

Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Your Excellencies,  
Dear guests,

On behalf of the BiH Central Election Commission and on my personal behalf I would like to heartily welcome you to this event where we jointly promote the initiative for celebrating "Global Election Day".

This initiative was launched in 2005 at the conference of the Association of European Election Officials. At the conference more than 20 member countries agreed to celebrate every Thursday in February as a day that would represent a trade mark of democratic elections in the world.

Also we in Bosnia and Herzegovina for four years now promote this initiative for celebration of this day.

In those efforts we expect the support primarily from the United Nations. It is their Declaration of human rights from 1948 that set the right to vote as one of the main citizens' rights.

The election is the process in which society and the politics meet in an organized way. The day we are celebrating today is only a short respite. The respite that helps us to analyze our place and role in that significant process.

All former elections in BiH, as well those organized by the OSCE from 1996 to 2000, as well as all elections after that period organized by domestic authorities were, I can freely say, administered in accordance with international standards and represented further progress in consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in our country.

Today, we do not wish to evaluate our work. We will leave that to the others.

But, in the public, we are often faced by spurious and non-argumentative allegations that cause distrust in validity of the election process and work of our institution. The perception is that these allegations happen before the elections, and then silently pass away.

We will work on successful administration of the 2010 General Elections. Our aim is to contribute to development and strengthening of democratic society in our country through constant improvements of the election process.

Independent and impartial work of the election administration is of crucial importance in achieving these goals. On this task the BiH Central Election Commission is followed by our Secretariat, elections commissions from Bosnia and Herzegovina and on the election days also members of the polling station committees.

Today we would also like to underline the very important role in promoting democratic culture and higher level of participation at the elections. Constant accentuation of the political meaning and the role of elections is of great importance for further democratization and mobilization of citizens to be active participants in elections of the

people who will realize their wishes and interests. Non participation at the elections is not only a benign by-passing on exercise one of the main citizens' right that we have. It also means letting others to make decisions on our destiny.

The elections are the fundamental pillar of democracy in any state and they must be free and honest, namely fair.

Free elections mean respecting human rights and freedoms, including the freedom of speech and association, freedom of registration of voters, parties and candidates, freedom from duress, freedom of access to polling stations, freedom of vote secrecy and legal protection of the voting right.

Fair elections mean equal starting positions in the election process, including impartial administration of elections, constitutional protection of the voting right, general right to vote, balanced media reporting, equal access to campaign resources, public and transparent vote count, equal and non-violent attitude of the authority: government, police, judiciary and military towards parties, candidates and voters.

The aim of elections is to express: free commitment, democratic will and attitude of the electorate. Only then the elections are an act of legal and righteous recognition of democratic and political legitimacy of the elected.

I would like to thank all you that are here with us today and who follow our efforts, especially, the office of the High Representatives and the OSCE Mission to BiH, members of the diplomatic corps, who have honored us with their presence, representatives of the USAID and the Council of Europe, representatives of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and entities, and representatives of judicial bodies, as well as our colleagues from municipal and city election commissions, who came here today from whole country, non-governmental sector – Association of Election Officials of BiH and all media representatives who are attending this ceremony.

Your presence shows that you have recognized importance of celebrating the Global Election Day.

Thank you.