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**THE COALITION ,,POD LUPOM“ – PRESS RELEASE**

 **The Coalition ''Pod lupom'' Announces the Start of Operations of its Long-Term Observers**

*At today's press conference in Sarajevo, the Coalition for free and fair elections “Pod lupom'' called on citizens from all over BiH to apply for non-partisan observation of the 2018 General Elections and announced the start of operations of its 63 long-term observers of the election period.*

Citizens can apply to observe the 2018 General Elections by calling the toll- free number 080 05 05 05, by visiting the Coalition’s web page [www.podlupom.org](http://www.podlupom.org) or directly at one of 7 regional offices of the Coalition.

“Unlike partisan observers that observe elections to protect the interests of their political subjects, non-partisan observers of the Coalition work in the interests of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, because they work to protect citizens' votes and to insist on the implementation of free and fair elections“, said Murisa Marić, member of the Strategic Board of the Coalition “Pod lupom”. The Coalition encourages all citizens to call the toll-free number or to use the coalition's web page to report all observed irregularities, which will be forwarded to the competent institutions for further processing.

According to the findings covering the period between the day of announcing the elections until today, certain irregularities were registered. Two municipal election commissions are understaffed – Usora and Kupres RS. Four local election commissions do not fulfill gender requirements in line with the Law on Gender Equality and Election Law of BiH, which prescribe membership of at least 40% of underrepresented gender in election commissions. Hence, election commissions in Bosansko Grahovo, Petrovac and Stolac are all males while the members of the election commission in Krupa na Uni are all females. The Coalition also registered a number of prohibited activities, as they fall under premature campaigning.

As of today, the overall election period, from the day of announcement of the elections until certification of the election results, will also be monitored by 63 long-term observers of the Coalition that are deployed across BiH.

Together they will observe the work of the local election administration, all activities anticipated in the election calendar and they will work to detect electoral irregularities and fraud.

'We call on all the competent institutions to collaborate with our observers in the field in line with their legal obligations and to react to irregularities in the electoral process. Also, we call on political subjects to act responsibly and in line with the law and we call on media to engage in responsible and objective reporting to make sure that citizens receive all necessary information about the election process“, said Dario Jovanović, Director of the Coalition “Pod lupom”.

All activities of the Coalition are implemented with financial support of the European Union and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

The Coalition

 ''Pod lupom''

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