svoje prisustvo na NATO Štab. Nakon što su mirovne Snage Europske unije (u daljnjem tekstu EUFOR) preuzele odgovornost za održavanje bezbjednosti u Bosni i Hercegovini 2004. godine, NATO je nastavio da pruža podršku transformaciji bosanskohercegovačkog društva kroz aranžmane Berlin plus. Osnovan je NATO vojni Štab u Sarajevu

kako bi direktno pomogao lokalnim vlastima u reformama odbrane. Pomoću NATO Štaba Sarajevo, NATO na zahtjev vlasti pruža Bosni i Hercegovini pomoć i savjete. Aktivnosti NATO Štaba su nadopunjene kako bi objedinile cilj Bosne i Hercegovine da pristupi NATO- u.

Ključni element za ulazak u PfP predstavlja Okvirni dokument, izdat od NATO-a 1994. godine. Bosna i Hercegovina je prihvatila poziv u program PfP i na osnovu toga potvrdila posvećenost ciljevima i načelima, koji su naznačeni u Okvirnom dokumentu PfP-a. Okvirni dokument, Bosna i Hercegovina je potpisala 14. decembra 2006. godine na svečanosti koja se održala u Briselu, u Štabu NATO-a, tačno poslije 11. godina od potpisivanja Općeg okvirnog sporazuma za mir. U novembru 2006. godine na NATO Samitu održanom u Rigi, Bosna i Hercegovina je pozvana, a u decembru iste godine formalno je pristupila NATO programu Partnerstvo za mir (Hasić & Džananović, 2023). Za Bosnu i Hercegovinu ulazak u PfP je značio bitan korak u jačanju saradnje, a uključivao je modernizaciju Oružanih snaga Bosne i Hercegovine, jačanje demokratske kontrole i izvođenje zajedničkih vježbi. NATO, svjestan toga da je Općim okvirnim sporazumom za mir uveden posebni ustavni poredak, bio je spreman da prihvati odvojene entitetske oružane snage, pod uvjetom da se prevaziđu unutrašnje podjele, da se ojača podrška državnih institucija, da se uhapse ratni zločinci i da se ispune odgovarajući kriteriji, koji podrazumijevaju sigurnosnu politiku Bosne i Hercegovine i demokratski parlamentarni nadzor na nivou države, zajedničku doktrinu, standarde opreme i obuke za Vojsku Federacije i Vojsku Republike Srpske, zajedničke pokazne vježbe, transparentnost odbrambenih planova i transparentnost finansiranja. Osim toga, NATO je zahtijevao i promovisanje pomirenja, regionalne saradnje i stabilnosti.

Bosna i Hercegovina podržava temeljni koncept PfP i želi doprinijeti sigurnosti i stabilnosti u Euroatlantskom prostoru, smanjenju prijetnji miru i jačanju veza kroz aktivnu saradnju, te posvećenost općim demokratskim principima.⁴ Proces reforme odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine zasnovan je na principu kolektivne sigurnosti i zahtijeva stvaranje profesionalnih Oružanih snaga, koje su interoperabilne sa snagama NATO-a. Kao partner, Bosna i Hercegovina nastoji sudjelovati u stvaranju savremene sigurnosne politike na prostoru Europe. NATO je u vezi ambicije BiH zauzeo pozitivan stav i ne samo definirao šta zemlja treba uraditi da postane kredibilan kandidat za članstvo u PfP-u nego i pomagao napore BiH da to ostvari (Maxwell & Olsen, 2013).

U tu svrhu, Bosna i Hercegovina učestvuje od maja 2007. godine u Procesu planiranja i preispitivanja (u daljnjem tekstu PARP). Poslije PARP-a predstoji

⁴ Više pogledati:

https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska_politika_bih/multilateralni_odnosi/sjevernoatlantski_savez_na_to/bih_i_nato/?id=112, 21.10.2025.

Individualni partnerski program (IPP), koji predstavlja radni program između države članice PfP-a i NATO-a. Poslije toga slijedi Individualni partnerski akcijski plan (IPAP), koji predstavlja mehanizam saradnje države partnera i NATO-a. Viši komplementarni nivo u kojem Bosna i Hercegovina učestvuje od aprila 2008. godine, od Samita NATO- a u Bukureštu je Intenzivirani dijalog (ID). Na osnovu Akcionog plana za članstvo (u daljnjem tekstu MAP-a) od Bosne i Hercegovine se traži da ostvari odgovarajuće ciljeve koji se odnose ne samo na vojna, odbrambena i sigurnosna pitanja već i na politička, ekonomska i pravna pitanja u području resursa. Pravna pitanja zahtijevaju da Bosna i Hercegovina ima uređen zakonodavni sklop tako da saradnja s NATO-om bude kompatibilna u skladu s nacionalnim pravnim mehanizmom. Predsjedništvo BiH je u junu 2009. godine donijelo odluku da aplicira za MAP. Bh. delegacija, predvođena predsjedavajućim Predsjedništva BiH Željkom Komšićem, je 2. oktobra 2009. godine zvanično uručila aplikaciju za ulazak BiH u Akcijski plan za članstvo. Bosna i Hercegovina je očekivala da će biti pozvana u MAP u decembru 2009. godine, za vrijeme sastanka Sjevernoatlantskog vijeća NATO-a na ministarskom nivou, međutim, to se nije desilo, prvenstveno zbog zastoja u reformskim procesima u BiH. Međutim, u zvaničnoj izjavi generalnog sekretara NATO-a nakon ovog sastanka kaže se da nije pitanje da li će BiH ući u MAP i NATO, nego je pitanje kada će se to desiti. On je pozvao političke lidere u BiH da nastave sa reformskim procesima, jer će od pozitivnih rezultata zavisiti i datum kada će BiH ući u MAP.⁵ Rezultat toga bio je uslovno članstvo. Bosna i Hercegovina je 2010. godine dobila mogućnost aktiviranja MAP-a. MAP predstavlja neophodan korak za integraciju Bosne i Hercegovine u NATO. Međutim, proces je usporen zbog unutrašnjih političkih neslaganja.

Geneza odnosa i pravaca djelovanja Bosne i Hercegovine u geopolitičkom sistemu međunarodnih odnosa, posebno u kontekstu saradnje ili potencijalnog članstva u NATO-u, primarno su obilježile unutrašnje složenosti i vanjski pritisci. Historijski kontekst zamršenih odnosa između postjugoslovenskih i balkanskih država s jedne strane i NATO-a i moćnih igrača poput Rusije s druge strane, pružaju duboko ukorijenjenu strukturu za razumijevanje izazova sa kojima se BiH danas suočava. Sistem kolektivne odbrane NATO-a nudi privlačno obećanje vojne sigurnosti i zaštite od potencijalnih prijetnji, garancija od koje bi Bosna i Hercegovina mogla imati velike koristi. Međutim, etnopolitičke podjele države, kombinovane sa vanjskim, pogotovo malignim uticajima, iz Srbije, čiju vanjsku politiku političke vođe Republike Srpske replikuju, te Rusije, učinile su putanju BiH ka članstvu NATO zamršenom i ispresijecanom (Hasić & Džananović, 2023).

NATO je danas finansijski najbogatija organizacija Svijeta. Postavio je sebi za cilj osiguranje zajedničke odbrane da bi na temelju toga garantirao buduću

⁵ Više pogledati: Atlantska inicijativa. Bosna i Hercegovina i NATO. Februar 2010.

sigurnost i očuvao mir. Temelji se na visokom stepenu planiranja i koordiniranja na vojnom, odbrambenom i političkom nivou. Države koje su pristupile NATO savezu postigle su pomak u skoro svim segmentima. Značajno su unaprijedile sigurnosne i institucionalne kapacitete. NATO nastoji adekvatno odgovoriti na skoro sve izazove nestabilnosti savremenog svijeta. Kolektivnom odbranom, članom 5 Sjevernoatlantskog ugovora izašao je iz svojih granica postavši globalni učesnik. NATO je ugradio pravne okvire svojih cjelovitih reformi na unutrašnjem planu, koje se tiču kako strukture i komandovanja tako i konkretnih snaga. Osim toga, NATO je odredio razvijanje odnosa sa mnogo različitim državama i regijama svijeta, što je naročito značajno za dugačku paletu ciljeva koje će samostalno ili zajedno s drugim odgovarajućim organizacijama u međunarodnoj zajednici ostvarivati. NATO garantuje sigurnost. Svoje vojne i političke strukture je transformirao i prilagodio kako bi ispunio zadatke osiguravanja mira i upravljanja u kriznim situacijama. Pripadanje NATO-u zahtijeva i intenzivno djelovanje kako bi sigurnost bila uvećana. Svaka država članica ima posebne obaveze koje se tiču odbrane i sigurnosti.

Shvaćanje prirode sigurnosti uključuje i domene koje podrazumijevaju aktivno uključivanje institucija u oblasti ekonomije. S tim u vezi, svaka država koja želi da postane članica NATO-a, prolazi i kroz niz ekonomskih reformi u okviru procesa transformacije društva, čime se otvaraju nove razvojne mogućnosti. Članstvo pruža pouzdanu garanciju da će članice priskočiti jedna drugoj u pomoć, pojedinačno ili kolektivno, u slučaju oružanog napada na bilo koju od njih. Nijedna zemlja nije primorana da računa samo na sebe i vlastite ekonomske resurse u suočavanju sa temeljnim sigurnosnim izazovima. Istovremeno, nijedna zemlja se ne odriče ni prava da ispunjava obaveze prema svom narodu, te je i dalje odgovorna za svoju odbranu. NATO to ne radi umjesto njih; on im samo daje sredstva da djeluju kao cjelina. Savez omogućava zemljama članicama da zajedničkim naporima ostvare ključne ciljeve nacionalne sigurnosti. Sveobuhvatnoj stabilnosti doprinosi osjećaj da zemlje uživaju u jednakoj sigurnosti u svojstvu članica Saveza, nezavisno od svog položaja ili vojne snage.⁶ Bosna i Hercegovina je država, koja unutar Općeg okvirnog sporazuma za mir u Bosni i Hercegovini izgrađuje mir, uz ovlaštenja Ureda visokog predstavnika - Aneksa 10 i uz prisustvo europskih vojnih snaga EUFOR Althea. Sigurnosni izazovi sa kojima se suočava trebaju se posmatrati u okviru odnosa globalnog okruženja. U institucijama odbrane sistem odbrambenog planiranja je usaglašen je sa NATO normama. Opća sigurnost, mir i stabilnost su preduvjet i nužan ambijent za dobrobit i funkcioniranje svakog društva.⁷ Sigurnost je cilj kojem teži

⁶Više pogledati: Atlantska inicijativa. Bosna i Hercegovina i NATO. Februar 2010.

⁷Više pogledati: Bijela knjiga odbrane Bosne i Hercegovine. Juni 2005. godine.

<http://www.mod.gov.ba/files/file/dokumenti/Bijela-knjiga-bs.pdf>, 7.10.2025.

svake društvena zajednica i država, istodobno ona je nasušna potreba i želja svih pripadnika društvene zajednice, nužan i bitan uvjet reda i mira što omogućava stabilan društveni razvitak i preduvjet razvitka društva i države uopće (Vencl, Jamnić, & Pušeljčić, 2021).

Ključni element za ostvarivanje vojne sigurnosti Bosne i Hercegovine je postati članicom NATO-a, jer joj u tom slučaju njen nacionalni suverenitet i teritorijalni integritet garantira cijeli Savez.⁸ U Briselu, u sjedištu NATO-a, na sastanku Komiteta za partnerstvo i kooperativnu sigurnost usvojen je Prvi individualno prilagođeni partnerski program (ITPP – Individual Tailored Partnership Programme) između Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a. Time je učinjen važan korak u okviru implementacije MAP-a. Glavni ciljevi Bosne i Hercegovine u provođenju saradnje s NATO-om zahtijevaju jačanje vladavine zakona, demokratsku kontrolu oružanih snaga, veću saradnju s europskim i euroatlantskim strukturama i rješavanje sigurnosnih problema. Ostvarenim kvalitetom suradnje Bosne i Hercegovine sa NATO savezom treba da se potvrdi da je ona pouzdan partner i da posjeduje respektivne kapacitete, koji mogu značajno da doprinesu jačanju mira i stabilnosti u regiji jugoistočne Europe. Za Bosnu i Hercegovinu regionalna obrambena suradnja i odnosi sa susjedima važan su aspekt njihove euroatlantske politike. Takvom suradnjom će stvoriti uvjete za unutarnju i vanjsku interoperabilnost, a time i veću operativnu sposobnost za izvršavanje misija Oružanih snaga Bosne i Hercegovine, a posebno misija očuvanja mira i humanitarnih misija (Petrović, 2022)

Bosna i Hercegovina ima prioritet da zaštiti neovisnost, suverenitet i teritorijalni integritet, da zaštiti ustavni poredak i njime zajamčena ljudska prava i slobode, da razvija ekonomiju kao preduvjet stvaranja realnih uslova za poboljšanje životnog standarda građana, priključenje Europskoj Uniji, kao najpovoljnijem načinu realizacije ovog prioriteta i da se priključi i pristupi kolektivnim sistemima sigurnosti. Bez ikakvih ograničenja Bosna i Hercegovina prihvata koncept kolektivne sigurnosti, kao najznačajniji stup vlastite vojne strategije, te zbog toga teži ka što bržem ulasku u NATO. Bosna i Hercegovina, bez ikakve sumnje, bezbjedonosno je najugroženija država, ne samo zapadnog nego i čitavog Balkana, a možda i Evrope u cjelini. Bez obzira što trenutno nije suočena s neposrednom vanjskom prijetnjom, zbog nerazriješenih odnosa vezanih za blisku ratnu prošlost nalazi se u latentno neprijateljskom okruženju. Osim toga, u Bosni i Hercegovini prisutan je permanentni rizik od unutrašnjeg cijepanja izazvanog

⁸https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska_politika_bih/multilateralni_odnosi/sjevernoatlantski_savez_nato/bih_i_nato/?id=112, 21.10.2025.

djelovanjem nemirujućih etničkih podjela. Utoliko više članstvo u najmoćnijem vojnom savezu na svijetu za Bosnu i Hercegovinu trebalo bi predstavljati ne samo poželjan, već i najlogičniji mogući izbor.⁹ Bosna i Hercegovina je prvi Program reformi predala NATO-u 2019. godine, što predstavlja korak naprijed dosadašnjoj saradnji.

3. Zaključak

NATO, kao vojno-politička organizacija osigurava kako pomoć tako i usluge državama. Kroz kolektivne odnose nastoji riješiti sigurnosne problem kroz prizmu međukolektivnih odnosa i saradnju. Ima za cilj unaprijediti odbrambene kapacitete država kako bi se povećala njihova sigurnost. Odnos Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a obilježen je dugoročnom saradnjom zasnovanom na Partnerstvu, sigurnosnim reformama i podršci stabilnosti države. NATO je odigrao glavnu ulogu u poslijeratnoj obnovi Bosne i Hercegovine. Odnosi Bosne i Hercegovine i NATO-a su se nastavili širiti izvan okvira Općeg okvirnog sporazuma za mir. Bosna i Hercegovina je država partner NATO-a, ali još uvijek ne i članica. Saradnja se nastavlja kroz Program reformi, zajedničke vježbe, podršku reformi odbrane i sigurnosti i pomoć u kriznim situacijama. Pristupanje NATO-u ovisi od postizanja političkog konsenzusa unutar Bosne i Hercegovine i nastavka reformi. Dok se tehnički kapaciteti i saradnja kontinuirano poboljšavaju, različiti politički stavovi ostaju glavna prepreka daljnjem napretku. Iz tog razloga, odnos Bosne i Hercegovine može se opisati kao trenutno stabilno partnerstvo, koje za posljedicu ima otvoreno pitanje konačnog strateškog opredjeljenja. Svakako važno je napomenuti da pristupanje Bosne i Hercegovine NATO-u značajno doprinosi poboljšanju trenutne sigurnosne situacije. NATO garantuje zaštitu suvereniteta i teritorijalnog integriteta Bosne i Hercegovine. Pristupanje Bosne i Hercegovine NATO – u značajno je i iz segmenta politike. Ulaskom u NATO savez Bosna i Hercegovina ne samo da bi dodatno unaprijedila vladavinu prava i demokratiju već bi i dodatno učvrstila regionalnu saradnju. Najznačajnije pogodnosti ulaska u NATO su stabilnost i osnažena sigurnost. Oružane snage Bosne i Hercegovine ostvarile su veliki napredak u prilagođavanju NATO standardima.

⁹ Više pogledati: Zaključci o potrebi članstva Bosne i Hercegovine u NATO detaljno opisani u: Marinković, Milan, *Zašto prijem u NATO mora biti prioritet BiH*. (2013)., <https://www.tacno.net/polemika/zasto-je-opasno-forsirati-clanstvo-u-nato-paktu-bez-unutrasnjeg-konzensusa-u-bih/>, 15.10.2025.

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THE RELATIONS BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

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Overview Scientific Paper

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Abstract

The relationship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has evolved over time. NATO provides support for the stability, functionality, and democracy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together with the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO works to improve a mutually beneficial relationship. Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO collaborate on the reform of the defense and security sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, enhancing the responsibility and transparency of Bosnia and Herzegovina's defense institutions, and ensuring democratic control over the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. NATO Headquarters Sarajevo operates in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its main mission focused on partnership. NATO Headquarters Sarajevo maintains a strong cooperation with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina in areas such as force development, training and regulations, as well as in planning and executing training activities.

Keywords: *NATO, stability, functionality, democracy, NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, partnership*

1. Introduction

The initial relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization date back to the late 1990s and early 2000s. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, commonly known by its abbreviation NATO (English: North Atlantic Treaty Organization), is an international military-political organization. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (hereinafter NATO) was established by the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty (Washington Treaty) in 1949, between the countries of the former Western Bloc. The North Atlantic Council is the only body of NATO formally established by the North Atlantic Treaty, and it derives its authority from it. The political center of NATO and the headquarters of the North Atlantic Council are located in Brussels, Belgium. NATO currently consists of 32 member states, with Bosnia and Herzegovina holding the status of a membership candidate.

Through its security policy, Bosnia and Herzegovina has committed to active international cooperation in political, security, and economic matters. Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy is focused on maintaining and enhancing lasting peace, security, democratic stability, and overall state development, as well as contributing to international peace and security.¹⁰ Although NATO membership is declared as a key strategic goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy, confirmed by the Law on Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina, numerous parliamentary declarations, decisions, and strategic foreign policy documents of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, there remains a strong disagreement among domestic political elites, particularly between the leaders of the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina's foreign policy orientation toward NATO (Hasić & Džananović, 2023).

Bosnia and Herzegovina's primary objectives with NATO are related to the rule of law, developing cooperation with Euro-Atlantic and European structures, democratic control of the Armed Forces, intelligence and security systems, military interoperability, defense planning and budgeting, human resources and crisis management, public diplomacy, and defense sector reforms. The establishment of peace and transparency in institutions is a key mission of NATO.

In fulfilling its tasks, NATO relies on a high degree of coordination and planning at the political level, as well as in the military defense sector (Najetović, 2001). Countries that have joined NATO have made significant progress in almost all

¹⁰ For more details, see The Presentation Document Partnership for Peace. December 2006, https://mod.gov.ba/files/file/nato/prez_dokum_hr.pdf, 16.10.2025.

areas, particularly in enhancing their security and institutional capacities. NATO is an intergovernmental organization that does not have its own armed forces. Most of the forces available to NATO remain entirely under national command and control, unless member states call upon them to execute a task (Turković, 2006).

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been undergoing the process of joining the largest military-political alliance since 2006, when it signed the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program, which is the primary indicator of the development of security relations between the partner country and NATO. Based on the PfP program, military and political cooperation in Europe is developed and intensified, the threat to peace is reduced, and stability is further strengthened.

2. Development of relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been developing close relations with NATO over the years. The cooperation originated from efforts to halt the war of the 1990s and intensified through various partnership programs. NATO supported the efforts of the United Nations (hereinafter UN) to end the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995. After the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace (Dayton Agreement) on December 14, 1995, NATO sent the Multinational Implementation Force (hereinafter IFOR) to Bosnia and Herzegovina six days later, under a UN mandate. The primary task of IFOR was to ensure the implementation of the military provisions of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. IFOR's mission included ensuring the cessation of hostilities, separating the warring factions, and bridging the territory between the two entities. Within a year, IFOR completed its mission, and in December 1996, it was replaced by the smaller Stabilization Force (hereinafter SFOR). The mission of SFOR was enhanced and expanded to include support for the progress of the peace mechanism and assistance to civil agencies focused on establishing lasting peace.

The declared goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina is to achieve full membership in the military-political alliance. NATO provides security to its members and aims to achieve stability and security across the entire Euro-Atlantic region. Through complementary mechanisms, cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO takes place. The purpose of these mechanisms is to increase the interoperability of the country's defense and security capacities, which seeks to join the Alliance, through a highly demanding process of building standards and

systems of values compatible with NATO members.¹¹ The process of NATO accession follows a specific, clearly defined procedure. Technically, integration into NATO occurs through participation in the political-military Partnership for Peace (hereinafter PfP) program and the Membership Action Plan (hereinafter MAP). Bosnia and Herzegovina announced its intention to make the necessary changes to become a credible candidate for joining the PfP program by mid-2004. This would represent a step forward for integration into NATO and the European Union (EU). The changes Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to implement involved transforming the Armed Forces into modern, capable forces that are well-equipped. Additionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina needed to establish efficient command and control at the state level, along with parliamentary oversight over all defense-related issues.

The adoption of new defense laws in 2003 and 2004, as well as changes in the entity constitutions, ensured the unified development of the defense structure, with a certain division of responsibilities between the entities and the state. The 2005 White Paper on Defense stated that the process of reforming Bosnia and Herzegovina's defense system began in 2003 with the establishment of the Commission for the Reform of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Defense. The process of reforming the defense system of Bosnia and Herzegovina was driven by many barriers and decisions aimed at removing these barriers, which existed between the Armed Forces of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Srpska. The barriers were reflected in the competences of the state and the entities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska in the defense sector, the composition and size of which hindered meeting standards, the incompleteness of control and command at the state level, lack of transparency, as well as the enormous financial costs associated with defense and inadequate equipment (Smailhodžić, 2019). The working framework of the Commission for Defense Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina was built upon principles that can be summarized by the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina expressed its desire to join NATO, while NATO set the condition that Bosnia and Herzegovina must have one professional military force, as the defense system structure was deemed unacceptable. Bosnia and Herzegovina also needed to abolish mandatory military service. Meeting these conditions would fulfill NATO's requirements and at the same time address Bosnia and Herzegovina's defense needs.

The relationship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO is based on partnership, which encompasses not only advisory support but also assistance in

¹¹ For more details, see: Partner: Monthly Magazine on Euro-Atlantic Integration, Defense and the Armed Forces, Issue No. 2, March 2008, <http://www.mod.gov.me/files/1206620684.pdf>, 10.11.2025.

promoting peace, stability, implementing reform processes, and strengthening defense institutions. Relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO underwent a significant change at the end of 2004, when NATO transferred all tasks related to peace implementation to the European Union Force (hereinafter EUFOR), significantly reducing its presence, with only NATO Headquarters remaining in Sarajevo. After EUFOR took responsibility for maintaining security in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2004, NATO continued to support the transformation of Bosnian society through the Berlin Plus arrangements. NATO established a military Headquarters in Sarajevo to directly assist local authorities in defense reforms. Through NATO Headquarters Sarajevo, NATO, at the request of the Bosnian authorities, provides assistance and advice. NATO's activities are complemented to consolidate Bosnia and Herzegovina's goal of joining NATO.

A key document for joining the PfP program is the Framework Document, issued by NATO in 1994. Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted the invitation to join the PfP program and confirmed its commitment to the objectives and principles outlined in the PfP Framework Document. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Framework Document on December 14, 2006, during a ceremony held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, exactly 11 years after the signing of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. In November 2006, at the NATO Summit in Riga, Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited, and in December of the same year, it formally joined the NATO Partnership for Peace program (Hasić & Džananović, 2023).

For Bosnia and Herzegovina, joining the PfP represented an important step in strengthening cooperation, involving the modernization of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Armed Forces, strengthening democratic control, and conducting joint exercises. NATO, recognizing that the General Framework Agreement for Peace had introduced a special constitutional order, was willing to accept separate entity armed forces, provided that internal divisions were overcome, support for state institutions was strengthened, war criminals were arrested, and relevant criteria were met. These criteria included Bosnia and Herzegovina's security policy, democratic parliamentary oversight at the state level, a common doctrine, equipment standards, and training for both the Army of the Federation and the Army of the Republic of Srpska, joint demonstration exercises, transparency of defense plans, and transparency of funding. Furthermore, NATO demanded the promotion of reconciliation, regional cooperation, and stability.

Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the fundamental concept of the PfP and aims to contribute to the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area, reduce threats to peace, and strengthen ties through active cooperation, as well as a commitment to

general democratic principles.¹² The defense reform process in Bosnia and Herzegovina is based on the principle of collective security and requires the creation of professional Armed Forces that are interoperable with NATO forces. As a partner, Bosnia and Herzegovina seeks to participate in the creation of a modern security policy in Europe. NATO has adopted a positive stance toward Bosnia and Herzegovina's ambitions, not only defining what the country needs to do to become a credible candidate for PfP membership but also assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in achieving this goal (Maxwell & Olsen, 2013).

To this end, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been participating in the Planning and Review Process (hereinafter PARP) since May 2007. After PARP, the next step is the Individual Partnership Program (IPP), which is a working program between a PfP member state and NATO. Following that, the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) follows, representing a cooperation mechanism between the partner state and NATO. At a higher complementary level, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been participating in the Intensified Dialogue (ID) since April 2008, following the NATO Summit in Bucharest. Under the Membership Action Plan (hereinafter MAP), Bosnia and Herzegovina is required to achieve relevant goals that pertain not only to military, defense, and security issues but also to political, economic, and legal matters related to resources.

Legal matters require that Bosnia and Herzegovina has an organized legislative framework to ensure that cooperation with NATO is compatible with the national legal mechanisms. In June 2009, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina made the decision to apply for the MAP. The Bosnian delegation, led by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Željko Komšić, officially submitted the application for Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership in the Membership Action Plan on October 2, 2009.

Bosnia and Herzegovina expected to be invited to the MAP in December 2009, during the NATO North Atlantic Council ministerial meeting, however, this did not occur, primarily due to delays in reform processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nonetheless, in an official statement following this meeting, NATO's Secretary-General stated that it is not a matter of if Bosnia and Herzegovina will join MAP and NATO, but when this will happen. He urged the political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue with the reform processes, as the timing of Bosnia and Herzegovina's entry into MAP would depend on the positive results of these reforms.¹³ The result of this was conditional membership. In 2010, Bosnia and

¹² For more details, see:

https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska_politika_bih/multilateralni_odnosi/sjevernoatlantski_savez_na_to/bih_i_nato/?id=112, 21.10.2025.

¹³ For more details, see: Atlantic Initiative. Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO. February 2010

Herzegovina was given the opportunity to activate the Membership Action Plan (MAP). MAP represents a necessary step for Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into NATO. However, the process was slowed down due to internal political disagreements.

The genesis of Bosnia and Herzegovina's relations and its course of action within the geopolitical system of international relations, particularly in the context of cooperation or potential NATO membership, has primarily been marked by internal complexities and external pressures. The historical context of the complex relationships between post-Yugoslav and Balkan states on one side, and NATO and powerful players like Russia on the other, provides a deeply rooted structure for understanding the challenges Bosnia and Herzegovina faces today. NATO's collective defense system offers an attractive promise of military security and protection from potential threats—guarantees from which Bosnia and Herzegovina could greatly benefit. However, the ethnopolitical divisions within the country, combined with external, particularly malign influences from Serbia (whose foreign policy is mirrored by the political leaders of Republika Srpska) and Russia, have made Bosnia and Herzegovina's path to NATO membership complicated and fractured (Hasić & Džananović, 2023).

NATO is today the financially wealthiest organization in the world. Its goal is to ensure collective defense in order to guarantee future security and maintain peace. It is based on a high level of planning and coordination at military, defense, and political levels. Countries that have joined NATO have made significant progress in nearly all areas, greatly improving their security and institutional capacities. NATO strives to adequately respond to almost all challenges of instability in the modern world. Through collective defense, as outlined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, it has extended its reach beyond its borders, becoming a global participant. NATO has established legal frameworks for its comprehensive internal reforms, concerning both structure and command as well as specific forces.

Additionally, NATO has focused on developing relationships with many different countries and regions around the world, which is particularly important for the broad range of goals it will pursue either independently or in collaboration with other appropriate organizations in the international community. NATO guarantees security. It has transformed and adapted its military and political structures to fulfill the tasks of ensuring peace and managing crises. Membership in NATO also requires active engagement to increase security. Each member state has specific defense and security obligations.

Understanding the nature of security includes domains that require active involvement of institutions in the economic sphere. In this regard, every country seeking NATO membership undergoes a series of economic reforms within the process of societal transformation, thereby opening new development opportunities. Membership provides a reliable guarantee that member states will come to each other's aid, individually or collectively, in the event of an armed attack on any of them. No country is forced to rely solely on itself and its own economic resources when facing fundamental security challenges. At the same time, no country renounces its right to fulfill obligations to its people, and remains responsible for its own defense. NATO does not do this for them; it simply provides the means for them to act as a whole. The alliance enables member countries to achieve key national security goals through joint efforts. Comprehensive stability is further supported by the sense that countries enjoy equal security as members of the Alliance, regardless of their position or military strength.¹⁴

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country that, within the framework of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is building peace, with the authority of the Office of the High Representative (Annex 10) and the presence of European military forces, EUFOR Althea. The security challenges it faces should be viewed within the context of global relations. In the defense institutions, the defense planning system is aligned with NATO standards. General security, peace, and stability are prerequisites and essential conditions for the well-being and functioning of any society. Security is the goal of every social community and state, and at the same time, it is a vital need and desire of all members of the community. It is a necessary and important condition for order and peace, enabling stable social development and serving as a prerequisite for the overall development of society and the state (Vencl, Jamnić, & Pušeljić, 2021).

A key element for achieving military security in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to become a member of NATO, as in that case, its national sovereignty and territorial integrity would be guaranteed by the entire Alliance.¹⁵ In Brussels, at NATO's Headquarters, the first Individual Tailored Partnership Programme (ITPP) was adopted between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO during a meeting of the Partnership and Cooperative Security Committee. This marked an important step in the implementation of the Membership Action Plan (MAP). Bosnia and Herzegovina's main objectives in cooperating with NATO include strengthening

¹⁴ For more details, see: Atlantic Initiative. Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO. February 2010.
¹⁵

https://www.mvp.gov.ba/vanjska_politika_bih/multilateralni_odnosi/sjevernoatlantski_savez_na_to/bih_i_nato/?id=112, 21.10.2025.

the rule of law, ensuring democratic control over the armed forces, increasing cooperation with European and Euro-Atlantic structures, and addressing security issues. The quality of the cooperation achieved between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO should confirm that it is a reliable partner, possessing the relevant capacities that can significantly contribute to strengthening peace and stability in the Southeast European region. For Bosnia and Herzegovina, regional defense cooperation and relations with neighboring countries are important aspects of their Euro-Atlantic policy. Such cooperation will create conditions for both internal and external interoperability, thereby enhancing the operational capabilities of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly for peacekeeping and humanitarian missions (Petrović, 2022).

Bosnia and Herzegovina prioritizes the protection of its independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, safeguarding the constitutional order and the human rights and freedoms guaranteed by it, developing the economy as a prerequisite for creating real conditions to improve the citizens' standard of living, joining the European Union as the most favorable way to achieve this priority, and joining collective security systems. Bosnia and Herzegovina fully embraces the concept of collective security as the most important pillar of its military strategy, which is why it strives for NATO membership as quickly as possible. Bosnia and Herzegovina is undoubtedly the most security-vulnerable country, not only in the West but throughout the entire Balkans and perhaps even Europe.

Despite not currently facing an immediate external threat, due to unresolved issues related to its recent war history, it exists in a latent adversarial environment. Additionally, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces the permanent risk of internal fragmentation, caused by persistent ethnic divisions. For these reasons, membership in the world's most powerful military alliance should not only be a desirable but also the most logical choice for Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁶ Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its first Reform Program to NATO in 2019, which represents a step forward in the existing cooperation.

¹⁶ For more details, see: Marinković, Milan, Why Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO Membership Must Be a Priority. (2013).), <https://www.tacno.net/polemika/zasto-je-opasno-forsirati-clanstvo-u-nato-paktu-bez-unutrasnjeg-koncenzusa-u-bih/>, 15.10.2025.

3. Conclusion

NATO, as a military-political organization, provides both assistance and services to states. Through collective relations, it seeks to resolve security issues through inter-collective relations and cooperation. Its goal is to improve the defense capabilities of states in order to increase their security. The relationship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO has been characterized by long-term cooperation based on Partnership, security reforms, and support for the stability of the state. NATO played a key role in Bosnia and Herzegovina's post-war reconstruction. The relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO have continued to expand beyond the framework of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a NATO partner country, but still not a member.

Cooperation continues through the Reform Program, joint exercises, support for defense and security reforms, and assistance in crisis situations. NATO membership depends on achieving political consensus within Bosnia and Herzegovina and continuing reforms. While technical capacities and cooperation continue to improve, differing political views remain the main obstacle to further progress. For this reason, the relationship between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO can be described as a currently stable partnership, which results in the open question of the country's final strategic orientation.

It is important to note that Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to NATO would significantly contribute to improving the current security situation. NATO guarantees the protection of Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO membership is also significant from a political perspective. By joining the NATO alliance, Bosnia and Herzegovina would not only further improve the rule of law and democracy, but also strengthen regional cooperation. The most important benefits of NATO membership are stability and enhanced security. The Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina have made significant progress in aligning with NATO standards.

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