



Bosnia and Herzegovina



Country Overview:

Location: Southeastern Europe, bordering the Adriatic Sea and Croatia

Size: 51,197 sq km

Population: 3,875,723 (July 2013 est.)

Capital: Sarajevo

Exports-commodities: metals, clothing, wood products

Imports-commodities: machinery and equipment, chemicals, fuels, foodstuffs

Currency: Convertible marks (BAM)

Ethnic groups: Bosniak 48%, Serb 37.1%, Croat 14.3%

Religion: Muslim 40%, Orthodox 31%, Roman Catholic 15%

Government type: emerging federal democratic republic

Chief of State: Nebojsa RADMANOVIC (chairman of the presidency since November 2012)
Note: Chief of State rotates between three nationalities every 8 months.

Head of Government: Chairman of the Council of Ministers Vjekoslav BEVANDA (since 12 January 2012)

Language: Bosnian (official), Croatian (official), Serbian

Bosnia and Herzegovina is the 107th largest economy in the world.



Bosnia and Herzegovina / Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна Херцеговина

Meetings and Negotiations

- Greetings will vary depending on the ethnicity of the individual.

- More conservative Bosniac women may not shake hands with men.

- Generally, a firm handshake is used with the appropriate time of day. **“Dobar Dan”** is the most formal greeting meaning “good day.”

- Muslims may sometimes also use the Persian greeting **“Salam”** for hello.

- Be sure to use appropriate business titles such as **“Gospodin”** for Mr. and **“Gospoja”** for Mrs.

- An arms length of personal space is most common when first meeting.

- Formality is usually **very important** at initial business meetings and will generally be thoroughly maintained until a

closer relationship and **trust** is established.

Business Attire

- Men will generally wear darker colored suits with conservative ties. Strong colognes are common.

- After suffering years of war and poverty, it is common to see styles that are somewhat outdated.

- **Women** will wear conservative, dark colored business suits with few accessories. More conservative Muslim women may also wear a head scarf, however this is rare in business settings.

Behavior

- **Avoid** holding up the thumb, index and middle finger at the same time, even when ordering three of something. This is a sign of Serbian nationalism.

- Pointing a finger directly at someone or waving a finger is considered **rude**.

- It is considered rude in Bosnian culture to **refuse** offers of food or drink.

- Punctuality is expected and appreciated in business settings.

- Serbs and Croats will commonly drink strong liquor before meals at various times of day. Muslim Bosniaks, however, **do not** drink alcohol.

Gift Giving

- Gifts are generally opened when received.

- If giving flowers, make sure there is an **odd** number.

Appropriate Gifts:

- Chocolates, and various office gadgets with your company logo

Gifts to Avoid:

- Alcohol, anything containing pork or pig skin, chrysanthemums (used at funerals)

Business Tips continued

Conversation

- During small talk, be prepared for questions that Americans may consider **personal** (such as age or salary).

- Bosnians are generally very animated and expressive while conversing.

- They generally tend to be quite

direct, even in formal business situations.

- Younger generations generally speak English very well, but it may be a good idea to inquire about an interpreter, especially if meeting with an elder.

- Direct eye contact is expected and appreciated. It is **mandatory** when toasting.

Topics to Discuss:

- Bosnian landmarks, investment and development opportunities, tourist areas, heritage, cultural differences and customs

Topics to Avoid:

- The civil war, Serbia, communism, politics and religion.