

Post-election conference of election management bodies
“2024 Local Elections – Lessons for the future”
Hotel Ibis Styles Sarajevo, April 24-25, 2025

Concept

The 2024 local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina were held on October 6, 2024. On November 5, 2024, the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the Decision on the Confirmation and Publication of the Results of the Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina¹. Additionally, on November 15, 2024, the Supplementary Decision on the Confirmation and Publication of the Results of the Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted.

The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with financial support from the Council of Europe and the OSCE Mission to BiH, is organizing a post-election conference to analyze all aspects of the 2024 electoral process and discuss current challenges and future steps for improving the electoral system. This event will enable all election participants to exchange opinions and experiences and to propose concrete solutions for improving the electoral process.

Background

The focus of the post-election conference of the Central Election Commission of BiH is the presentation of findings from the reports of international observation missions, analysis of reports on the work of election commissions of the basic constituencies, and presentation of the Report on the implementation of pilot projects for introducing new technologies into the electoral process, along with the Feasibility Study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conference will also include an analysis of the training delivered to the polling station committees and the counting process at both polling stations and the Main Counting Centre, particularly emphasizing identified shortcomings. Additionally, participants will work in groups on “Preparations for Improving the Electoral Process for the 2026 General Elections”, which will serve as the foundation for defining the conference’s conclusions.

1. Findings from the reports of international observation missions

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 30 August 2024, consisting of a 14-member core team based in Sarajevo and 20 long-term observers (LTOs) deployed on 6 September to 10 locations across the country. The ODIHR EOM remained in the country until 13 October.

On election day, 240 observers from 37 countries were deployed, including 202 observers deployed by ODIHR, as well as a 25-member delegation from the Congress of Local and

¹ Official Gazette of BiH, no. 75/24

Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and a 13-member delegation from the European Parliament. Together, they formed the International Election Observation Mission (IEOM).

The ODIHR EOM assessed the compliance of the electoral process with OSCE commitments, other international commitments and standards for democratic elections, as well as with domestic legislation.

Representatives of ODIHR, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, and the European Parliament will present the findings from the reports of international observation missions (ODIHR, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, EP) from the 2024 local elections.

2. Report on the work of election commissions of basic constituencies

The election management bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the Central Election Commission of BiH, municipal/city election commissions, and polling station committees. The competences of these bodies are prescribed in Chapter 2 of the Election Law of BiH. The competence of municipal/city election commissions is specifically outlined in Article 2.13 of the Election Law of BiH.

Under Article 2.9, paragraph (1), item 1 of the Election Law of BiH, the Central Election Commission of BiH coordinates, monitors, and regulates the legality of the work of all election commissions and polling station committees in compliance with the Election Law. Furthermore, Article 5 of the Instruction on the operations and reporting of the election commission of basic constituencies in BiH stipulates that election commissions must submit an annual report on their work to the Central Election Commission of BiH by January 31 of the following year.

To collect the necessary data on the performance of activities within the competence of election commissions, as prescribed in Article 2.13 of the Election Law of BiH, the Central Election Commission of BiH, on December 23, 2024, submitted a request to election commissions for the submission of their work reports for 2024. These reports include both narrative and tabular formats.

The Central Election Commission of BiH analyzed and consolidated the reports, taking stock of challenges faced by polling station committees as reported by the municipal/city election commissions, including difficulties in the work of election commissions themselves, proposals for improving their work, experiences of municipal election commissions (MECs), experiences related to the implementation of pilot projects, as well as proposals, comments, and recommendations for improving electoral process processes.

A more detailed report on the work of election commissions of basic constituencies will be presented at the Post-Election Conference.

3. Report on the implementation of pilot projects and Feasibility Study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies into the electoral process of Bosnia and Herzegovina

On the Election Day, October 6, 2024, electoral technologies were tested at 456 of the planned 458 polling stations in 24 basic constituencies; Pilot Project 1 - Voter Authentication and Results Transmission, Pilot Project 2 - Optical Scanners and Automatic Ballot Counting, Pilot Project 3 - Biometric Identification and Authentication of Voters (in the Brčko District of BiH), and Pilot Project 4 - Video Surveillance at Polling Stations.

Three pilot projects were financed from donor funds, and all public procurement procedures for goods and services were carried out by the donor, while one pilot project was financed from the budget of the Central Election Commission of BiH.

These activities demonstrated how electoral technologies can improve the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the electoral process, prevent fraud, ensure automatic vote counting and election results in a very short time after the closing of polling stations, and document polling station operations through audio and video recordings.²

The first periodic report on the introduction of new technologies into the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina³, dedicated to the digitalization of the electoral process with a focus on the implementation of activities from four pilot projects conducted on the day of the 2024 Local Elections, October 6, 2024, was submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH on July 30, 2024⁴, in accordance with Article 20.16e, paragraph (4) of the Election Law of BiH⁵, which stipulates that the Central Election Commission of BiH shall regularly submit comprehensive reports to the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH on its activities regarding the introduction of new technologies. The report in question was reviewed and adopted at the 21st session of the House of Representatives of the BiH PA, held on August 28, 2024⁶, and at the 15th session of the House of Peoples of the BiH PA, held on November 12, 2024.⁷

The second periodic report on the introduction of new technologies into the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁸, dedicated to the technical and legal aspects of four pilot projects implemented on the day of the 2024 Local Elections, was submitted to the

² More in the Final Report of the Implemented Pilot Projects for the Introduction of New Technologies into the Electoral Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Feasibility Study for the Introduction of Specific Electoral Technologies into the Electoral Process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, February 2025, <https://www.izbori.ba/Default.aspx?CategoryID=1416&Lang=3>

³ Document no. 04-2-50-4-1192-53/20

⁴ Document no. 04-2-50-4-1192-56/20

⁵ Official Gazette of BiH nos. 23/01, 7/02, 9/02, 20/02, 25/02, 4/04, 20/04, 25/05, 52/05, 65/05, 77/05, 11/06, 24/06, 32/07, 33/08, 37/08, 32/10, 18/13, 7/14, 31/16, 41/20, 38/22, 52/22, 67/22 and 24/24

⁶ Letter of the HoR of BiH PA number 01-50-1-15-21/24 of August 28, 2024

⁷ Document no. 02-50-6-16-15/24 of November 14, 2024.

⁸ Document no.04-2-50-4-1192-71/20

Parliamentary Assembly of BiH on October 4, 2024⁹. The report in question was considered at the 23rd session of the House of Representatives of the BiH PA, held on December 3, 2024. The House of Representatives adopted the second periodic report on the introduction of new technologies into the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁰ In addition to this report, the House of Representatives also adopted the following conclusions:

1. The House of Representatives of the BiH PA tasks the Central Election Commission (CEC) of BiH with preparing a feasibility study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies into the electoral process of Bosnia and Herzegovina within 90 days from the date of adoption of this conclusion, in accordance with Article 20.16e of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.
2. The House of Representatives of the BiH PA tasks the Council of Ministers of BiH with providing financial resources, per the request of the CEC of BiH, in the Budget of the BiH institutions for 2025 for the procurement of the necessary equipment for the introduction of specific electoral technologies into the electoral process of Bosnia and Herzegovina, under Article 20.16e of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹¹

The Final Report on the implemented pilot projects for the introduction of new technologies into the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Feasibility Study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies into the electoral process of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹² was adopted by the Conclusion on determining the text of the Final Report on the implemented pilot projects for the introduction of new technologies into the electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Feasibility Study for the introduction of specific electoral technologies into the electoral process of Bosnia and Herzegovina¹³ at the 11th session of the CEC of BiH on February 28, 2025.

The Report was submitted to the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH¹⁴, thus implementing the Conclusion of the House of Representatives of the PABiH of December 3, 2024. Based on the Report, the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH can decide in which direction the introduction of electoral technologies in Bosnia and Herzegovina will proceed.

The key findings of the Feasibility Study and further steps necessary for the implementation of new technologies will be presented at this conference.

⁹ Document no.04-2-50-4-1192-72/20

¹⁰ [Act of the HoR Of BiH BA number 01-50-1-15-23/24 of December 3, 2024](#)

¹¹ [Conclusion of the HoR of BiH PA number: 01-50-1-15-23/24 reference 01,02-50-18-1894/24 of December 3, 2024](#)

¹² Document of the BiH CEC 04-2-50-4-1192-89/20

¹³ Document of the BiH CEC 04-2-50-4-1192-90/20

¹⁴ Document of the BiH CEC 04-2-50-4-1192-91/20

3. Education of polling station committees and the counting process at the polling stations and in the Main Counting Center – identified shortcomings

According to the amendments to the Election Law of BiH from April 2024¹⁵, the Central Election Commission of BiH is responsible for appointing, dismissing, training, certifying, and evaluating the presidents and deputy presidents of polling station committees, who are non-partisan persons.

To conduct training for the presidents and deputy presidents of polling stations, the Central Election Commission of BiH has, through a public call, selected candidates for teams of instructors who will deliver the training to the presidents and deputy presidents of polling station committees.

In the period from June 22 to July 7, 2024, regional training sessions for instructors responsible for training candidates for presidents and deputy presidents of polling station committees were held. All training sessions were conducted by members of the Central Election Commission of BiH and employees of the Secretariat of the Central Election Commission of BiH.

After the training and testing, the Central Election Commission of BiH, based on Article 2.9, paragraph (1) of the Election Law of BiH and in relation to the test results, electoral experience, and fulfillment of general and special conditions required by the public vacancy, at its 48th session held on August 2024, adopted a Decision on the Appointment of Instructors for the Training of Presidents and Deputy Presidents of Polling Station Committees for the 2024 Local Elections, appointing 294 instructors.¹⁶

At its 52nd session held on August 14, 2024, a Decision was adopted accepting the objections of 7 candidates for instructors responsible for the training of presidents and deputy presidents of polling station committees¹⁷. The total number of appointed instructors is **301**.

The Central Election Commission of BiH has appointed 5,753 presidents and 4,439 deputy presidents (a total of 10,192 persons) of polling station committees for the 2024 Local Elections. Teams of appointed instructors delivered the training to these persons.

Since the training process must be continuous, the Central Election Commission of BiH is working on establishing a concept for the instructors' continuous training.

To this end, the OSCE Mission to BiH organized two workshops, **“Training of Instructors of Presidents and Deputy Presidents of Polling Station Committees in BiH”**. The report on the training will be presented at the Post-Election Conference.

¹⁵ Official Gazette of BiH, no. 24/24

¹⁶ Decision number 06-1-07-1-1350-1/24 of August 1, 2024

¹⁷ Decision number 05-1-07-5-1214/24 of August 14, 2024

4. Group work (4 groups) on: Preparations for improving electoral process for the 2026 General Elections

Group work will be organized into four groups, where participants will discuss ways to improve specific activities in the electoral process and implement the recommendations from the Final Report of the ODIHR observation mission.

Objectives of the post-election conference “Local Elections 2024 – Lessons for the Future”

An analysis of the electoral process by all participants to find concrete proposals for improving the electoral process.

Conference host: Central Election Commission of BiH, Council of Europe, and OSCE Mission to BiH.

Conference time: April 24-25, 2025

Conference location: Hotel Ibis Styles Sarajevo, Džemala Bijedića 169A. Phone: +387 33 483 900 Email: hb3g8-fo1@accor.com

Participants: The conference will bring together around 200 participants and guests: chairmen of municipal/city election commissions, representatives of parliamentary parties, representatives of the Council of Europe, the OSCE Mission to BiH, OSCE/ODIHR, the Head of the Monitoring Delegation of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the Co-Rapporteur for Monitoring of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, project staff of the Council of Europe, representatives of the Delegation of the European Union to BiH, the Office of the High Representative in BiH (OHR), representatives of embassies in BiH, the non-governmental sector in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the media.

Conference format

In-person attendance – Approximately 200 participants and guests will be present at the conference venue.

Conference format – Presentation/video presentation and discussion, working groups, plenary sessions.

Thursday, April 24, 2025

1. Findings from the reports of international observation missions (ODIHR, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, European Parliament).
2. Report on the work of election commissions of basic constituencies.
3. Report on the implementation of pilot projects and the Feasibility Study.

4. Education of polling station committees and the counting process at the polling station and in the Main Counting Center – identified shortcomings.

Friday, April 25, 2025

1. Group work (4 groups) on the topic: Preparations for improving the electoral process for the 2026 General Elections.
2. Discussion and adoption of the conference conclusions.
3. Recognition award ceremony.

Technology: PowerPoint presentations

Date and time:

April 24, 2025, from 13 to 18 hours

April 24, 2025, from 9 to 13 hours