



Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

LOCAL ELECTIONS

6 October 2024

ODIHR NEEDS ASSESSMENT MISSION REPORT

20-23 May 2024



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I. INTRODUCTION

Following an invitation from the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to observe the 6 October 2024 local elections, and in accordance with its mandate, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) to Bosnia and Herzegovina from 20 to 23 May 2024. The NAM included Ana Rusu, ODIHR Senior Election Adviser and Martina Barker-Ciganikova, ODIHR Election Adviser.

The purpose of the NAM was to assess the pre-election environment and preparations for the local elections. Based on this assessment, the NAM should recommend whether to deploy an ODIHR election-related activity for the forthcoming elections, and if so, what type of activity best meets the identified needs. Meetings were held with officials from state institutions as well as with representatives of political parties, media, civil society and international community. A list of meetings is annexed to this report.

ODIHR would like to thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina for their assistance and co-operation in organizing the visit. ODIHR would also like to thank all of its interlocutors for taking the time to meet with the NAM and for sharing their views.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 8 May, the Central Election Commission (CEC) announced the local elections for 6 October, in which voters are to elect mayors and members of municipal assemblies in the 143 municipalities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The pre-election environment has been marked by repeated failed attempts by national stakeholders to agree on constitutional and electoral reform. As a result, the Office of the High Representative (OHR), the United Nations body mandated to oversee the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, imposed amendments to the Election Law in March 2024. The elections take place in the context of the European Union's decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, the elections take place against the backdrop of the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on the Srebrenica genocide and increased divisive actions and rhetoric challenging the constitutional order from the authorities of Republika Srpska, one of the country's two entities.

Women continue to be under-represented in public and political life. In the last local elections, only 5 women (in 140 directly elected contests) were elected mayors and women constitute 618 (19.6 per cent) of elected local council members. In the current state and entity parliaments women comprise between 17 and 28 per cent of the elected members. The Serb member of the presidency and the chairperson of the Council of Ministers are women.

The Constitution and the Election Law form the primary regulatory framework for the local elections. Through an imposition by the OHR, the Election Law was amended in March 2024 with the stated aim to ensure integrity of the electoral process; the discriminatory constitutional legal framework on candidacy rights remains unchanged. While there was no public consultative process on the imposed changes, there were bilateral consultative meetings with representatives of the main stakeholders and various pieces of draft legislation were submitted to parliament for consideration by individual political parties. Nevertheless, no consensus was reached. Most ODIHR NAM interlocutors still expressed overall satisfaction with the substance of the amendments, while at the same time regretting the changes were

not introduced by the parliament. The amendments, a number of which address prior ODIHR recommendations, pertain to all aspects of the electoral process including voter and candidate registration, election administration, conduct of polling and counting, campaign and campaign finance, media, and election dispute resolution. The ruling coalition of Republika Srpska expressed strong disagreement with the amendments and questioned participation in an election under the imposed amendments, but ultimately, decided to participate in the elections. In March 2024, Republika Srpska adopted a parallel entity election law; the law was reviewed by the BiH Constitutional Court which in July issued a temporary suspension of its implementation until a final decision is rendered.

Members of municipal councils and assemblies are elected through a proportional representation system, using open lists with preferential voting and a 3 per cent legal threshold for allocation of mandates to political subjects. Mayors are directly elected in both entities, with the exception of Sarajevo, the City of Mostar and Brčko District whose mayors are indirectly elected by the municipal assemblies. All mandates are allocated for four-year terms.

The CEC together with lower-level commissions administer the elections. The March 2024 amendments significantly increase the competencies of the CEC, among others with respect to appointment of polling stations committees and, as a pilot project, introduction of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) in elections. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns as to the CEC's capacity to administer the new tasks. Notwithstanding the limited time ahead of the elections, the CEC informed the ODIHR NAM preparations were in line with the election calendar but recruitment of polling staff according to the new rules is expected to be particularly challenging. In line with its mandate, the CEC adopted binding regulations on various aspects of the electoral process. Overall, ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed satisfaction with the introduction of ICT elements and expect that their use, combined with the professionalized lower-level election commission, will increase trust in election administration and deter electoral fraud witnessed in previous elections.

Citizens of at least 18 years of age are eligible to vote, unless explicitly revoked of this right by a court decision for a grave criminal offence or due to declared legal incapacity. According to the CEC, the central voter register it maintains contains some 3.4 million voters, with a slight increase of voters as compared to the last elections. Voter lists are available for public scrutiny, and voters can request correction of their data. Voters abroad must actively register using a dedicated online platform. Overall, ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not raise major concerns with the accuracy of the voter register.

Candidates for the local elections may stand independently or be nominated by political parties and their coalitions. The right to stand is granted to citizens with voting rights but in line with the March amendments, persons convicted of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes are not eligible to stand. By law, candidate lists in proportional contests must have at least 40 per cent of the less represented gender. Starting with these elections, applications for registration are done exclusively online via a dedicated platform, which was welcomed by all ODIHR NAM interlocutors. The CEC certified a total of 173 political entities with over 26,000 candidates. Overall, ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed no concerns with the inclusivity of the candidate registration process.

The official campaign period will start on 6 September. All the political parties that the ODIHR NAM met with expressed confidence in their ability to campaign without restrictions; the legislation provides for equitable treatment of contestants to use public facilities for campaign purposes. The March amendments prohibit any type of election campaign, including paid political advertising, from the day of calling the elections up until 6 September and empower the CEC to sanction any premature campaigning. The amendments also further detail what constitutes misuse of administrative resources, and prohibit political subjects from using hate speech and spreading disinformation. While most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed the amendments, some expressed concerns about their effective implementation and oversight. Local issues relevant to the respective communities are expected to be

prevalent in the campaign discourse and door-to-door small scale campaigning is still considered the most efficient outreach method.

The Election Law and the Law on Financing Political Parties regulate the campaign finance framework. The legislation sets individual donation and expenditure limits. In line with prior ODIHR recommendations, all campaign finance transactions must be channelled through a designated campaign bank account and the contestants are now required to also submit an interim campaign finance report before election day in addition to an initial declaration at the time of the registration and a final report within 30 days after publication of final election results. The CEC oversees campaign finances and may impose sanctions for violations either *ex officio* or based on a complaint. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the overall transparency of political and campaign finance as well as the capacity of the CEC to effectively and timely monitor campaign finance.

The media environment includes a large number of media outlets but is fragmented and divided along ethnic and political lines. While the state and entity constitutions guarantee freedom of expression, defamation in Republika Srpska has been re-criminalized in 2023, causing both local and international concern. Many ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed to increased pressure being exercised on media throughout the country, in particular referring to verbal attacks and threats against journalists, as well as their safety and precarious working conditions, the use of defamation lawsuits by politicians to silence media, non-transparent media ownership as well as dire financial situation and functioning of the public service broadcasters. The law requires broadcasters to cover elections in a fair, balanced and impartial manner. The March amendments aim at promoting gender equality measures during the election campaign by calling on political subjects to make their best efforts to ensure equal representation of women and men candidates in the party programmes both on public and private electronic media.

Election-related complaints may be filed with the municipal election commissions and the CEC, with the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina having jurisdiction over appeals of CEC decisions. Following the 2024 amendments, CEC decisions on complaints lodged against the appointment of the presidents of the polling station committees are final and binding. In line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, deadlines for filing a complaint with election commissions and submitting appeals to the CEC have been extended from 48 to 72 hours. A number of ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed lack of trust in the capacity and independence of the judiciary in the context of their role in adjudicating election disputes effectively.

The law provides for election observation of all stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers, as well as observers appointed by contestants. Some political parties and civil society organizations plan to field observers on election day.

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors stressed a strong need for an election observation activity and requested ODIHR to deploy a high number of observers to cover all stages of the electoral process. In particular, ODIHR NAM interlocutors highlighted the need to observe and assess the practical implementation of the amended legal framework, especially given the extent of the amendments pertaining to all aspects of the electoral process and the timing of their adoption. Moreover, interlocutors stressed that while the introduction of ICT on the margins of these elections is expected to increase the integrity of the electoral process, it is limited to a number of polling stations and therefore, ODIHR's observation of election day procedures, in particular the counting of votes countrywide, is needed.

Based on its findings, contingent on the necessary funding, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an election observation mission (EOM) for the upcoming local elections. In addition to a core team of experts, the ODIHR NAM suggests requesting secondment by OSCE participating States of 24 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 300 short-term observers to follow election day procedures. In line with ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM will include a media monitoring element.

III. FINDINGS

A. BACKGROUND AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 8 May, in line with the legislation, the Central Election Commission (CEC) announced local elections for 6 October. Voters are due to elect mayors and members of municipal assemblies in the 143 municipalities across the country.

The state structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a result of the constitutional arrangement agreed in the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace (the Dayton Agreement).¹ The country consists of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska.² In addition, Brčko District holds a special status as a unit of local self-government under direct state sovereignty. At the state level, the executive powers are exercised by the Presidency and the Council of Ministers, and the legislative powers by the Parliamentary Assembly. The Constitution grants the status of three constituent peoples to Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Citizens may also declare themselves as “others”, either by identifying with another ethnic group or by choosing not to affiliate with any group.³

The elections take place in the context of the European Union’s decision to open accession negotiations with Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴ Notwithstanding the adoption of some non-election related laws in line with the EU acquis, the pre-election environment has been marked by repeated unsuccessful attempts by national stakeholders to agree on constitutional and electoral reform. As a result, the Office of the High Representative amended the electoral legal framework and imposed a new set of changes on 26 March.⁵ Although blockage of state and entity institutions has been formally resolved following the October 2022 general elections, several ODIHR NAM interlocutors opined that in practice many institutions continue to be paralyzed. Moreover, the elections take place against the backdrop of the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution on the Srebrenica genocide.⁶ Reaction to this, together with opposition to

¹ The implementation of civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement is overseen by the Office of the High Representative, an *ad hoc* international institution that retains powers to enforce the law and impose legislation, among others.

² Each entity has its own distinctive ethnic composition and an important degree of autonomy, including its own constitution, political structure, governing institutions, administrative and judicial bodies.

³ The state law on the protection of the rights of people belonging to national minorities officially recognizes 18 national minorities; most of them are very small in numbers. According to the last census conducted in 2013, 96,539 persons (2.7 per cent of the population) declared themselves as “others”; the largest national minority is Roma, with 12,583 members.

⁴ Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its application to join the EU on 15 February 2016. In 2019, the European Commission (EC) identified 14 key areas that needed to be reformed for BiH to start negotiations, including the functioning of democratic institutions, the rule of law, fundamental rights, human rights and administrative reform. In December 2022, BiH was granted candidate status, but the continuation of the process was made conditional upon progress in these areas and the fulfilment of nine specified conditions. Prior to the decision, BiH implemented the most urgent changes as outlined by the EC, including the adoption of laws on conflict of interest and anti-money laundering. On 12 March 2024, the EC assessed the reforms and the pace of their implementation positively, and so it recommended accession negotiations to be opened. The new [EU growth plan](#) for the Western Balkans envisages a financial aid package worth EUR 6 billion.

⁵ Following the Conference in Bonn in December 1997 and based on Annex 10 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the Peace Implementation Council requested the High Representative to impose laws as he sees fit if Bosnia and Herzegovina’s legislative bodies fail to do so.

⁶ The resolution, adopted on 23 May 2024, designated 11 July as the “International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica”, to be observed annually. The [resolution](#) adopted by a recorded vote of 84 in favor to 19 against, with 68 abstentions, condemned any denial of the Srebrenica genocide as a historical event and actions that glorify those convicted of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by international courts. It also requested the Secretary-General to establish an outreach programme titled “The Srebrenica Genocide and the United Nations”, starting its activities with preparations for the thirtieth anniversary in 2025. The Serbian President condemned the resolution and decried the nature of its adoption as highly politicized.

the imposition of changes to the Election Law, fed into divisive actions (including an adoption of a parallel entity election law in Republika Srpska) and rhetoric challenging the constitutional order from the authorities of Republika Srpska.⁷ Following the adoption of the resolution, the Republika Srpska authorities announced a proposal of a “peaceful disassociation” to be delivered to the Federation by end of June.

Traditionally, most major political parties have targeted their appeals to a single constituent people, whereas others define themselves as parties with a multi-ethnic “civic” approach.⁸ In the last 2020 local elections, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) has obtained 44 mayoral seats, Party for Democratic Action (SDA) 27, the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH) 22, Serb Democratic Party (SDS) 16, Social Democratic Party (SDP BiH) 10 and independent candidates 5 seats.⁹

Women and youth continue to be under-represented in public and political life.¹⁰ In the current state and entity parliaments women comprise between 17 and 28 per cent of the elected members. The Serb member of the presidency and the chairperson of the Council of Ministers are women. In the last local elections, only 5 women (in 140 directly elected contests) were elected mayors and women constitute 618 (19.6 per cent) of elected local council members. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns about the possibility of low voter turnout for the local elections, in particular among the youth.

ODIHR has observed elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1996, including local elections in 2004.¹¹ For the 2022 general elections, ODIHR deployed an election observation mission, which found that elections “were overall well organized and competitive. However, regrettably, the increasing segmentation along ethnic lines and the corresponding divergent views on the future of the country remain a concern for the functioning of democratic institutions. Universal and equal suffrage is still not guaranteed. Failed negotiations among political parties left the electoral legal framework without needed reforms; nevertheless, recently introduced amendments strengthened some aspects of the electoral process. Election preparations were managed in an overall efficient and transparent manner by upper-level election commissions. Political impasse, a general mistrust in public institutions and references to the country’s wartime past marked the electoral environment. Women’s active participation was undermined by insufficient efforts to overcome long-standing gender stereotypes. During the campaign, fundamental freedoms were respected. However, the lack of public debate and the use of divisive

⁷ On 5 February, after several postponements, a trial opened before the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina against the President of Republika Srpska, Milorad Dodik, for failing to implement the decisions of the High Representative. In July 2023, Mr. Dodik signed two laws allowing the entity to ignore the High Representative decisions: one law blocks the publication of decisions made by the High Representative in the Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, effectively meaning the entity can disregard them. The other law concerns the refusal to implement decisions by the country’s Constitutional Court in the territory of the entity. If convicted, Mr. Dodik faces a sentence of six months to five years in prison and a ban on public duties. For more details on the adoption of Republika Srpska entity election law, see *Legal Framework* section.

⁸ In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the major parties are the Democratic Front (DF), the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH), People and Justice (NiP), Our Party (NS), Alliance for a Better Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBB BiH), Party for Democratic Action (SDA) and Social Democratic Party (SDP BiH). The HDZ BiH and smaller parties joined under the umbrella organization Croatian National Assembly traditionally target the Croat electorate. The SDA largely targets voters who identify as Bosniak. Some other main parties in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, such as DF, NS and SDP BiH, advance a multi-ethnic approach. In Republika Srpska, the major parties are the Democratic People’s Alliance (DNS), People’s Democratic Movement (NDP), Party for Democratic Progress (PDP), Serb Democratic Party (SDS), the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), and the Socialist Party (SP). All of these traditionally target the Serb electorate.

⁹ Originally scheduled for 4 October 2020, the elections were postponed to 15 November due to lack of available funds. Elections in Mostar were conducted on 20 December 2020.

¹⁰ See Paragraph 29 of the 2019 [Concluding observations on the sixth periodic report of Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

¹¹ See previous [ODIHR election reports on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

rhetoric, also reflected in the limited and biased media coverage, reduced voters' opportunity to make an informed choice. Election day was overall orderly, but impacted by concerns regarding the secrecy of the vote and inconsistent application of procedural safeguards, mainly during the vote count".¹²

B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The local elections are primarily regulated by the Constitution as well as by the 2001 Election Law, and the 2012 Law on Financing of Political Parties.¹³ The Central Election Commission (CEC) issues regulations to supplement the legislation. Bosnia and Herzegovina is party to major international and regional instruments on democratic elections.¹⁴

On 26 March 2024, the High Representative imposed the Law on Amendments to the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter the 2024 amendments),¹⁵ with a subsequent technical decision published on 2 April.¹⁶ The Election Law has been amended a number of times since its adoption in 2001; however, the 2024 amendments are the most extensive.¹⁷ Prior to the decision, in December 2023, the High Representative called on local political stakeholders to collaboratively adopt necessary changes to ensure the integrity of elections with the ultimate aim to restore voters' trust in the election process and imposed a deadline for its execution, which he subsequently prolonged.¹⁸

There was no public consultative process on the imposed changes, however, the ODIHR NAM was informed that bilateral consultative meetings took place with representatives of the main stakeholders involved in the electoral process, including the CEC. Overall, most ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed satisfaction with the substance of the amendments and were of the opinion that they would significantly increase the integrity of the process. Nevertheless, most interlocutors expressed discontent that, due to the ongoing political deadlock, the amendments were introduced by the High Representative, rather than by the parliament. While a number of discussions took place on various pieces of draft election legislation submitted to parliament for consideration by individual political parties over the months preceding the imposition, no local consensus was reached on the overall electoral reform.

¹² In paragraph 25 of the 1999 OSCE Istanbul Document, OSCE participating States committed themselves "to follow up promptly the ODIHR's election assessment and recommendations". See ODIHR Electoral Recommendations Database at [Paragraph25.odihr.pl](https://www.odihr.pl/Paragraph25.odihr.pl).

¹³ The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina is included in the Annex IV of the Dayton Agreement. In addition, there are a number of entity laws, including the constitutions of the entities, regulating their electoral systems as well as activities and financing of political parties.

¹⁴ This includes the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 2003 UN Convention against Corruption, 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, and 1994 Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. The country is a member of the Council of Europe's Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and Group of States against Corruption (GRECO).

¹⁵ The High Representative's competencies to impose laws, the so-called "Bonn powers", were not exercised between 2014 and 2021; since then, the High Representative has taken multiple decisions using these powers.

¹⁶ According to the correction, the members of the current CEC convocation who would reach retirement age before the 2026 general elections would be exempt from the otherwise prescribed retirement age in order to continue their mandates and conduct the 2026 general elections.

¹⁷ Previous recent amendments to the Election Law imposed in 2022 referred inter alia to allocation of funds required to organize elections, introduction of a definition of hate speech, a prohibition on the misuse of administrative resources in the campaign and abuse of Polling Station Commissions positions by contestants. On the day of the October 2022 general elections, the High Representative amended provisions governing the indirect elections to the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from cantonal assemblies.

¹⁸ Additionally, the High Representative offered a time frame of three weeks to the to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to change a very limited set of provisions from his amendment package mainly related to campaign finance and sanctions, while the predominant remainder of the provisions were not subject to change. This provision was not used by the local stakeholders.

Initially, the Republika Srpska government officially rejected the imposed changes and called on all members of the electoral authorities from Republika Srpska across the country (including members of the CEC) to resign. On 29 March, the Republika Srpska National Assembly (RSNA) adopted a Draft Election Law with the aim to conduct the local elections under the entity law and under supervision of a new entity level election commission, to effectively nullify the authority of the CEC. Other stakeholders, including the Republika Srpska based opposition, deemed these actions as violating the constitutional and legal framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Bosniak Caucus of the Council of Peoples of the RSNA raised the issue of vital national interest and vetoed the law. Following several public calls to boycott the elections, on 21 May, the ruling coalition in Republika Srpska decided to participate in the upcoming elections based on the BiH Election Law. A request to the Constitutional Court to review the RS election law for compliance with the BiH Constitution was filed by the deputy speaker of the BiH House of Representatives; the Court issued a temporary suspension of the implementation of the law until a final decision is rendered.¹⁹

The amendments, a number of which address prior ODIHR recommendations, pertain to all aspects of the process including voter and candidate registration, election administration, conduct of polling and counting, campaign and campaign finance, media, and election dispute resolution.²⁰ They also introduce the gradual introduction of ICT (information and communication technologies) including ballot scanners, video surveillance at polling stations and biometric identification of voters, and increase the competencies of the CEC, among others with respect to appointment of polling stations committees.²¹ A number of interlocutors voiced concerns that the extent of the amendments and the range of new tasks imposed on the CEC might overstretch its capacity, in particular, given the limited timeframe and resources at its disposal.

The CEC has informed the ODIHR NAM that it adopted numerous by-laws related to all aspects of the election process in order to align new processes with the amended law. To comply with the 30-day deadline imposed by the High Representative, the by-laws were adopted in an expedited manner.

Several long-standing shortcomings and prior ODIHR recommendations, including within the constitutional framework applicable for the conduct of general elections, remain unaddressed. These refer to discriminatory residency and ethnicity-based restrictions to stand as a candidate as only voters self-declared as Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs may stand as candidates for the state and entity presidencies, provided that they reside in the appropriate entity.²² The ECtHR has repeatedly deemed these discriminatory restrictions incompatible with the European Convention of Human Rights.²³

¹⁹ The Court stated that the entity's new election law regulates issues that are already regulated by the state election law and transfers the competences of the Central Election Commission to the lower-level entity commission, invalidating at the same time some provisions of the state level election law.

²⁰ See individual sections of this report for more details.

²¹ Measures related to the use of ICT are to be introduced gradually for the 2024 local elections in selected pilot areas in order for them to be ready for wide implementation for the 2026 general elections. The CEC was further given the mandate to review the constituency boundaries every four years should the relevant institutions fail to do so.

²² Only Serb candidates may stand for the presidency of the state in Republika Srpska, while in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina the state presidency is contested only by Bosniak and Croat candidates. "Others" are not eligible to stand for the state and entity presidencies. Additionally, only Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs may be indirectly elected to the BiH House of Peoples and as president and vice-presidents of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

²³ See, among others, ECtHR judgements in [Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Zornić v. Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), [Pilav v. Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) and [Šlaku v. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kovačević v. Bosnia and Herzegovina](#).

C. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The local elections encompass the elections of mayors and municipal assemblies in the 143 municipalities across the country. A total of 3,200 councilors will be elected in the local elections in city and municipal councils in the Federation, as well as city and municipal assemblies in the Republika Srpska, and the Brčko District Assembly.²⁴

Members of municipal councils and assemblies are elected through a proportional representation system, using an open list with preferential voting and a three percent legal threshold for allocation of mandates to political subjects in line with the *Saint-Lague* method.²⁵ The number of councillors in each municipality varies depending on the number of registered voters.²⁶ In line with the 2024 amendments, voters may indicate a preference for up to three candidates on their chosen list, or just vote for the list, without stating preference for any candidates.²⁷ First candidates to obtain seats are those with number of preferential votes of at least 10 per cent of the votes cast for a given list; others are awarded mandates based on their order on the list. Mayors are directly elected in both entities, with the exception of Sarajevo, the City of Mostar and Brčko District whose mayors are indirectly elected by the municipal assemblies. Directly elected mayors are elected on the basis of a plurality of votes, with the candidate who receives the most votes being elected. All mandates are allocated for four-year terms.

The Election Law regulates the election of candidates to municipal councils and assemblies who are not members of the three constituent peoples but are from a national minority on a special list.²⁸ In constituencies, where the total number of people from the 18 recognized national minorities represents at least 3 per cent of the population of the municipality based on the last census, at least one seat must be reserved for a national minority representative.²⁹

D. ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The elections are administered by the CEC, 143 Municipal Election Commissions (MECs), including 14 City Election Commissions and the Election Commission of Brčko District, as well as some 5,600 Polling Station Commissions (PSCs).³⁰ The CEC has the overall responsibility to administer elections and establish election results at all levels.

The CEC is a permanent body, with all seven members appointed for a seven-year term by the BiH House of Representatives upon the nomination by a Special Commission for Selection and Nomination.³¹ By

²⁴ The elections will take place for 58 municipal and 20 city councils in the Federation, 53 municipal and 10 city assemblies in Republika Srpska, as well as for 111 municipal mayors and 32 city mayors across the country and for the Assembly of Brčko District.

²⁵ A political subject is a party, a coalition of parties, an independent candidate or a list of independent candidates registered to participate in the elections.

²⁶ Municipalities with less than 8,000 registered voters elect between 11 and 17 members; municipalities having between 8,000 and 20,000 registered voters elect between 17 and 25 members and municipalities with more than 20,000 voters elect between 25 and 31 members.

²⁷ Previously, the number of preferential votes was not limited. In line with the amendments, if more than three candidates are marked, the list is considered to have received a valid vote, but preferential votes will not be counted.

²⁸ The Law on the Protection of Rights of Members of National Minorities recognizes 18 national minorities; most of them are small in numbers. According to the last 2013 census, 96,539 people (2.7 per cent of the population) declared themselves as “others”; the most numerous national minority is Roma, with 12,583 members.

²⁹ The 3 per cent threshold is the cumulative percentage of the municipality population of all 18 national minorities and the seat is not reserved for a particular national minority, but only for a candidate who claims to be a member of one of the 18 national minorities.

³⁰ The final number of PSCs on election day is likely to decrease as the CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that it intends to increase the number of voters per polling station.

³¹ This commission consists of two members from the High Judicial and Prosecution Council, three from the administrative commission of the BiH House of Representatives and two from the current CEC.

law, the composition of the CEC should include two Bosniaks, two Croats, two Serbs and one member from “others”. The chairperson is elected by the CEC members from among themselves, provided that one Bosniak, one Croat, one Serb and one “other” member serve a 21-month term each. Currently, two CEC members are women including the chairperson, and according to the law, all election commissions should have at least 40 per cent of members of each gender, while in three-member commissions both genders should be represented. The amendments, not yet applicable to current CEC members, stipulate additional requirements for candidates wishing to become CEC members and also prescribe more detailed dismissal procedures for the CEC members with the aim to protect their security of tenure.

Over the past years, the integrity of the CEC and the legality of the appointment of some of its members have been repeatedly questioned by some political forces in the country due to alleged political affiliations.³² Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed concerns about political and personal pressure put by some political leaders on CEC members.

MECs are permanent bodies appointed for a seven-year term by municipal councils and approved by the CEC; they are responsible for overseeing voting and counting in subordinate polling stations and the data entry of the preliminary election results. The MEC composition should reflect the ethnic composition of the given municipality.³³ The PSCs administer the voting and counting of votes, and the number of PSC members differs based on the size of the polling station.

Previously, all PSC members were appointed by political subjects contesting the elections in a respective constituency. This provision created mistrust among stakeholders towards lower-level commissions due to their alleged strong political affiliation as well as abuse (so-called trading) of PSC positions by contestants. The March amendments empower the CEC to directly appoint, train and remove presidents and deputy presidents of the PSCs who must be non-partisan. The remaining PSC members can now be appointed only by political subjects represented in municipal and city councils for local elections, and by political subjects represented in state and entity level parliaments for the general elections.

The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that to identify and recruit 12,000 PSC presidents and their deputies who are not affiliated with political parties is a very challenging task. Their training is to take place over the period of three months from June until August. The CEC is also in recruitment process of 300 trainers and 150 technical operators for the implementation of the pilot projects. The amendments allow for a temporary provision, which stipulates that should the CEC fail to recruit a sufficient number of staff, they shall be appointed according to the former rules by political subjects. Given this, all ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a strong wish for a significant presence of international observers to enhance the integrity of the process.

On 8 May, the CEC published the calendar of activities for the upcoming elections. In line with the 2024 amendments, the CEC is now enabled to control its own budget by being authorized to submit a budget request without it being altered by the Ministry of Finance. The cost of the elections has been estimated to amount to some BAM 19 million, with some 11 million already approved by the relevant institutions.³⁴ Cities and municipalities are to allocate the remaining funds. The CEC sessions are broadcast live on a *YouTube* channel, and all its decisions are made public on its website which has been updated for these elections. The amendments also stipulate that accessibility of the polling stations for voters with disabilities shall be taken into consideration when designating the location of polling stations. The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM about insufficient funds to conduct a comprehensive voter education campaign, in particular given the extent of the amendments.

³² In April 2022, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded that the appointment of the CEC members in question was in accordance with the Election Law and the Constitution.

³³ MECs are composed of three, five or seven members depending on the size of the municipality.

³⁴ Some EUR 9.7 million; EUR 1 equals BAM 1.95, Bosnian Convertible Mark.

In line with the 2024 amendments and with the financial assistance from the donor community, the CEC is preparing the implementation of four pilot projects to introduce ICT to be tested on the election day in 10 per cent of the polling stations. The first pilot, related to fingerprint identification and authentication and transfer of election results from polling stations directly to the CEC, will be implemented in 165 polling stations in 10 municipalities. The second pilot which introduces optical ballot scanners for automatic ballot counting, in 145 polling stations in 6 municipalities. The third pilot, the biometric identification of voters, will be conducted in polling stations in Brčko District. For the fourth pilot, which introduces the video surveillance system, funding is to be secured by the Ministry of Finance. Overall, ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed satisfaction with the introduction of new voting technologies and opined that their use, combined with the professionalized PSCs is the best way to prevent electoral fraud.

E. VOTER REGISTRATION

Citizens aged 18 or older have the right to participate in the elections, except those disenfranchised for a serious crime, including for war crimes, and those who have been declared legally incapable by a court decision, including on the basis of intellectual or psychosocial disability. Suffrage restrictions based on mental disability are at odds with OSCE commitments and other international standards.³⁵

In-country voter registration is passive; the CEC maintains the Central Voter Register (CVR), which is derived from the population register and based on permanent and temporary residence of citizens.³⁶ The population register is maintained by the Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange under the Ministry of Civil Affairs. As of 8 May, the CEC announced the preliminary number of voters as 3,406,088. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed to the fact that the number of registered voters is higher as compared to the last 2022 general elections (by some 37,000 voters) although according to estimates a high number of citizens left the country in the past years.³⁷ The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that those citizens who left to live and work elsewhere, did not de-register their place of residence in BiH and are thus still automatically included in the register.³⁸ In general, ODIHR NAM interlocutors did not express major concerns regarding the accuracy of the voter register.

The law provides for voting abroad, for which voters need to register electronically anew for each election.³⁹ Voters can vote either in-person at diplomatic representations in select countries or by mail.

Voters can verify their records throughout the year and request corrections of their data with the municipal institutions responsible for updating the population register. In line with the 2024 amendments, excerpts from the CVR shall now be published twice a year also in a non-election year for the purpose of their updating. Following a voter list verification process, the CEC shall finalize the CVR by 22 August and subsequently forward the voter lists to respective MECs. Voters, whose records on election day are not found in the voter list, but who can prove valid residency within the relevant election precinct, can be additionally registered at the polling station and vote by special “tendered” ballots. Homebound voters

³⁵ Paragraph 7.3 of the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states that the participating States will “guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens”. See Articles 12 and 29 of the [CRPD](#). See also Paragraph 48 of [General Comment No. 1 to Article 12 of the CRPD](#) states that “a person’s decision-making ability cannot be a justification for any exclusion of persons with disabilities from exercising [...] the right to vote [and] the right to stand for election”.

³⁶ Registration of permanent residence is mandatory for all citizens, while displaced citizens may have temporary residence until their return to the municipality of their prior permanent residence.

³⁷ It is estimated that some 400,000 citizens left the country since the last 2013 census.

³⁸ For updates of the CVR, the CEC depends on the accuracy of the data provided by other institutions responsible for updating the population register, including municipalities, canton and entity level police.

³⁹ An electronic registration platform [eizbori](#) is available for citizens to register.

and those in places of detention can vote via mobile ballot boxes. Records of internally displaced persons, citizens living abroad and residents in Brčko District shall be updated by 23 July.⁴⁰

F. CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

The right to stand is granted to citizens with voting rights. Following the 2024 amendments, no person who has been convicted by any international or domestic court of the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes may stand as candidate for elections or hold any elected, appointed or other public office.⁴¹ Candidates for the local elections may stand independently or be nominated by political parties and their coalitions. Some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed potential difficulties in checking criminal records of candidates convicted by courts outside Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In order to register, political subjects have to submit supporting signatures and electoral deposits.⁴² Political subjects were able to submit their applications for participation in the elections with all supporting documents to the CEC between 9 and 24 May. In line with the March amendments, the submission is done exclusively in an electronic form via a dedicated online platform and all ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed this step as significantly facilitating the verification and registration process. The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that the new platform also enables automatic verification of all supporting signatures and recognizes double signatures which are automatically eliminated.⁴³

The CEC certified a total of 173 political entities with over 26,000 candidates. Candidate lists had to be submitted by contestants to the CEC from 26 June to 8 July. Candidate lists must have at least 40 per cent of candidates of each gender, with specific placement requirements.⁴⁴ Several parties informed the ODIHR NAM about their internal rules to promote participation of women, including internal quotas. The CEC should verify and register all candidates by 2 August and publish the final lists of candidates in the media by 22 August. Overall, ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed no concerns with the inclusivity of the candidate registration process.

G. ELECTION CAMPAIGN

The official election campaign period, during which the rules for equitable access to public facilities by contestants for campaign purposes apply, will start on 6 September and will last until 5 October when the silence period begins including online.⁴⁵ The 2024 amendments prohibit any type of election campaign, including paid political advertising, from the day of calling the elections up until 6 September and empower the CEC to sanction any premature campaigning.⁴⁶ Political subjects are also forbidden to use hate speech, spread disinformation, prevent journalists from performing their duties and use children

⁴⁰ IDPs have the right to either vote in the polling station of their temporary residence, provided such residence has been kept for at least six months, or in special “absentee” polling stations for the electoral unit where they were registered before being displaced. Data about IDPs is provided to the CEC by other relevant authorities; the CEC informed the ODIHR NAM about difficulties in proper identification of the IDPs.

⁴¹ The CEC informed the ODIHR NAM that there is no official database of convicted war criminals and the data is provided by individual courts and the Ministry of Justice.

⁴² Parties and independent candidates must submit 100 signatures from municipalities with less than 10,000 registered voters and 200 signatures for municipalities with more than 10,000 registered voters. Political parties with members holding a mandate in the municipal or city council or assembly are exempt from the signature collection.

⁴³ Previously, due to shortage of resources, the CEC was able to verify only a 10 per cent sample of support signatures for each subject.

⁴⁴ The Election Law stipulates that at least one candidate of the less represented gender be placed among the first two candidates, two - among the first five candidates, three - among the first eight candidates on each list. The CEC can return a list for correction or register the part of the list that complies with the quota and the sequential order of candidates, or deny registration.

⁴⁵ This includes access to public places, including for holding meetings and displaying posters and billboards.

⁴⁶ During this period, the media are allowed to inform about the activities of the officials, but without mentioning their party or candidacy in the elections.

for political purposes. The new provisions also further detail what constitutes misuse of administrative resources and increase sanctions for breaches conducted during the pre-election and campaign period. While most ODIHR NAM interlocutors welcomed the amendments, they also noted that these provisions need to be tested against their effectiveness to deal with potential misuse of administrative resources and previous practices of pressuring voters, in particular public sector employees, students and pensioners, to campaign and to vote for ruling parties.

Positively, the amendments aim to promote gender equality during campaigning, including by prompting political parties to ensure equal promotion of candidates of both genders in media appearances, at public gatherings and other forms of election campaigning. Nevertheless, ODIHR NAM interlocutors noted there is no enforcement mechanism or applicable sanctions to verify compliance with the provision.

Political parties the ODIHR NAM met with expressed confidence in their ability to campaign without restrictions. Some political parties highlighted small-scale door-to-door campaigning, field visits and direct contact with the electorate as the most effective campaign methods and were of the opinion that local issues relevant to the communities will be prevalent in the campaign discourse. Campaigning online and on social networks is expected to play a significant role as another venue of outreach to voters.

H. CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Campaign finance is primarily regulated by the Election Law, the Law on Financing Political Parties, laws on political parties of Republika Srpska and Brčko District, and by CEC instructions. There is no direct public funding for election campaigns but political parties are entitled to annual public funding which can be used to finance the election campaigns.⁴⁷ The parties' regular activities may also be financed from their own funds and donations from individuals and legal entities.⁴⁸ Foreign, anonymous, and religious donations are prohibited as well as those from publicly funded sources, and from persons who have public procurement contracts exceeding BAM 10,000 in the current year. A political subject may spend up to BAM 0.3 for each registered voter during the one-month official campaign period. All campaign incomes and expenditures must be channeled through a designated campaign bank account each contestant is required to open no later than the day of application for participation in the elections.⁴⁹

The CEC is mandated with the oversight of political party and campaign finance.⁵⁰ In line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, the 2024 amendments introduce an interim report to be submitted to the CEC three days before election day. In addition, an initial declaration at the time of registration, and a final report within 30 days following the publication of results, are to be submitted. Non-compliance with the requirement to submit the initial report results in denial of registration of the electoral contestant, and failure to submit the final report leads to revocation of a mandate. The CEC shall publish campaign finance reports on its website within 30 days of receipt.

The CEC may impose sanctions for violations either *ex officio* or based on a complaint. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors raised concerns regarding the overall transparency of political and campaign finance as well as the capacity of the CEC to effectively and timely monitor campaign finance including potential breaches given its lack of resources, limited sample of political subjects being audited, delayed publication of reports and non-dissuasive sanctions.

⁴⁷ Political parties are entitled to annual funding from state, entity, cantonal and municipal budgets.

⁴⁸ An individual may donate to a party up to BAM 10,000, a party member up to BAM 15,000 and a legal entity up to BAM 50,000 annually.

⁴⁹ Unspent funds from these accounts during campaign period shall be returned to the political party or in case of individual candidates to respective donors.

⁵⁰ The amendments oblige all state, entities, cantonal and local self-government units' institutions to co-operate with the CEC to provide all required data, information and documents relevant for the effective verification of data accuracy.

I. MEDIA

While there is a large number of media outlets, most ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed out that the media environment is divided along ethnic and political lines and that both public and private media are vulnerable to pressure from political or business interests and provide voters with biased coverage.

The state and entity constitutions guarantee freedom of expression. Nevertheless, in 2023, defamation in Republika Srpska has been re-criminalized, causing both local and international concern.⁵¹ Many ODIHR NAM interlocutors pointed to increased pressure being exercised on media, in particular referring to verbal attacks and threats against journalists, most notably women, safety and precarious working conditions of journalists, the use of defamation lawsuits by politicians to silence media, non-transparent media ownership as well as the dire financial situation of the public service broadcasters.⁵²

The public broadcasting service is provided by the Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHRT) at the state level, as well as the Radio Television of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FTV) and Radio Television of Republika Srpska (RTRS) at the entity level. In addition, there are multiple public television and radio channels operating on the cantonal and municipal levels. Funding is mainly provided through a broadcast tax collected by the entity broadcasters and shared with BHRT. The failure by the entity broadcasters to transfer the legally prescribed part of the funds to the BHRT has been a longstanding issue and ODIHR has previously recommended to introduce a stable system of funding to the public broadcaster. On 8 May, the state broadcaster stopped providing services to the FTV which led to suspension of airing of some of its programs.⁵³ Subsequently, the Sarajevo Municipal Court ordered the signal to be reinstalled. The ODIHR NAM was informed that the FTV is in a financial crisis, close to being shut down and salaries of its employees are not being paid out.⁵⁴

Media coverage of campaigns is regulated by the Election Law and CEC regulations. The 2024 amendments among others extend transparency obligations to reveal ownership details also to online media, further specify conditions for paid political advertising, and give the right to broadcasters to refuse to air advertisements that are discriminatory on a broad range of grounds or incites hatred.⁵⁵ The new provisions also aim at promoting gender equality measures during the election campaign by calling on political subjects to make their best efforts to ensure equal representation of women and men candidates in the party programmes both on public and private electronic media. The ODIHR NAM was informed that this provision will not be monitored or enforced by the broadcasters or the oversight body and its enforcement is up to the political parties. While some ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed general satisfaction with access to traditional media, others highlighted the use of online portals and social networks as providing for increased space for meaningful coverage and public debate.

Public broadcast media shall grant three minutes of free airtime to each contestant for advertisement during the official campaign period. The election contestants can also purchase advertising time, up to a maximum of 30 minutes on each public broadcaster, and 60 minutes on each private broadcaster, per

⁵¹ See among others, the [statement](#) by OSCE Representative on Freedom of Media, the [reaction](#) by the UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, and the [joint statement](#) by the UN, the OSCE Mission, the Council of Europe and the EU Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Media reported that since the amendments to the Republika Srpska Criminal Code were adopted, 72 criminal complaints for defamation have been filed, and in 8 cases journalists and editors have been sued.

⁵² See among others the [reaction](#) of the OSCE Mission in BiH on increased threats to media freedom.

⁵³ See the [statement](#) of the OSCE Mission to BiH regarding interruption of regular programming on federal television.

⁵⁴ FTV discontinued 15 of its regular programs and shortened others. See a [statement](#) by the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom calling for urgent action to address the financial deadlock.

⁵⁵ The provisions state that paid political advertising shall be clearly defined as such and shall not be broadcast for a period of at least 15 minutes prior, during or after the news broadcast, as well as that the price and conditions of broadcast of ordered political advertising shall be unified for all political entities participating in the elections.

week. Broadcast media are required to respect the principles of equal access, balance, fairness, and impartiality, especially in their information programmes.⁵⁶

The Communication Regulatory Authority (CRA) oversees broadcasters' compliance with media regulations and deals with media-related complaints. It also has the competence to apply sanctions for violations; these range from warnings to fines and include also the possibility of suspending a program, which has so far never been applied. The CRA informed the ODIHR NAM that it would not conduct media monitoring during the campaign due to lack of technical and human resources. Most of the time, the body becomes aware of violations via complaints and notifications received from third parties. The decisions of the CRA can be appealed to the Council of the CRA, then to the Administrative Court and further to the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Complaints related to print and online media coverage of the campaign fall under the mandate of the Press and Online Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a self-regulatory body that issues non-binding decisions. Several ODIHR NAM interlocutors questioned the capacity of the regulatory bodies to execute their tasks efficiently given the limited resources at its disposal.

J. ELECTION DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Voters and political subjects whose rights are violated may file election-related complaints with the election commissions. The CEC serves as the first instance to review most election disputes and handles appeals against MEC decisions.⁵⁷ As regards election day irregularities, voters, observers and PSC members may register "substantiated objections" in a logbook, on the basis of which a contestant may file a formal complaint or the CEC may consider the matter *ex officio*.

Appeals against all CEC decisions are dealt with by the Appellate Division of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose decisions are final, except in cases where constitutional rights are in question. Following the 2024 amendments, CEC decisions on complaints lodged against the appointment of the presidents of the PSCs are final and binding with no possibility for an appeal. The Constitutional Court deals with cases infringing individuals' fundamental rights when all other remedies have been exhausted.

In line with a prior ODIHR recommendation, the 2024 amendments extend the deadlines for filing a complaint with election commissions and submitting appeals to the CEC from 48 to 72 hours, additionally extending the deadline by further 3 to 5 days in highly complex cases. The CEC welcomed this change. The deadlines for filing complaints and appeals to the courts remain unaltered and complaints must be resolved by the court within three days. The Appellate Division of the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Court) informed the ODIHR NAM they would have welcomed a prolongation of a deadline in particular given a limited number of judges dealing with the high number of cases. A case may be referred to the prosecutor or police if it contains elements of a criminal offence. Corresponding to a prior ODIHR recommendation, new provisions further oblige the CEC and the Court to inform the public in a timely manner about the complaints and appeals, as well as decisions, and to keep a separate register. Public hearings are not guaranteed by the legislation.

A number of ODIHR NAM interlocutors expressed a lack of trust in the capacity of election commissions, courts, and the prosecutors' offices to handle election disputes effectively and voiced concerns over the lack of independence of the judiciary.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The news coverage of officials who are also contestants is allowed provided their candidacy is not mentioned. These officials must not enjoy a privileged position in media with respect to other election contestants.

⁵⁷ MECs are in charge of complaints related to voter registration and the campaign.

⁵⁸ Section 1.1.1 of the 2019 European Commission's Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for membership to the EU states that "the independence of the judiciary is not sufficiently guaranteed to shield it from all forms of politicization and pressures".

K. CITIZEN AND INTERNATIONAL OBSERVATION

The law provides for election observation of all stages of the electoral process by citizen and international observers, as well as observers appointed by political subjects. The CEC is in charge of the accreditation process; applications may be submitted electronically. MECs accredit the observers appointed by contestants for activities within their relevant territory. Political parties informed the ODIHR NAM of their intentions to field party observers with the aim of deterring potential violations.

Pod Lupom, a coalition of several civil society organizations, informed the ODIHR NAM about its plans to deploy some 50 long-term observers around three months prior to the elections and some 1,000 short-term observers to follow election day proceedings, primarily in polling stations where ICT elements will be implemented. The observation will also include monitoring of social network activities of contestants.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

All ODIHR NAM interlocutors stressed a strong need for an election observation activity and requested ODIHR to deploy a high number of observers to cover all stages of the electoral process. In particular, ODIHR NAM interlocutors highlighted the need to observe and assess the practical implementation of the amended legal framework, especially given the extent of the amendments pertaining to all aspects of the electoral process and the timing of their adoption. Moreover, interlocutors stressed that while the introduction of ICT on the margins of these elections is expected to increase the integrity of the electoral process, it is limited to a number of polling stations and therefore, ODIHR's observation of election day procedures, in particular, counting of votes countrywide, is needed.

Based on its findings, contingent on funding, the ODIHR NAM recommends the deployment of an election observation mission (EOM) for the upcoming local elections. In addition to a core team of experts, the ODIHR NAM suggests requesting secondment by OSCE participating States of 24 long-term observers to follow the electoral process countrywide, as well as 300 short-term observers to follow election day procedures. In line with ODIHR's standard methodology, the EOM will include a media monitoring element.

ANNEX: LIST OF MEETINGS

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ahmet Halilović, Assistant Minister for General Affairs
Frano Planinić, Assistant Minister for International Legal and Consular Affairs

Central Election Commission

Irena Hadžiabdić, President
Vanja Bjelica-Prutina, Member
Jovan Kalaba, Member
Vlado Rogić, Member
Ahmet Šantić, Member
Goran Mišković, Secretary General

Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Zvezdana Antonović, Judge
Mirsada Džindo, Judge

Communications Regulatory Agency

Amela Odošević, Director of Broadcasting
Azra Maslo, Head, Department for Programs and Complaints

Agency for Identification Documents, Registers and Data Exchange

Dražen Vujica, Head, Regional Centre Sarajevo

Political Parties

Milan Dunović, Democratic Front
Sabina Čudić, Our Party
Šerif Špago, Party for Democratic Action
Safet Kešo, Party for Democratic Action
Nihad Omerović, People and Justice

Media

Senada Čumurović, Assistant Director General, Radio and Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Dunja Pasalić, SRNA News agency of Republika Srpska
Dejan Jazvić, Editor-in-chief, FENA Federal News Agency
Aida Kovač, FENA Federal News Agency

Civil Society

Dario Jovanović, Project Coordinator, Coalition *Pod Lupom*
Jasmila Pasić, Project Manager, Coalition *Pod Lupom*
Milena Mastalo, Programme Manager, Transparency International BiH
Lejla Bičakčić, Director, Centre for Investigative Reporting

International Community

Representatives of embassies of OSCE participating States, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Office of the High Representative, the UN office and the EU delegation