**PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT OF ELECTION DAY**

The Pod Lupom’s preliminary assessment of the Election Day in the 2020 Local elections in BiH is that the Election day at the vast majority of polling stations went in line with the Election law of BiH and the implementing regulation, with irregularities that in general are traditionally repeated in elections in BiH.

More serious problems were recorded at about 4% of the polling stations, where a combination of various election irregularities was observed, which may point to targeted manipulations of the electoral process.

The Coalition “Pod lupom” will request recount of the votes at the most critical polling stations if serious violations of the election regulations are confirmed. It is expected that all irregularities, especially those with elements of crime, shall be investigated as soon as possible in order to protect the election´s process integrity and the votes cast.

As society, we have demonstrated maturity in the newly emerging epidemiological circumstances, and both in the political and democratic sense. There was no triumphalism on the part of the winning political subjects in certain local communities or celebrations violating the protective measures. And another significant democratic step forward is a concession the political subjects that lost their election race at the local level made during the Election night, not questioning the election results.

The 2020 Local Elections were organized and conducted at time of the Covid-19 epidemic that brought many challenges for the electoral administration authorities. The epidemiological measures were complied with at the majority of polling stations. The biggest problem related to the epidemic was impeding the constitutional right of the persons suffering from Covid-19 or persons ordered to isolate, which is a denial of the fundamental democratic rights.

Organized attempts to prevent the Coalition’s observers to conduct non-partisan observation and control of the elections were recorded in Doboj and Banja Luka. The Coalition will file complaints against members of the polling station committees at those polling stations were our observers were not allowed access due to arbitrary actions of the polling station committees’ members.

The recorded irregularities indicate that there is a need for urgent actions to improve the quality of the electoral system toward which the Pod Lupom Coalition will gear their efforts in the period to come.

**VOTER TURNOUT**

This is the first time that the Pod Lupom Coalition monitored voter turnout. The registered voter turnout in the 2020 Local elections in BiH is at 51% (with a margin of statistical error of +/- 1, 35 % on .95 % confidence interval).

**CRITICAL INCIDENTS**

The Pod Lupom Coalition received around 200 reports on “critical incidents” at the polling stations. 75% of them were resolved on Election Day in cooperation with local election commissions and the Central Election Commission of BiH preventing potential irregularities from continuing at the polling sites. The largest number of the critical incident cases refer to disallowing the observers to monitor the electoral process (59) and shortage of election materials (18).

The Pod Lupom's observers recorded 39 objections in the Minutes on operation of the polling station committee.

**WORK OF LOCAL ELECTION COMMISSIONS DURING ELECTION NIGHT**

The Pod Lupom's observers monitored the work of local election commissions (LEC) i.e., the procedures for receiving the polling material and entering the results from the polling stations.

In 98% of the cases our observers were allowed unimpeded access to the LEC's premises.

In 8% of the cases observers recorded large crowds during the handover of the polling material.

In 93% of the cases, the recommended measures for preventing the spread of the Covid-19 were complied with.

In 29% of the cases, our observers recorded improper packing of the polling material by the polling station committees. In 6% of the cases, damages are visible indicating that someone opened the polling material (there is no seal on a bag, loose seals or seals that are different from the standard ones used on all other bags). In Novi Grad Municipality, 29 bags were open at the time of their receipt, and the current mayor made visits to and spoke with members of the LEC.

In 44% of cases, representatives of the LECs opened the bags to remove errors on forms or errors in packing of the polling material.

The most frequent errors and/or problems appearing during the handover of the polling material from the polling stations are unsealed bags or improper packing (in 31 LECs) or the improperly filled forms (in 28 of 142 LECs).

Repeated counting was recorded in 19 LECs - in 8 cases the polling station committee of that particular polling station completed the recount, and in 11 cases, a special team for conducting a recount was formed.

Objections to the work of the LEC was recorded in 15 LECs. In two LECs, it was not possible to observe entry of the results into the JIIS (Integrated Election Information System).

**ESTABLISHING OF ELECTION RESULTS**

The establishment of the election results at the polling stations was conducted mainly in accordance with the law and regulations. At 24 polling stations, pens were recorded on the counting desks at the time of opening a ballot box opening the door for suspicion of the possibility of interventions on the ballot papers.

Declaration of invalid ballots in the race for (city)mayor was not conducted in accordance with the CEC's regulation at 8 polling stations. During the vote count, one case of adding votes to the ballot papers in the race for (city)mayor was recorded in Gradiška by a partisan observer.

Observers filed objections regarding the establishment of election results in the race for (city) mayor at 16 polling stations. Serious irregularities that may impact the results in the race for (city)mayor were recorded at two polling stations (007B045 in Novi Grad and 003A076 in Bihać).

Declaration of invalid ballot papers in the race for city assembly/city council/municipal assembly/municipal council was not conducted in line with the CEC's regulation. During the vote count, adding votes to the ballot papers in the race for city assembly/city council/municipal assembly/municipal council was recorded in Kalesija by a member of the polling station committee. Observers filed objections regarding the establishment of election results in the race for city assembly/city council/municipal assembly/municipal council at 17 polling stations. Serious irregularities that may impact the results in the race for city assembly/city council/municipal assembly/municipal council were recorded at two polling stations (080A011B in Kalesija and 082A005A in Sapna).

In the 2020 Local elections, the Coalition “Pod Lupom” encountered many discrepancies in the “accuracy test” for election of local self-government bodies. It is imperative to emphasize that a significant number of these discrepancies occurred because of the new epidemiological circumstances caused by the Covid-19 pandemic considering that mobile teams had to be organized to allow voting of persons who were tested positive for Covid-19 or persons who were in isolation. Mobile teams took ballots from the polling stations, which resulted in substantial discrepancies in the accuracy test. In the coming days, the Coalition will carefully process all respective data from the field.

Problems with packing of the polling material were observed at five polling stations. Going into the polling stations after it closed was recorded at 40 polling stations. Stock form and Form for aggregate results were not signed by all members of the polling station committees at 13 polling stations. The yellow Form for aggregate results was either not displayed or it was displayed but it was illegible at 20% of the polling stations.

**CLOSING OF POLLING STATIONS**

The polls closed mainly in line with the regulation. 98.9% of the polls closed at 7 pm, while the remaining 0.8% closed with up to one-hour delay. At 2.3% of the polls that were not closed on time, the citizens lined up outside the polling stations at 7 pm were not allowed to vote despite the regulations providing differently. At almost all polling stations, all members of the polling station committees were present at the closing time.

**VOTING PROCESS**

The voting irregularities (one person is issued more than ballot, one person votes multiple times, one person votes on behalf of another person that is not present at the polling station) were recorded at 36 polling stations. Photographing the ballots was recorded at the polling stations in Novi Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Brčko District, Ilidža and Sanski Most.

Bulgarian train i.e., arrival of voters at polls with filled out ballots and their leaving with blank ballots was recorded at six polling stations - in Prijedor, Vareš, Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje, Novo Sarajevo, Stari Grad Sarajevo, and Brčko District of BiH.

Open inducement of voters to vote for a particular political subject or pressure on voters were recorded at 76 polling stations.

At least one case of voting without valid identification documents occurred at 2.9% of the polling stations, and even more than ten cases were recorded at one polling station in Odžak.

Sending voters away from the polling stations because they are not on the excerpt from the final Central Voters’ Register was recorded at 48 % of the polling stations (between one and ten cases), while more than 10 such cases were recorded at 27 polling stations.

The Pod Lupom's observers recorded family voting at almost two thirds of polling stations with up to ten cases. More than ten cases of family voting were recorded at 28 polling stations.

The case of one person assisting a large number of voters with voting in the voting booth was recorded at 26.5% polling stations and more than 10 such cases took place at four polling stations – in Bijeljina, Srebrenik, Stolac and Živinice.

The case of long presence of unauthorized persons was recorded at 15 polling stations. In 3.2% of the cases, the voting procedures were not applied and the recommended measures for preventing the spread of the Covid-19 virus were not followed.

The observers were not allowed unimpeded access to observe the counting process at 24 polling stations in the country, and objections and complaints were made by partisan election observers.

In Živinice, two observers had extremely unpleasant experiences with the electoral administration, including members of both the polling station committees and the Local election commission. The cases of false impersonation of the Coalition's observer were recorded in Čelić.

**OPENING OF POLLING STATIONS**

98% of the Coalition’s observers were allowed unhindered access to the polling stations to which they were assigned. The problem with access was present at 59 polling stations, the majority of which were located in Doboj and Banja Luka. This problem was resolved in 51 cases, while in 8 cases the Coalition observers did not continue their observation. Initially, the observers were not allowed into the polling station under the pretense of inability to comply with the epidemiological measures; however, they were subsequently allowed the access. This tells us that the observers were not allowed the access because of arbitrary actions of the polling station committee.

In 87.5% of the cases, all members of the polling station committee were present at the polling stations at 6 am.

In 96.6% of the polling stations, it was observed that the polling stations were organized according to the Instruction on Operation of the Election Management Bodies on the Election Day in the Context of the Covid-19 Pandemic issued by the Central Election Commission of BiH.

It raises concerns that every third polling station in the country did not display the list of the polling station committee members with the name of the political subject for each member of the committee, even though this was an obligation.

Some shortage of election materials was recorded at 3.9% of the polls, while ballots were not hand-counted at 2.2% of the polls.

At 99.4% of the polling stations, the ballot box was shown to be empty prior to the opening of the polls.

Total of 83.3% of the polls were opened at 7 am, while the remaining polling stations opened after up to one-hour delay. Three polls opened after a delay of more than one hour: 103B017 in Vlasenica, 123B009 in Han Pijesak and 173A001 in Čapljina.

Secrecy of the voting was ensured at all polling stations; the voting booths were set up in a way that no one could see how other person voted. Secrecy of the voting was compromised in Prijedor, where voting booths were placed next to a window allowing others to see the voting process. The situation was resolved after this case was reported by one of the Coalition’s observers. Such situation was also recorded in Bratunac; however, it was resolved after observer’s reaction.

**THANK YOU**

The Coalition “Pod Lupom” would like to thank the citizens non-partisan observers for observing the 2020 Local Elections at the polling stations, in local election commissions and mobile teams and in the Call center.

The Coalition would like to thank the media outlets for covering the independent observation missions in the 2020 Local Elections in BiH and the majority of the election administration bodies at all levels for their correct cooperation. We thank all other actors of the electoral process, and especially citizens voters for their support and confidence.

The Pod Lupom Coalition worked together with 85 civil society organizations to organize the electoral process and would like to thank these organizations for their engagement and contribution to free and fair elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.