

TO THE MEDIA

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PRESS RELEASE

The Coalition "Pod lupom": **Prevent election fraud and ensure free and fair elections in BiH through amendments to electoral legislation.**

Within the framework of a project funded by the European Union, the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections "Pod lupom" yesterday held the Regional Conference in Banja Luka entitled "The Future of BiH's Elections: Prevent Election Fraud and Ensure Free and Fair Elections in BiH through advancing Electoral Legislation".

Government at the state level should be formed as soon as possible, in order to, among other, initiate necessary changes to electoral legislation during non-election year. Participants of yesterday's conference agree it is necessary, as soon as possible, to commence the process of amending the Election Law of BiH, which would provide a better framework to administrate a free and fair elections in BiH.

The opening speech was delivered by Mr. Vehid Šehić, the president of the Strategic Committee of the Coalition. Mr. Šehić emphasized the importance of the Election Law of BiH because it is the mirror of one country's democracy, respect of human and civil rights, equality of all BiH citizens. Therefore, due to all above mentioned it is necessary to change the BiH Election Law by implementing the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and constitutional courts in BiH.

"It is important to work in this area having in mind the fact that the Council of Europe requested from Bosnia and Herzegovina to amend its electoral law because it is a discriminatory", Mr. Šehić added.

The Coalition presented the Final Report on the Civic and Non-partisan Observation of the 2018 General Elections. The incomplete legal framework, non-implementation of the binding verdicts of local and international courts, transparent violation of the Election Law of BiH, a record high number of registered election irregularities, political influence on the election administration and the absence of sanctions contributed to the Coalition's assessing the 2018 General Elections **as partially irregular**.

"This is the first time in the Coalition's history to assess some segments of the electoral process as irregular" - said Mr. Dario Jovanović, the Coalition's Project Director.

Panel discussion participants were Mrs. Mira Pekić, a representative in the House of Representatives of the PS BiH, Mrs. Nada Batinar, the President of the City Election Commission of Banja Luka and Mr. Lazar Prodanović, a delegate in the House of Peoples of the PS BiH.

During the discussion, the conference participants often emphasized the need to tighten financial and other sanctions for violations of the Election Law, as well as to insist on establishing liability and sanctioning the offenders, which includes criminal liability where applicable, or where there are elements of this.

Participants agree that amendments to the Election Law of BiH should be prepared in such a way as to involve as many relevant actors as possible in the election process, especially all parliamentary parties, as well as independent experts in electoral legislation, in order to reach quality solutions.

The conference brought together about 50 representatives of government at different levels, electoral administrations, political parties, the international community, and civil society.

The Coalition for Free and Fair Elections "Pod lupom" consists of six civil society organizations financed by the European Union in order to advance electoral legislation in BiH. The Coalition enables citizens to actively participate in the process of monitoring of elections.

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