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EC Finds BiH Makes Limited Progress in Agriculture in 2015

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

On November 10, the European Commission (EC) released its Progress Report on BiH's pre-accession efforts, noting that preparations in the areas of agriculture and fisheries are at an early stage. The EC concluded that BiH has yet to develop its agriculture and rural development policy and establish the necessary institutional structures that would allow the use of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD). Furthermore, BiH lacks a national agricultural information strategy and should improve its agricultural statistics. Also, BiH has yet to create a legal framework for the agricultural census and the land registration systems need to be harmonized country-wide. The EC noted that BiH has made some progress in the veterinary and food safety areas, but there is much work that remains to be done. Specifically, BiH should align its official controls with EU standards and should improve its inspection services and laboratories. In the veterinary sector, BiH should improve controls of communicable animal diseases, such as brucellosis, tuberculosis and rabies, and should upgrade its animal identification and control systems for the movement of animals.

General Information:

On November 10, in its 2015 Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) progress report the European Commission (EC) noted that BiH is in an early stage of the preparations for the EU accession in the areas of agriculture and fisheries. The EC specified that in 2016 BiH should focus in particular to improve and harmonize its official control system, inspection services and laboratories with those of the EU's. BiH should also prepare a state-level rural development strategy and create a structure for utilization of pre-accession assistance through the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance for Rural Development (IPARD).

Specifically, in the area of **agriculture and rural development policy**, the EC noted that while the Entity agricultural development strategies exist, BiH still lacks national-level agricultural and rural development strategies. BiH should also adopt state-level legislation on wine and organic agriculture. Coordination within the agriculture and rural development sectors, including on support measures, still needs to be strengthened.

The EC noted that productivity and competitiveness in agricultural production is hampered by inefficient administration and lack of effective rural credit schemes. BiH should adopt a national agricultural information strategy and create a legal framework for carrying out the agricultural census. Agricultural statistics and the agricultural information system need to be improved. Moreover, BiH should improve the land registration systems and land management.

In the area of **food safety**, in June 2015, the EC accepted BiH's action plan for export of dairy products to the EU. In September, the EC authorized four dairy plants to export heat-treated products to the EU. However, BiH is still not allowed to export most goods of animal origin to the EU market. Therefore, BiH should amend veterinary, food safety, agriculture and rural development legislation to create an EU-compliant official food and feed control system. Additionally, BiH should strengthen its inspections carrying out controls on genetically engineered (GE) food and feed in accordance with EU legislation. The country needs to fully implement the Hygiene Package country-wide. It also needs to draw up a state-level strategy for laboratory testing of samples for official controls of the food and feed chains.

On **veterinary** issues, BiH made progress in monitoring and controlling communicable animal diseases (i.e. brucellosis, tuberculosis and rabies). The EC noted that BiH should further strengthen the legal framework on animal health, draft a country-wide strategy for managing animal by-products and establish the animal identification and movement control systems in line with the EU's requirements.

In the **phytosanitary** sector, in July, the EC authorized BiH for export of potatoes to the EU. The EC noted that progress has been made in the work of official diagnostic laboratories and controls at border inspection points, as well as continued country-wide surveillance of harmful organisms. BiH continued to carry out registration of producers, importers, exporters and distributors in a single phyto-registry.

In the area of **genetically engineered products**, the EC stressed that BiH needs to harmonize its implementing legislation to provide for uniform operating procedures across the country.

On **fisheries**, the EC emphasized that legislation in this sector needs to be harmonized across the country to facilitate export of fish and fishery products to the EU.