Sarajevo, October 7, 2018 ; 9 am

TO THE MEDIA

**PRESS RELEASE**

 **NO REPORTS OF MAJOR IRREGULARITIES REGARDING THE OPENING OF POLLS;**

**OBSERVERS REPORT NUMEROUS TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES**

*The Coalition for free and fair elections “Pod lupom”, which implements citizen, non-partisan observation of the 2018 General Elections in BiH, today has around 4,000 observers at 70% of polling stations and 62 mobile teams as well as observers in 143 local election commissions (since 6 pm) that together observe Election Day. This Press Release addresses the situation at polling stations registered by 8 am.*

In the majority of polling stations Election Day began without any major irregularities, however, there were many technical shortcomings.

The vast majority of the Coalition's observers had unhindered access to polling stations, while several dozens of the polling stations refused to register the Coalition's observers because of inadequate communication with the local election commissions. 66 critical situations were registered by 8 am, of which 45 pertain to barring the observers from entering polling stations and sending them away from polling stations due to lack of communication between different levels of electoral authorities. Voting was interrupted in one polling station in Doboj (038B039A) because ballots were already marked.

Preparations for the opening of polling stations were carried out mostly in line with the regulations. All members of the polling station committee were present at 82% of polling stations. Ballots were not counted manually in 2% of polling stations, and some elections materials were lacking in 6% of polling stations. In some isolated cases, ballot box was not shown empty prior to the opening of the polling station.

Total 72% of polling stations opened at 7 am; 23 % of polling stations opened between 7 am and 7:15 am, and 5% of polling stations opened between 7:15 am and 8 am. In some isolated cases, polling stations opened after 8 am and the secrecy of vote was not adequately secured.

A list containing names and surnames of members of the polling stations including the information about their affiliation to political subjects was not displayed in 21% of polling stations. This was the recommendation of the Coalition “Pod lupom” that the Central Election Commission adopted, and as such it is obligation of all polling station committees.

The first press conference will take place at 11 am at which time the Coalition will provide information about the Election-Day processes by 10 am, including a Press Release.

We call on BiH citizens to report electoral irregularities to the Coalition by calling the toll-free number 080 05 05 05 or by visiting www.podlupom.org.

*For additional information please contact Nina Zubović, Public Relations Coordinator of the Coalition “Pod lupom” by email at* *pr@podlupom.org* *or at 063 396 534..*