

ITU Regional Development Forum for Europe (RDF-EUR)

*Information and Communication Technologies for Attaining
Sustainable Development Goals*

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CONTRIBUTION BY COMMUNICATIONS REGULATORY AGENCY / BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

TITLE: Proposal of activities to ensure the implementation of accessible and affordable ICTs and services all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

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Europe Regional Initiative: EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development

Year(s) of implementation: 2019/2020

Background: Through its representative in the management team of ITU-D SG Q7/1, Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to obtain the necessary capacity building to ensure that digital technologies are available, accessible and affordable to all. Furthermore, the obtained knowledge is shared regionally to raise awareness and mobilise all ICT ecosystem stakeholders to implement the available key resources devised and made available by ITU-D. Recent collaboration include active participation in the Focus Event on “*Technology, Digitalization, Artificial Intelligence – Curse or Blessing for Sustainable Development*” led by the ITU Office for Europe, as part of the 2019 Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region and in Accessible Europe 2018 organised in December last by ITU Office for Europe, in UN Vienna. In most countries of the Western Balkans, there is a lack of legally binding provisions, lack of funds and insufficient awareness about existing accessible services although the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has been ratified and incorporated in the national legislation. However, thanks to ITU-D empowerment of its members as well as its efforts in implementing WTDC-17 regional initiatives, positive steps have been made. Ensuring accessible and affordable ICTs for persons with disabilities and other persons with specific needs has been recognised as a precondition for enabling equal access to information and communication without limitation.

Proposal: Since access to telecommunications/ICTs services has been acknowledged as essential for social, cultural, economic, political and democratic development as well as an enabler to exercising several fundamental rights for all the worlds’ citizens, in 2019/2020, the focus should be on the implementation of available, accessible and affordable ICTs. To achieve that, it is crucial to:



- Revise and strengthen national ICT legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks. Government institutions and national regulatory authorities (NRAs) can play an essential role in improving the current situation by updating current legislation and promoting ICT accessibility and by creating a market for accessible ICTs by adopting accessible public procurement practices thus ensuring web accessibility.
- Join forces in achieving the SDG on reducing inequality through “Accessible Europe”, the ITU/EC multi-stakeholder platform for fostering innovation and regional implementation in line with the UN CRPD, while bearing in mind that enabling environment ensuring accessible telecommunications/ICT for persons with disabilities and other person with specific needs should be established in all countries by 2023.
- Develop and deliver robust ICT training opportunities to meet the needs of the developing countries in ITU Europe region, by following the available good models and practices;
- Development of standards, create accessibility experts, raise awareness, share good practices and ensure implementation.
- Ensure the implementation of accessible ICTs by relying on key ITU-D resources ([model policies and guidelines](#), [training courses](#), [video tutorials on how to develop accessible digital content](#), a [programme on web accessibility](#), the ITU-D [Study group on Question 7/1](#) as a working platform.

Bosnia and Herzegovina commends the ITU’s work in supporting its members to ensure accessibility to goods and services for persons with disabilities other persons with specific needs and believes that further engagement of all ITU members will contribute to enabling all citizens to participate in society and economy fully. On behalf of Bosnia and Herzegovina, **Communications Regulatory Agency** confirms the continuation of its proactive contribution in implementing the activities the objectives of EUR3: Accessibility, affordability and skills development for all to ensure digital inclusion and sustainable development.

