



AS/Bur (2026) 31

19 May 2026

Declassified¹

Bureau of the Assembly

Proposal for testing the feasibility of observing out-of-country voting in the context of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (4 October 2026)

Memorandum prepared by the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly

1. Introduction

1. Following a proposal from the Parliamentary Alliance for Free and Fair Elections to develop a methodology for observing out-of-country voting (OCV), and subsequent discussions within the Presidential Committee, the Bureau of the Assembly decided, on 5 September 2025, to observe OCV in the context of the elections in the Republic of Moldova, in order to test the feasibility of the methodology (see document [AS/Bur \(2025\)50](#)). In accordance with the Guidelines for the Observation of Elections by the Parliamentary Assembly, the decision whether to observe OCV in each case is left to the Bureau of the Assembly.² Unfortunately, due to limited time and the dates involved, it was not possible to organise this test at such short notice.

2. The general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, scheduled for 4 October 2026, present a good opportunity to test the feasibility of observing OCV. Of the 3.37 million voters registered in 2022, diaspora-registered voters account for roughly 2.1% of the electorate.

3. It should be noted that the Parliamentary Assembly has a long-standing and excellent record of cooperation with the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since 2024, the Assembly has been implementing an [electoral cooperation programme](#) aimed at enhancing election integrity and increasing citizens' trust in the electoral process by strengthening the capacities of the CEC.

4. During the 2022 general elections, polling stations were set up in several Council of Europe member states within their respective Diplomatic-Consular Representations (DKP). The breakdown of voter numbers at locations with meaningful numbers of voters is provided below:

CoE Member State	Diplomatic-Consular Representation (DKP)	No. of Voters
Germany	Consulate General in Munich	666
	Consulate General in Frankfurt	244
	Consulate General in Stuttgart	246
	Embassy in Berlin	229
Belgium	Embassy in Brussels (for Belgium and Luxembourg)	443
Austria	Embassy in Vienna	411
	Honorary Consulate in Salzburg	34
	Honorary Consulate in Graz	253
Sweden	Embassy in Stockholm	321

¹ This memorandum was approved by the Bureau on 23 April 2026 and declassified by the Bureau on 22 June 2026.

² In line with para. 37 of the [Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly](#) as revised in 2025.

CoE Member State	Diplomatic-Consular Representation (DKP)	No. of Voters
Switzerland	Embassy in Bern	285
Norway	Embassy in Oslo	271
Denmark	Embassy in Copenhagen	260
Netherlands	Embassy in The Hague	211
Czechia	Embassy in Prague (for Czechia and Slovakia)	86
Slovenia	Embassy in Ljubljana	70
United Kingdom	Embassy in London (for the United Kingdom and Ireland)	62

5. For 2026, the CEC anticipates a similar distribution of polling stations, with the possibility of increased voter turnout depending on the final registration numbers and the level of motivation among the diaspora.

6. The legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina - specifically, the Election Law of BiH, the Rulebook on Accreditation, and the Rulebook on the Conduct of Elections - explicitly permits both international and domestic observers to monitor elections conducted abroad.

- **Accreditation:** The CEC of BiH is the sole authority responsible for accrediting international observers, including representatives from international organisations and foreign governments.
- **Rights:** Accredited observers are granted the same rights at DKP polling stations as they have domestically, including unrestricted access to station preparations, the voting process, and ballot counting.
- **Logistics:** Observers may collect their accreditation badges either at the CEC headquarters in Sarajevo or at the designated DKP. They are required to comply with both the Election Law and the security protocols of the respective diplomatic missions.

2. Proposed methodology

General framework

7. Observation of OCV should be carried out in strict compliance with the PACE [Guidelines for the observation of elections by the Parliamentary Assembly](#), the Code of conduct for International Election Observation Missions and the 2005 Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, including the rules governing the **disclosure of potential conflicts of interest**. Some adaptations, however, will be necessary, given the specificities of OCV as well as time constraints due to the proximity of the election date.

Submission of candidatures

8. Political groups should be invited to submit, by 15 June 2026, candidates from member states where OCV is provided for the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (4 October 2026).

9. Candidates should have experience in election observation, having observed at least one, preferably two elections as part of PACE election observation missions.

Composition of the ad hoc committee

10. The list of OCV observers will be approved by the Bureau by written procedure in time to request the accreditations.

11. When approving the composition, the Bureau will form teams of (at least) two of election observers preferably from different political groups, who will carry out the observation together. There may be more than one team per country. It shall not be possible for a member of the Assembly to carry out the election observation alone.

12. The total size of the delegation of OCV observers shall not exceed the size of the delegation observing the in-country vote (in the present case 20 members). For this test, considering the time constraints and to facilitate the process, there would be no requirement to respect the D'Hondt.

13. The ad hoc committee would be chaired by the Head of the election observation delegation, to whom the teams would report back their remarks and observations on the evening of the vote.

Secretariat and other support

14. Prior to election day, the Secretariat shall organise online briefings/training to provide information about the legal framework, address the distinct challenges of the OCV, and recall the regulatory framework applying to election observers, in particular as regards impartiality and non-interference.

15. The Secretariat will provide an election observation form to OCV observers, to facilitate and structure the collection of information.

16. The Secretariat will not accompany the teams. Interpretation shall not be provided. The Assembly shall not cover any costs stemming from the OCV observation. Any ad hoc committee members' expenses (transport, accommodation, etc.) should be covered by their respective national parliaments.

3. Follow-up

17. Given that the aim of this exercise is testing the feasibility of the Assembly observing OCV, the Head of the delegation will present to the Bureau the findings of the OCV observation but these will not be included in the PACE report on the observation of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

18. On the basis of the implementation of this test, the Bureau will approve the relevant methodology, taking into account possible adjustments. This methodology will be applied in future OCV observation missions by the Assembly, subject to adaptations as appropriate, should the Bureau decide to have them in each specific case, in line with the current Guidelines. In the future, and if so decided by the Bureau, the OCV findings could be included in the PACE EOM report.

4. Draft decision

The Bureau is invited to:

- decide to observe out-of-country voting in the context of the parliamentary elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 4 October 2026, as a test, and approve the relevant methodology for this exercise;
- on the basis of this test, come back to the issue of the feasibility of the observation of out-of-country voting by the Assembly and approve the relevant methodology.