

Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by member states of the European Charter of Local Self-Government (Monitoring Committee)

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Information report on the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (15 November 2020) and in Mostar (20 December 2020)

Remote meetings on 29-30 October 2020 and on 17 December 2020

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Summary

The following report is an analysis of the two remote observation procedures, completed ahead of the local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, held on 15 November 2020, as well as the local election in the city of Mostar, held for the first time in over twelve years, on 20 December 2020.

Against the backdrop of a global pandemic, the Congress was unable to send a delegation to conduct a fully-fledged observation mission. In accordance with Resolution 455(2020) regarding local and regional elections in major crisis situations, which was adopted by the Statutory Forum on 28 September 2020, a remote procedure, held entirely online was conducted in both instances.

Both programmes were consistent with past missions, and thus the delegation was able to get a relatively accurate picture of the situation on the ground, given the unique circumstance. Of particular interest for the Congress is that the local election was finally reinstated in Mostar after the conclusion

1 L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
 EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
 SOC/G/PD: Group of Socialists, Greens and Progressive Democrats
 ILDG: Independent Liberal and Democratic Group

ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group

NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

2 Full members of the Council for Democratic elections of the Venice Commission: Mr Stewart DICKSON and Mr Jakob WIENEN / Alternate members: Rosaleen O'GRADY and Vladimir PREBILIC.

3 Chair of the Governance Committee and Head of Delegation regarding the mission to Mostar organised in November 2019. Mr Robert-Csongor Grűman took part in the remote meetings on 17 December 2020.

4 The same applies to Congress member Ms Randi Mondorf who was supposed to serve as a Rapporteur for an on-site observation mission to BiH/Mostar and consequently took part in the remote meetings on 29-30 October and 17 December 2020.

of a twelve-year political impasse. It has been noted positively that there were less acute ethnic tensions during the campaign compared to previous elections. For both elections it can be said that they took place in an overall calm and orderly environment despite difficult framework conditions.

While the COVID-19 related measures seem to have been implemented and respected overall, during both the local elections in BiH and in Mostar, there were a number of recurring issues regarding both elections that the Congress noted with the help of a local election observation assistant and several reports from domestic observers. Of particular note, was the accuracy of voters' lists and fraudulent use of registration of voters residing *de facto* abroad; the secrecy of the vote including the ongoing practice of calling the name of the voter before the ballot is cast; family voting; as well as the politicisation of election commissions (trading of seats on commissions).

1. INTRODUCTION⁵

1. Following an invitation by the President of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr Željko Bakalar, dated 29th September 2020, the Bureau of the Congress decided to conduct a remote election observation procedure in order to evaluate the local elections to be held in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 15 November 2020. In the same letter, the CEC President invited the Congress to observe the local election in the city of Mostar to be held on 20 December 2020. The delegation comprised Mr Stewart Dickson (ILDG, R, United Kingdom) Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission; Mr Jakob Wiene (EPP/CCE, L, The Netherlands) Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission; Mr Vladimir Prebilič (SOC/G/PD, L, Slovenia) Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission; Ms Rosaleen O'Grady (ILDG, L, Ireland) Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission; and, Ms Randi Mondorf (ILDG, R, Denmark). The team was supported by Emeritus Professor, Colin Copus member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

2. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made it impossible for the physical presence of a delegation, in line with Congress' usual practice, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to observe the elections. Thus a remote observation exercise was conducted in accordance with the methodology of distance observation pursuant to the Report on local and regional elections in major crisis situations,⁶ adopted by the Statutory Forum of the Congress in September 2020. As a result of Congress regulations there was no physical mission sent to BiH. Instead a series of on-line meetings were held remotely with principal interlocutors. Remote observations meant that the Congress delegation was not in a position to undertake nation-wide observations or to form a view from first-hand experiences of the local Election Day.

3. In accordance with Congress Resolution 455(2020), a local election observation assistant visited 12 polling stations in Sarajevo (on 15 November) and 10 polling stations in the city of Mostar on (20 December), on behalf of the Congress. Preliminary and post-election assessments conducted by BiH NGO coalition Pod Lupom were used as reference. It should also be noted, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities was the only international organisation to observe elections, though remotely, alongside a number of Sarajevo based embassies.

4. The following information report focuses specifically on issues arising out of exchanges held with Congress interlocutors in the context of the local government elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina held on 15 November 2020. Appendix I (page 12) was added to the end of this report regarding the remote observation procedure the Congress conducted on the local election that was held in the city of Mostar on 20 December 2020.

5. The programmes of both procedures can be found on pages 17 and 19, respectively. As indicated the Congress delegation was also able to meet, remotely, with incumbent mayors and mayoral candidates as part of this observation.

6. The Congress wishes to thank all those who met with the delegation in both instances for their open, informative and constructive dialogue.

2. Political Context

7. Bosnia and Herzegovina comprises of two entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republika Srpska; it also includes the self-governing Brčko District. The constitution of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an integral part of the Dayton Agreement and it was formally adopted on 14th December 1995. The new constitution confirmed the co-existence of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska while the constitutions of both these entities were modified to comply with the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁵ Prepared with the contribution of expert Prof. Colin COPUS, United Kingdom, member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government.

⁶ CG-FORUM(2020)01-05 22 September 2020.

8. As the result of the historical developments, the institutional set-up of the country is complex and differs in all entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The institutional set-up at the local level differs across BiH including the competences and resources of local authorities.

9. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is divided into 10 autonomous Cantons, which constitute the intermediate level of Local Self-Government. The lower level of Local Self-Government is composed of 78 Municipalities and Cities.

10. In Republika Srpska, 63 Municipalities and Cities constitute the basic Local Self-Government Units. There is no intermediate level of Local Self-government in Republika Srpska. Cities in both entities can be divided into Municipalities.

11. On 7th May, the CEC of Bosnia and Herzegovina announced that Local Elections would be held on 4th October 2020. But following a decision at their 25th session on 23rd May the elections were postponed as the 2020 state budget of BiH had not yet been finalised, which included electoral finances and as a consequence were rescheduled for 15 November 2020⁷. On 15 November 2020 elections were held for the following:

- 64 Municipal Councils in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH),
- 56 Municipal Assemblies in the Republika Srpska (RS),
- 120 mayors of municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- 14 City Councils in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- 7 City Assemblies in Republika Srpska,
- 22 City mayors in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and
- Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

12. On 24 July 2020 it was announced that the City of Mostar would hold its first local election in 12 years on 20 December 2020. As per the new election rules, 35 councillors would be directly elected and they in turn would go on to elect Mostar's new mayor⁸. The Congress' observation of this election is contained in an appendix to this report.

13. According to a Congress monitoring report, local democracy in the BiH is negatively affected by the complex decision-making system as well as the lack of clarity in the apportionment of competences between the local and cantonal levels⁹. In particular, financial difficulties remain an important matter for local governments in BiH and there is a need for Congress to continue to support local authorities receiving sufficient financial resources commensurate with their powers and responsibilities.

14. The constitutional provisions in FBiH and legislation passed in cantons allow councils to establish their own operational rules, appoint public officials and set up committees and other structures to conduct their business. Local assemblies in Republika Srpska create their own rules for operating and structure to carry out their activities. Thus, there is a diversity of structure and process at the local level across and within the two entities. The absence of a standardised approach may lead to frustrations higher in the governmental chain but that diversity can enhance local self-government if employed correctly.

3. Administrative Structure

15. Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of two entities and Brčko district: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska. The capital of BiH is Sarajevo. The main cities are Mostar, Tuzla, Bihać and Zenica. In Republika Srpska the main cities are Banja Luka, Bijeljina, Prijedor and Trebinje. The Brčko District of was formally part of both entities but in 1999 became a multi-ethnic self-governing administrative unit.

16. The state level governance structure involves a three-member rotating presidency, including one Croat, one Bosniak and one Serb. The BiH Presidency Chairman rotates every eight months; the

⁷ <https://www.izbori.ba/Default.aspx?CategoryID=183&Lang=6&Id=3084>

⁸ <https://www.rferl.org/a/date-confirmed-for-mostar-s-first-local-elections-in-12-years/30744810.html>

⁹ Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, March 2012

Head of the Council of Ministers BiH; there is a bicameral Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina which comprises the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples.

17. The FBiH is divided into 10 autonomous Cantons which are the intermediate level of Local Self-Government between the centre and the 78 Municipalities and Cities which may be divided into Communes. According to a monitoring report of the Congress, the situation of local democracy in the FBiH is negatively affected by the complexity of the three-level decision-making system as well as the lack of clarity in the apportionment of competences between the local and cantonal levels.¹⁰

18. Republika Srpska has a president and two vice-presidents and an 83 member unicameral parliament and the Council of Peoples. The basic Local Self-Government consists of 63 Municipalities and Cities. Cities are usually larger urban areas which combine several Municipalities; Municipalities themselves can be divided into Communes. There is no intermediate level between Local Self-Government and the centre in the Republika Srpska. There is a high concentration of power at the centre in Republika Srpska. Recent efforts towards decentralisation however, along with a rather simple institutional setting led to substantial improvements with regard to Local Self-Government, notably in terms of consultation with local authorities by the centre.¹¹

19. The Brčko District was granted a special status under international arbitration and through a constitutional amendment adopted on 5 March 2009.¹² It is a Local Self-Government Unit “with its own institutions, laws and regulations, and with powers and status definitively prescribed by the awards of the Arbitral Tribunal for the Dispute over the Inter-Entity Boundary in the Brčko Area.” The Brčko District “exists under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is subject to the responsibilities of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina”.

20. Sarajevo is the Capital City of BiH. It is the only city explicitly mentioned in the constitution and it enjoys, according to the constitutional Court, local self-governance.¹³

4. Legal Framework

21. Elections are primarily regulated by the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted in 2001 and last amended in 2016.¹⁴ Particular amendments relate to the qualification of election commissions and polling station committee members as well as regulations about the gender balance in the membership of these commissions and committees. In addition, special training has been introduced for the presidents and deputy presidents of Polling Station Commissions (PSCs). Changes have been introduced in terms of voters’ registration, notably regarding the list of identification documents that need to be submitted. A gender quota guaranteeing the minimum representation of the underrepresented gender has been introduced: there should be at least 40% of candidates from the underrepresented gender on a candidates’ list.

22. Also of importance to the legal framework for elections are the 1995 constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 2012 Law on Political Party Financing, the Dayton Agreement, Central Election Commission regulations and the constitution and the laws of the lower level governments and bodies.

5. Election Administration

23. The Central Election Commission is a permanent body primarily responsible for the conduct of elections. Local electoral administration is overseen by Municipal Election Commissions, City Election Commissions (MEC) and the Election Commission of the Brčko District. They are responsible for appointing and training members of the Polling Station Committees, arranging technical preparations for the elections, overseeing polling and counting procedures as well as for data entry of the preliminary election results.

¹⁰ Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, March 2012

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² <http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/legal/laws-of-bih/pdf/001%20-%20Constitutions/BH/BH%20Amendment%20%20to%20BH%20Constitution%2025-09.pdf>

¹³ Local and regional democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, March 2012

¹⁴ An unofficial consolidated version of the Election Law can be found at https://www.izbori.ba/Documents/documents/English/Laws/Election_Law_of_BiH-eng.pdf

24. MECs are permanent bodies comprising three, five or seven members depending on the number of registered citizens in the Municipality.¹⁵ They are appointed for 7-year term by the respective Municipal Councils and subject to the approval of the CEC. The composition of MECs reflects the ethnic composition of the respective Municipalities according to the most recent census.¹⁶

25. Polling Station Committees constitute the lower level of election administration. They manage the voting and counting processes in polling stations.¹⁷ PSCs comprise three or five members depending on the size of the population registered to the particular polling station. area¹⁸ PSCs members are appointed on an ad-hoc basis for each election. Electoral contestants nominate an equal number of representatives who are then randomly assigned to PSCs through a lottery by the respective Municipal Election Commission.¹⁹ A given contestant can have only one representative in each PSC. When there are more contestants than PSC members, political balance may not be ensured as some contestants may not be represented in some of the polling stations.

26. Members of Polling Station Committees have the obligation to attend a training provided by the respective Municipal Electoral Commission and to complete a test of knowledge.²⁰ Once assigned to a specific PSC however, members can be replaced up until the Election Day and without any justification, which can result in members lacking the appropriate training and experience.²¹

27. Despite the changes introduced to the Election Law in 2016, the Congress interlocutors expressed considerable concern over lack of professionalisation and the politicisation of polling station committees and this remains a major issue to address for Bosnia and Herzegovinian local elections.²² The neutrality of these organisations is still highly questionable and so too are some of their activities and practises which have not been resolved since the 2016 local elections. The Congress interlocutors expressed continued concern at the tactic of ruling parties inflating their representation on PSCs by creating 'phantom parties' (parties which exist in name only) with whom they then trade places on PSCs, casts a shadow over the probity and quality of some PSCs and the election process. Such place trading indicates the importance and influence over the election process had by the PSCs and why it is important to ensure their neutrality and probity.

28. Activities such as in some instances PSC members announcing publicly the name of the voter about to vote, family voting collusion in public and the arrangement of polling booths where voters can be overseen have been criticised by the Congress interlocutors and require changes.

29. The Congress, in its report of its observation of the 2018 FBiH Cantonal Assembly elections concluded that: 'as noted by the Congress in relation to previous elections, the election administration is still politicised – in particular at the level of PSCs – which remains a matter of concern.'²³ That concern, two years later, still exists.

6. Electoral System

30. The municipal elections in BiH involved the election of a mayor and a municipal assembly across the 143 municipalities of Republika Srpska and FBiH. Mayors are directly elected by voters, using the first past the post (simple plurality) system, with the exception of Sarajevo and Mostar whose citizens elect the city councillors who in turn elect the Mayor.

31. Assembly elections use an open list proportional representation system of voting with the number of assembly members varying dependent on the size of the municipal population. The threshold for successful election is 3% which can result in the election of a large number of parties to an assembly

15 In 2012, MECs comprised 3 members when there were up to 20,000 voters registered in the respective Municipalities and 5 members when there were more than 20,000 voters registered.

Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7 October 2012, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

16 Article 2.14 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

17 Article 2.20 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

18 In 2012, PSCs comprised 3 members when there were up to 500 voters registered in the respective polling station and 5 members when there were more than 500 voters registered.

Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 7 October 2012, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

19 Article 2.19 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

20 *Ibid.*

21 Bosnia and Herzegovina General Elections, 12 October 2014, OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Final Report

22 <http://europa.ba/?p=42594>

23 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680937716>

which means protracted negotiations between parties post the election. A fractured assembly political environment may make agreement difficult. As numerous parties can be elected to the assembly, the direct election of the mayor means that multi-party coalitions (or ethnic slates) are formed to support mayoral candidates.

7. Voter Registration

32. The Central Voters' Register is the electronic database that records citizens 18 or older who have the right to vote.²⁴ It is continuously updated from official records on permanent and temporary residence of citizens provided by different State institutions and maintained by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Voter registration is therefore a passive process for residence of BiH. The CEC is responsible for "accuracy, correctness and general integrity of the Central Voters' Register".²⁵ It is also responsible for issuing relevant voters' lists to the respective Municipal Election Commission. Central Voters' Register data should be publicly available and all voters can request the corrections of their personal data. The registration is closed 45 days prior to the elections.²⁶

33. In each municipality, the MEC is supported by a Voters' Register Centre which shall provide for technical support in identifying the polling stations and allocating voters as well as for updating data and dealing with requests and appeals related to the Central Voters' Register.²⁷

34. All BiH citizens registered in the Central Voters' Register²⁸ have the right to vote in person in the municipality of their permanent residence. Voters residing de facto abroad are entitled to vote if they are in the country on Election Day. Other voting procedures are provided for specific cases:

- voters temporarily residing abroad (without changing their permanent residence) are entitled to vote in person at the polling station of their permanent residence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at a diplomatic representation of the country abroad²⁹ or by mail;
- voters with the status of refugees can vote in person at their former permanent residence in accordance to the data from the last census, at the diplomatic representation or by mail;³⁰
- internally displaced persons can vote in person at their former permanent residence in accordance to the data from the last census or at their current residence, under the condition that they became a resident of that municipality at least 6 months prior to Election Day.³¹

35. Out-of-country voter registration is an active process and must be requested in advance to the Central Election Commission.

36. There were 3,283,194 on the registered voter list created by the CEC. But the number of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina aged over 18 at the time of the local elections was 2,908,432. The 101,771 overseas registered voters do not explain the difference between these two figures. The accuracy of the voters' lists remains a matter of concern as it was in the 2018 cantonal elections and the previous local elections in 2016,³² despite efforts made by the CEC to improve its accuracy.

37. A number of electoral registration issues remain to be addressed and solved, such as: the theft of personal data and its use for organised on-line fraudulent and or fictitious registrations of overseas voters and multiple applications for the same voter, which are a particular area of concern and difficult to monitor; the continued registration of deceased voters continues to occur which heightens the possibility of fraudulent voting. Of particular note is the situation in the city of Srebrenica in the six weeks leading up to the elections, where a significant number of foreign citizens, with parental ties to BiH, registered for BiH citizenship which was granted the same day, likely in an attempt to influence the election results. The CEC has introduced a more stringent approach to registration from overseas voters

24 Article 3.1 and 3.2 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

25 Article 3.6 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

26 Article 2 of the Rulebook on Maintaining and Using the Central Voters' Register

27 Article 3.8 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

28 With the exception of citizens serving a sentence imposed by a Court in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia or a Court of a foreign country.

29 Out-of-country voting should be requested in advance for each election according to Article 3.16 of the Election Law.

30 Article 1.5, 3.12 and 3.9 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

31 Article 20.8 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

32 <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016806fe048;>

<https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680937716>

requiring more evidence and checks to be made from authorities within the country the voter is said to reside.

8. Candidate Registration

38. Any resident of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) aged 18 years and above with a registered address in the country is eligible to be a candidate in the local elections.³³ Political parties and independent candidates must have submitted an application to register with the CEC by July 28, 2020. The CEC made final certification decisions on August 4, 2020. The deadline for submission of candidate lists for each municipality was 11th September 2020, and the CEC published a certified list on 1st October 2020. To be able to participate in the elections political parties and independent candidates needed to have received 100 signatures if the municipality in which they were standing had fewer than 10,000 voters; 200 signatures if the municipality has more than 10,000 voters; and 5% of signatures if the municipality has fewer than 1,000 voters.

39. There were 30,384 registered candidates for the local elections which took place on 15th November 2020. Some 543 political organisations were registered comprising: 129 political parties, 72 coalitions, 262 independent candidates, nine independent lists and 71 minority candidates. While these figures, on the surface, indicate a large number of participants, as reported in section 5 above, our interlocutors reported concerns about the creation of phantom parties which inflate the amount of genuine political choice available to the voter.

40. To be registered as a candidate individuals must be registered voters for the municipality to which they are standing for election³⁴. In addition, each candidate list – whether from a political party or list of independent candidates – must register with the CEC by submitting the required number of supporting voter signatures and bank account details to allow for the checking of campaign financing against the regulations. All candidates have to submit a deposit which is refunded if the list secures more than 3% of the vote cast for the municipal council and one third of the votes for mayoral candidates.

41. There is a gender quota of 40% of the under-represented gender on each candidate list. In the 2020 local elections in BiH there were 12,832 women candidates and 17,977 male candidates. There were 425 mayoral candidates of which 29 were woman, four of whom were elected compared to seven in the 2016 elections.

9. Observers

42. The COVID pandemic severely hindered the ability of international observers and the CEC produced a set of general rules for overseas observers arriving in BiH³⁵. As the Congress delegation was limited to a remote observation mission, due to an organisation wide travel restriction in light of the pandemic, a local election observer in BiH visited 12 polling stations on election-day in Canton Sarajevo including Sarajevo, municipalities Centar, Stari Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Novi Grad and Vogošća and was in regular contact with the Secretariat. The Congress was the only international organisation to conduct election observation in any capacity for these elections.

43. Within BiH the coalition of NGOs known as Pod Lupom (Under the Magnifying Glass) independently wrote two assessment reports which provided the main citizens based election observers and have already observed several elections in BiH. In 98% of cases the election observers deployed by Pod Lupom had unimpeded access to polling stations.³⁶

10. Campaign Environment

44. The campaign officially commenced on 16 October 2020 and concluded with a 24 hour period of 'silence' prior to the vote taking place. The period of silence involves the suspension of campaigning activity and media coverage and there is a 48 hour suspension of opinion poll publication. These

33 Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article 1.4

34 Chapter 4 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina

35 https://www.izbori.ba/Documents/Lokalni_izbori_2020/Akreditovanje_posmatraca/General_rules_for_international_observers_for_arrival_to_BiH.pdf

36 <http://podlupom.org/v2/en/article/preliminary-assessment-of-election-day/391>

suspensions of political activity and opinion polling allows for a period of calm and reflection for the voters as well as preventing late opinion polls influencing the vote and voter turnout.

45. The interlocutors made it clear that national and ethnic issues were still influencing the nature of the local election campaign by the main political parties and that local issues and local policy alternatives were being marginalised, but did not disappear, in the campaign both at the mayoral and municipal councillor level. Divisive rhetoric was reported by our interlocutors within the campaign and appeals to ethnic unity or voting along were also part of the campaign.

46. The CEC banned the party United Srpska, from contesting the local elections as a result of a video which, they deemed, violated electoral law because of its ethnic content. That ban however, was overturned by the courts which ruled that the video had been outside of the official period for local elections.

47. It was felt by some Congress interlocutors that the degree and intensity of the ethnic and national issues within the campaign were not as strong as in previous local elections, but was still very apparent and that there is still some way to go to 'localise' the local elections. Despite the existence of a number of independent candidates for mayors and municipalities and independent municipal lists – such candidates can be relied on more often than national party candidates to focus on local, non-partisan issues – some independents were supported by national political parties which raises questions about the extent of their 'independence'.

48. Media coverage was considered by our interlocutors, to lack a degree of sophistication and rigorous analysis of the issues, campaign, policies and pronouncements by candidates and parties and in the local-national distinction in these elections. While the weaknesses in the media coverage of the local elections and lack of investigative reporting had fuelled some public distrust and disenchantment with the process, the criticisms received were not as intense or detailed as those expressed during the 2016 elections. The use of social media, while under-regulated, had provided both candidates and voters with an additional source of media for political engagement.

49. The Congress interlocutors, particularly Pod Lupom, reported that the 'public administration vote', that is the promise of public employment, or threats to existing employment as a way of influencing voters, was still occurring.

11. Election Day

50. The Congress interlocutors provided vital information on which to base our assessment of the context of the local elections in BiH and indicated the issues which we should draw from the Pod Lupom and local observers' reports in the absence of a delegation on the ground on Election Day. A number of irregularities that are ongoing during Election Days reoccurred during the 2020 local elections and significant problems were reported in 4% of polling stations which indicates a more targeted approach to electoral regularities, rather than across the board problems.

51. The 2020 elections were held against the backdrop of the very challenging situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the safety of the voters, staff and MEC members was of great importance. On 26 June the CEC issued instructions further to electoral law, regarding measures to be taken on the day of the local elections election during the pandemic. The document covered 14 Articles and mandated a number of sanitary measures to be put in place, such as:

- the use of masks and gloves
- a physical distance of 1.5 m between people
- entry into the polling station limited to the number of free voting booths,
- regular disinfection of surfaces and materials throughout the day

52. Pod Lupom reported that 96% of polling stations were arranged according to the instructions of the Central Election Commission of BiH in accordance with the COVID-19 epidemic. In 25 polling stations the CEC instructions were not followed.³⁷

³⁷ <http://podlupom.org/v2/en/article/preliminary-assessment-of-election-day/391>

53. Pod Lupom confirms that the recurrent issues identified in past elections persisted during the 2020 local elections which indicates that a more robust set of regulations and enforcement of those regulations is required to remove any improprieties from the electoral system and process and these are summarised in the conclusion section of the present report. Pod Lupom refer to a number of 'critical issues' occurring over the day of the local elections. It is also difficult to conclude on the effect of the issues Pod Lupom identified on the overall outcome of the elections in particular municipalities or generally across the local elections, but this is likely to become clearer over time. Incidences of family voting at polling stations were still being observed.³⁸

54. The pandemic did have an effect on the organisation and operation of polling stations through regulations issued from the CEC which were generally and widely adhered on Election Day. An important consequence of the pandemic is the extent to which it depressed voter turnout especially among the elderly and infirm, who would otherwise have voted but decided not to do so because of safety concerns. It is not possible to estimate the degree of voter suppression as a result of the pandemic, at this stage, but it no doubt had an effect on Election Day.³⁹

55. Recounts were performed in a number of local election commissions further to the complaints issued. In two local election commissions, it was not possible for Pod Lupom or other domestic observers to monitor the process of entering results without hindrance.⁴⁰

56. The process of voting requires the presentation, by the voter, of valid identification documents and the checking of voter's signatures and placing each ballot paper into the ballot boxes. Due to a lack of training of a number of members of the elections commissions, several instances of inappropriate behaviour were noted by the domestic observers.⁴¹

57. In the municipalities of Centar, Stari Grad, Novo Sarajevo, Novi Grad and Vogosća, local observer reported that Some political parties (noticeably the SDA) had observers all day at each polling station. The behaviour of some of the observers was allegedly aggressive towards members of the commission and other observers. Some failed to identify themselves with name labels but instead simply identified themselves to the president of the commission. There was little direct or obvious campaigning around polling stations although some private houses next to polling stations were displaying candidate posters or banners and cars with candidate posters were seen driving near polling stations. As well as some family discussions around voting some voters (no numbers were provided) who experienced difficulty in voting because of disability or literacy levels requested support from commission members which was not provided so they were assisted by other voters when requesting help with the process. These activities are related to activities by individuals rather than the system and process of voting. Overall the local observer provides a positive report on the organising and running of the polling stations for the 2020 local elections in the areas observed.

58. By the close of polls on Election Day turnout reached 50%.

12. Election Results

59. The CEC reported that in the 2020 local elections 1,525,832 valid ballots had been cast for Municipal Councils, with 82,340 votes judged as invalid, while 1,511,901 valid ballots had been cast for Mayors, with 96,111 votes judged as invalid.⁴²

60. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) won 25 mayoral contests and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won 22 mayoral contests, from 79 in FBiH where 14 mayoralties changed hands; the

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Incorrectly packaged material by polling stations' was observed in 29% of cases. In 6% of cases, damage was noticed to the packaging of the voting material, which indicated that it had been opened beforehand (no seals on the bag, loose seals or seals that are different from the standard ones on all other bags). In the municipality of Novi Grad, 29 bags arrived already opened. The existing mayor was also observed talking to the local election commission (LEC) members. The most common errors and/or problems that occurred when handing over the polling material from the polling stations were unsealed bags or incorrect packaging (in 31 LIK) and incorrectly filled in forms (in 28 out of 142 local election commissions (LIK)).

⁴⁰ <http://podlupom.org/v2/en/article/preliminary-assessment-of-election-day/391>

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² https://www.izbori.ba/Rezultati_izbora/?resId=27&langId=4#/8/0/0

Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) won 41 contests from 65 in Republika Srpska where 21 mayoralities changed hands.

61. While the three main ethnic parties – the predominantly Bosniak Party of Democratic Action, SDA, the predominantly Serb Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD, and the predominantly Croat Croatian Democratic Union, HDZ - suffered reverses, between them they still control the largest number of municipalities across the country. The SDA was beaten in three out of four municipalities in the capital Sarajevo; the HDZ was defeated in Prozor-Rama and several other municipalities in Croat-dominated areas; the SNSD has for the first time in the last 20 years lost in Banja Luka. The aftermath of the significant SNSD loss resulted in its Leader, Milorad Dodik, Serb member of the BiH Tripartite presidency, threatening to use his party's majority in the Assembly of Republika Srpska to try to limit the powers of Mayors at the local level, in an attempt to regain control. Additionally, he has admitted to considering withholding the respective budget of municipalities that are not under SNSD control.⁴³ This issue is of utmost importance to the Congress and will be followed closely going forward.

62. In January 2021, it was reported that the CEC had annulled the election results in the cities of Srebrenica and Doboj, amid ongoing speculation and complaints regarding the regularity of the election process. A new date for a re-run of the election in those two cities has yet to be determined.⁴⁴

13. Conclusions

63. Previous electoral observations carried out by the Congress in Bosnia and Herzegovina had identified a number of issues which put the probity of the electoral process at risk, such as the activities of party political observers and membership, organisation of the local electoral commissions at polling stations; family voting collusion; probity of the electoral register; intimidation of voters; and, inducement or intimidation of voters through the offer of employment or threats to current employment for example. It was clear from the Pod Lupom report that these issues persisted across the country, but the extent and effect of them is difficult to gauge at this point. Any irregularities and improprieties in the system and process has the effect of undermining voter confidence in both the system and democracy and public concern about the probity of the local elections may have influenced turnout and voting.

64. The COVID-19 pandemic had an effect on the organisation and operation of polling stations through regulations from the CEC and these were generally and widely adhered on Election Day. But the pandemic may also have depressing voter turnout – especially among the elderly and infirm.

65. Serious questions remain about the secrecy of the ballot and possible pressure on voters given practices in particular stations but this appears to be as a result of individual actions, rather than a systemic series of fraudulent activities designed to identify how voters were voting. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina it is common practice that voters are identified publically, by name, before casting their ballot. This is done in an attempt for party affiliated observers to identify voters against their own party lists to see who come to the polls to vote. The extent of this practice needs to be assessed further, as it is not common practice across the majority of member States.

66. A number of issues need to further addressed by the CEC and other authorities:

- strengthening the secrecy of the vote by removing the practice of publicly announcing the voter's name;
- locating polling boxes separate from others and in completely private spaces;
- monitoring of opening and sealing of ballot boxes and vote counting;
- the role of political party observers and the composition and responsibilities of polling station commissions;
- the CEC should be supported in its attempts to prevent fraudulent registration.

67. While systemic, organisational and functional changes can be made to the current system, a cultural change among the ethnic divides also need to occur. Without a cultural change and the instilling of a democratic spirit at all levels of political activity, any systemic change can be undermined.

⁴³ <https://ba.n1info.com/english/news/a490118-ngos-reducing-mayoral-powers-because-of-election-outcome-endangers-democracy/>

⁴⁴ <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/01/21/bosnian-election-commission-scraps-poll-results-in-srebrenica-doboj/>

APPENDIX I

CONGRESS REMOTE OBSERVATION PROCEDURE OF THE LOCAL ELECTION IN THE CITY OF MOSTAR, BOSNIA HERZEGOVINA, 20 DECEMBER 2020

1. Introduction

1. The following section deals with the local election conducted in Mostar on 20 December 2020 and the resultant analysis following the remote procedure conducted by the Congress on 17 December 2020.

2. The main body of this section sets out and explores the administrative structure, legal framework, election administration, electoral system, voter and candidate registration for the City of Mostar.

3. A political agreement was reached and signed on 17 June 2020, in which the respective parties agreed on the changes of the Electoral Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina that regulates the City of Mostar as well as the new Statute of the City of Mostar.

4. The Electoral Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina was updated to allow for elections to occur, in the allotted timeframe following the signatures, taking into account previous rulings made by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the European Court of Human Rights in order to amend the discriminatory nature of the previous version.

2. Background

5. The local election in Mostar was last held in 2008 and had been delayed beyond the four year term of office because of a ruling by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina which declared its "Election Act 2001" to be discriminatory, as there was an unequal value of votes as well as limitations for voters living in the Central Zone of Mostar, and ordered that they be changed. The dominant two main nationalist parties – the predominantly Bosniak SDA and the predominantly Croat HDZ- over ten years failed to agree a way to abide by the court rulings and to change the respective regulations rendering the Statute null-and-void.

6. In the period since 2008 HDZ's Ljubo Beslic, acted as interim mayor of Mostar, with an administration that included representatives from the SDA, but there was no elected city council to hold the administration to account or to provide necessary representation for the city alongside the office of the mayor. The mayor was the only decision-maker for the city, with the exception of the budget adoption that is subject to approval by the Parliament of FBiH.

7. In May 2017, more than six months after Bosnia and Herzegovina's second local elections that did not include the city of Mostar, a Congress delegation met with appropriate stakeholders in both Sarajevo and Mostar to discuss the matter of this political impasse.

8. During the October 2017 Plenary Session, the Congress decided to put in place a "Reflection Group on Mostar," in order to prioritise its work while contributing to a sustainable solution for restoring local democracy in the city. This endeavour included six Congress members (three full and three supplementary) as well as a representative from the EU Committee of the Regions.

9. Since its introduction, the Reflection Group has visited Mostar three times, once in June 2018 and twice in 2019, in October and November respectively. Additionally, the Congress, under its umbrella of Cooperation Activities, launched a project in 2020 on bringing deliberative democracy to Mostar, which is being continued in 2021.

10. In 2018, Mostar Resident Irma Baralija, filed a complaint with the European Court of Human Rights citing discrimination against her by Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 29 October 2019⁴⁵ the European Court of Human Rights ruled in her favour stating that BiH failed to comply with its duty to take appropriate measures to protect the applicant from discriminatory treatment by not holding

⁴⁵ Judgement ECHR of 29 October 2019 *Baralija vs Bosnia and Herzegovina* (n° 30100/18)

democratic elections in Mostar and concluded to discrimination based on her place of residence, as she was unable to vote or stand in local elections in her hometown of Mostar. A Congress Delegation met with Ms Baralija privately in Mostar during the November 2019 mission.

11. The European Court of Human Rights ordered the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to amend the law within six months and, upon non-compliance, the Constitutional Court of BiH was expected to intervene. With the deadline of July 2020, the Parliamentary Assembly was unable to make any headway on the matter of Mostar, until 17 June 2020, when SDA and HDZ-BiH leaders, Bakir Izetbegović and Dragan Čović, respectively, agreed to meet with members of the international community in Sarajevo to come up with an agreement on Mostar. Following the five-hour meeting, High Representative Valentin Inzko said they had reached 90% of the decision.

12. On 24 July 2020 it was then announced that the City of Mostar would hold its first local elections in 12 years on 20 December 2020, five weeks following the rest of the State. As per the city's new election rules, 35 councillors would be directly voted, and would in turn vote to determine Mostar's new mayor.

13. The local election in Mostar took place on 20 December 2020 for 35 city councillors who then, indirectly, elect the mayor (by a two-thirds majority in the first two rounds and by a simple majority in the third). Following the publication of the initial election results on 3 January 2021, there were requests for a recount based on discrepancies between the results inscribed in the protocols of some polling stations and the actual number of the ballots in the bag. Five opposition parties sent an open letter to members of the international community urging them to exert pressure on the CEC to carry out said recount and the CEC finalised the results on 19 January 2021.⁴⁶

3. Observers

14. The regulation for observing the local election in Mostar is set out by the CEC in its 'General rules for international observers for arrival to Bosnia and Herzegovina and observing of local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, November 15, 2020 and the local election in the City of Mostar, December 20, 2020'⁴⁷.

15. As with the local elections across BiH the restrictions put in place as a result of the COVID pandemic, meant that a Congress delegation could not be present in Mostar before, or on Election Day. As the Congress delegation was limited to a remote observation mission a local election observation assistant visited 10 polling stations across Mostar. Pod Lupom, the NGO coalition formed to ensure free and fair elections in BiH, had observers at all polling stations in Mostar.

4. Campaign Environment

16. The local election campaign in Mostar commenced on 20 November 2020 and formally closed on 19 December 2020.

17. It was stressed by Congress interlocutors that the main parties were conducting the Mostar local campaign mainly, though not exclusively, along ethnic and national lines and that this reflected the approach during the 15 November election campaign in the rest of BiH. The ethnic tensions however, were seen as less acute than in past election campaigns and it may be that the presence of ethnically-based national parties has frozen campaigning in a way that does not fully reflect how many of the population are now thinking about local elections. Shifting the local campaign in Mostar more towards local issues, policies and choices, especially given 12 year period between local elections, remains an important concern.

18. The Congress interlocutors reported continued public unease, throughout the campaign, about the possibility of electoral fraud and a repeat of practices seen elsewhere in BiH such as: allegedly fraudulent voter registration; weaknesses in the secrecy of the vote; identification of some voters before voting; the membership, activities and role of LECs; misuse of public resources; voter intimidation or

⁴⁶ https://www.izbori.ba/Rezultati_izbora/?resId=28&langId=1#/9/0/0/0

⁴⁷ https://www.izbori.ba/Documents/Lokalni_izbori_2020/Akreditovanje_posmatraca/General_rules_for_international_observers_for_arrival_to_BiH.pdf

inducement through employment with, or at, the City Council; and, family voting. All of which, our interlocutors reported, undermined public confidence in the vote.

19. Pod Lupom reported 18 electoral irregularities in the Mostar local election campaign: nine incidences of premature campaigning (SDA, DF, and SDP two cases each, and one case for HDZ BiH, Party for BiH and SBB); five incidences of the misuse of the public resources; and four incidences of public campaign speech that they characterised as inappropriate. Pod Lupom diverged from some of our interlocutors in their observation that ethnic-tensions in the campaign were dissipating. Rather, Pod Lupom stressed that appeals to ethnic solidarity, including interference from politicians outside of Mostar and the raising of inter-ethnic tensions, were a prominent part of the campaign.⁴⁸

20. Despite the COVID restrictions it appears that the 2020 Mostar elections were the first time in which door-to-door campaigning had appeared, particularly in the dominantly Bosniak parts of the city. Such direct contact between candidates / parties and the individual voter may indicate that: the ethnic focus of the local election is dissolving as candidates need to focus more – not exclusively so – on issues; the existence of independents and smaller (less ethnically-based candidates / parties) requires contact with the voters rather than a reliance on ethnic loyalties; or that the main parties fear a shift away from ethnically-based voting to a more issue / candidate based voting and are attempting to shore-up their ethnic vote rather than take it for granted.

21. One interlocutor in particular highlighted the exclusion of Serbs within Mostar as Serbs are not a Constituent people in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton in which Mostar is located.

22. Overall there was some confidence among the Congress interlocutors that the direction of travel away from ethnically-based campaigning and voting would continue over time.

5. Election Day

23. According to the observations made by the Congress local observation assistant along with reports received from domestic observers, Election Day was orderly, peaceful and calm.

24. In some of the polling stations the election commissioners were unfamiliar with the tasks and duties they were expected to fulfill and appeared to be poorly trained. There was also some confusion in some polling stations over the process of voting and the regulations. Some commissioners provided advice to voters on the process of voting – how to vote – despite the regulations forbidding such practices.

25. Commissioners were observed, in some cases, to be recording the names of voters as they voted.

26. Confusion over how to count votes was also identified in some polling stations.

27. A number of complaints were made by members of the public about the organisation, and running of the polling stations.

28. Overall there seemed to have been a degree of chaos and confusion among those responsible for the overall administration of the process of voting and the operation of polling stations. Whether such confusion was deliberate, designed to influence the vote or simply a result of an amateurish approach on the day is difficult to disentangle, but as a consequence, public confidence in the system would have been damaged.

29. There were 31 political organisations or candidates that stood for the 35 city council seats. The electorate for the city elections was 100,864 and at the close of polls at 7pm, some 52,814 valid votes had been cast with 3,277 votes deemed to be invalid. Turnout at the elections was 55%.

48 <http://podlupom.org/v2/en/article/preliminary-assessment-of-election-day/391>

6. Election Results

30. The results of the Mostar local election held on 20 December 2020 were as follows:

- a. Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH): 13 (no change on 2008);
- b. Coalition for Mostar (Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Union for a Better Future of BiH (SBB) Democratic Front (DF) Party for Bosnia Herzegovinian (SBiH), Bosnia Herzegovina Patriotic Party (BPS)) 12 (+2);
- c. BH Bloc (Social Democratic Party Bosnia Herzegovina (SDP BiH) Our Party Bosnia Herzegovina (NS)) 6 (+3);
- d. Croat Republican Party (HRS): 3 (+3);
- e. Serb list "Stay Here – United for Our Mostar" (Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) Serb Democratic Party (SDS)): 1 (+1).

31. Despite observations that there was a lessening of ethnically-based voting and a less intense ethnic nature of the campaign, the results show a dominance of ethnic-based voting and consequently of ethnic-based representation. The SDA and the HDZ respectively received most of the votes and seats.

7. Conclusions

32. There was a less intense ethnic nature to the campaigning than had been observed in previous elections in Mostar, but ethnic solidarity and ethnic issues dominated the local election campaign.

33. Localising the local election campaign and a greater focus on local issues, policies and problem solutions is required but that will be difficult to achieve while national parties dominate the campaign and the result of the vote in terms of votes received and seats won.

34. The Mostar election experienced the same weaknesses and concerns that emerged from the national elections in BiH particularly around:

- a. the veracity of the electoral registration and avoidance of fraudulent registrations, such as the deceased appearing on the register;
- b. strengthening the secrecy of the vote;
- c. ensuring the privacy of polling boxes and voting booths;
- d. training and supervision of polling station commission members;
- e. political party members of polling station commissions and the roles, responsibilities and duties of such commissions;
- f. the ethnic-base of campaigning during local elections;
- g. training of members of polling station commissions;
- h. family voting.

35. Despite a gap of 12 years since the last local election in Mostar and the involvement of the European Court of Human Rights in ensuring the election took place, as well as the infrastructural, economic and social issues facing the city, only 55% of voters were tempted to cast their votes. While there would have been a 'COVID effect' which may have depressed the turnout with some voters staying at home for fear of infection, the turnout does not reflect what might have been expected in the circumstances. However, it was slightly higher than that recorded for the local elections throughout BiH at 50%.

APPENDIX II

FINAL PROGRAMME
Remote Meetings 29 – 30 October 2020
Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina (15 November 2020)

Thursday 29 October 2020

- 09:00 – 09:05 Welcome and Opening remarks by **Ms Renate ZIKMUND**, Congress Secretariat of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe
- 09:00 – 10:30 Briefing with representatives of the international community:
- **H.E. Ambassador Kathleen KAVALEC**, Head of OSCE Mission to BiH
 - **Ms Eketerina DORODNOVA**, Deputy Head of Delegation of the European Union to BiH
 - **H.E. Mr. Matthew FIELD**, Ambassador of The United Kingdom to BiH
 - **H.E. Mr Reinout Caspar VOS**, Ambassador of the Netherlands to BiH
 - **Mr Mirza DURMIŠEVIĆ**, Honorary Consul, Consulate of Denmark in Sarajevo, BiH
 - **Mr. Michael AHN**, Deputy Chief Political Officer, United States of America to BiH
- (meeting in English)*
- 10:45 – 12:15 Meeting with **Mr Željko BAKALAR**, President of the Central Election Commission of BiH
(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 12:15 – 13:45 Lunch break
- 13:45 – 15:15 Meeting with representatives of the Media
- **Ms Amela ODOBAŠIĆ** and **Ms Azra MASLO**, The Communications Regulatory Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina
 - **Ms Borka RUDIĆ**, Association of BH Journalists
- (with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)*
- 16:15 – 16:45 Meeting with **Ms Vesna TRAVLJANIN**, Director, **Association of municipalities and cities of the Federation of BiH**, and **Mr Semir EFENDIĆ**, Mayor of municipality Novi Grad, Sarajevo
(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)

Friday 30 October

- 09:45 – 11:15 Meeting with representatives of NGOS
- **Ms Ivana KORAJLIĆ**, Transparency International
 - **Mr Dario JOVANOVIĆ**, Koalicija Pod Lupom
 - **Ms Leila BIČAKČIĆ**, Executive Director, Center for Investigative Reporting
- (with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)*
- 11:30 – 12:00 Briefing with **Mr Igor RADOJIČIĆ**, Mayor of Banja Luka (SNSD)
(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 12:00 – 13:30 Lunch break
- 13:30 – 14:00 Briefing with **Mr Jasmin IMAMOVIĆ**, Mayor of Tuzla (SDP)

(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)

- 14:15 – 14:45 Briefing with **Mr Sejfidin TOKIĆ**, Mayoral candidate for Sarajevo Center (Bošnjački Pokret)
(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 15:00 – 15:30 Briefing with **Mr Adnan DELIĆ**, Mayoral candidate for Novi Grad Sarajevo (Independent)
(with Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 15:45 – 16:15 Debriefing with Secretariat and Delegation
(meeting in English)

Delegation

Congress Members

Mr Stewart DICKSON (ILDG, R, United Kingdom)

Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Mr Jakob WIENEN (EPP/CCE, L, The Netherlands)

Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Mr Vladimir PREBILIĆ (SOC/G/PD, L, Slovenia)

Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Ms Rosaleen O'GRADY (ILDG, L, Ireland)

Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Ms Randi MONDORF (ILDG, R, Denmark)

Congress member on the Election Observation Mission to BiH in October 2018 and November 2019

Expert

Mr Colin COPUS, UK member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government

Congress Secretariat

Ms Renate ZIKMUND, Head of the Department of Statutory Activities, External Relations and Co-operation

Mr Adam DRNOVSKY, Election Observation Officer

Ms Jovana VUJANOVIĆ, Election Observation Officer

Ms Martine ROUDOLFF, Assistant, Local and Regional Election Observation

Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo

Ms Bojana URUMOVA, Head of Office

APPENDIX III

FINAL PROGRAMME
Remote Meetings 17 December 2020
Election in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina (20 December 2020)

Thursday 17 December 2020

- 09:00 – 09:30 Briefing with representatives of the international community:
• **High Representative Valentin INZKO**, Office of the High Representative for BiH
(meeting in English)
- 10:30 – 11:15 Meeting with **Mr Željko BAKALAR**, President of the Central Election Commission of BiH
(with English/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 11:30 – 12:45 Meeting with representatives of NGOs
• Koalicija Pod Lupom, **Mr Dario JOVANOVIĆ**
• Nansen Dialogue Centre, **Mr Vernes VOLODER**
• Local Democracy Agency Mostar, **Ms Dženana DEDIĆ**
(with English/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 12:45 – 14:30 Lunch break
- 15:15 – 15:45 Briefing with **Mr Arman ZALHIĆ**, President of SDP of BiH in Mostar
(with English/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 16:00 – 16:30 Briefing with **Mr Salem MARIĆ**, President of SDA of BiH in Mostar
(with English/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 16:45 – 17:15 Briefing with, **Mr Velibor MILIVOJEVIĆ**, Leader of the SNSD and SDS Coalition “Ostajte ovdje – Zajedno za naš Mostar” (Stay here – together for our Mostar)
(with English/Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian interpretation)
- 17:15 – 17:45 Debriefing with Secretariat and Delegation
(meeting in English)

Delegation

Congress Members

Mr Stewart DICKSON (ILDG, R, United Kingdom)

Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Mr Jakob WIENEN (EPP/CCE, L, The Netherlands)

Congress representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Mr Vladimir PREBILIĆ (SOC/G/PD, L, Slovenia)

Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Ms Rosaleen O’GRADY (ILDG, L, Ireland)

Congress alternate representative on the Council for Democratic Elections, Venice Commission

Ms Randi MONDORF (ILDG, R, Denmark)

Congress member on the Election Observation Mission to BiH in October 2018 and November 2019

Mr Robert GRUMAN (EPP-CCE, R, Romania)

Chair of the Governance Committee and Head of Delegation Mission to Mostar November 2019

Expert

Mr Colin COPUS, UK member of the Group of Independent Experts on the European Charter of Local Self-Government

Congress Secretariat

Ms Renate ZIKMUND, Head of the Department of Statutory Activities, External Relations and Co-operation

Mr Adam DRNOVSKY, Election Observation Officer

Ms Jovana VUJANOVIĆ, Election Observation Officer

Ms Martine ROUDOLFF, Assistant, Local and Regional Election Observation

Mr Damjan JUGOVIĆ, Project Officer, External Relations and Co-operation

Ms Natalija MILOVIĆ, Project Officer, External Relations and Co-operation

Council of Europe Office in Sarajevo

Ms Bojana URUMOVA, Head of Office

Ms Violeta VIOIU, Deputy Head of Office

Ms Nada SIMANIC-DURMIC, Administrative assistant