

BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA
CENTRALNA IZBORNA KOMISIJA
SREDIŠNJE IZBORNO POVJERENSTVO



БОСНА И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНА
ЦЕНТРАЛНА ИЗБОРНА КОМИСИЈА

RULEBOOK
on Media Presentation and Public Advertising of Political Subjects
during the Election Period

Sarajevo, May 2026

Pursuant to Article 16.18 of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina (“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, 51/22, 67/22 and 24/24), the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at its 29th session held on 6 May 2026, adopted the following

RULEBOOK

on Media Presentation and Public Advertising of Political Subjects during the Election Period

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

Article 1 **(Application)**

The Rulebook on Media Presentation and Public Advertising of Political Subjects during the Election Period (hereinafter: the Rulebook) regulates in more detail the implementation of the provisions of Chapter 16 “Media during the Election Period” and certain provisions of Chapter 7 “Rules of Conduct during the Election Period” of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the Election Law of BiH).

Article 2 **(Definitions)**

For the purposes of interpretation and application of this Rulebook, the definitions and abbreviations used herein shall have the following meanings:

- a) **Election period** means the period from the day elections are called until the day election results are certified.
- b) **Premature election campaign** means any form of campaign activities undertaken by political subjects during the period from the calling of elections until the official start of the election campaign.
- c) **Election campaign** means activities and actions carried out during the period beginning 30 days before election day and ending upon the commencement of the period of twenty-four (24) hours prior to the opening of polling stations, during which a political subject informs voters and the public, in the manner prescribed by law, about its programmes and candidates for the forthcoming elections.
- d) **Official start of the election campaign** means the day on which the election campaign officially begins.
- e) **CRA** means the Communications Regulatory Agency.
- f) **CRA Rules** means all rules adopted by the CRA regulating matters related to the broadcasting of radio and television programmes.
- g) **Political subject** means a political party, independent candidate, coalition or list of independent candidates certified for participation in elections in accordance with the Election Law of BiH. For the purposes of this Rulebook, a political subject shall also include an association or another registered organised form of activity of national minorities and a group of at least 40 citizens having the right to vote, participating in elections within the meaning of Article 13.14 of the Election Law of BiH.
- h) **Political advertising** means the broadcasting or publication of advertisements, public invitations, spots and any other form of public advertising by a political subject.

- i) **Public advertising** means advertising through media, billboards, posters, the Internet, leaflets, mobile advertisements and any other form of public advertising available to voters and the public.
- j) **Seat of an institution, within the meaning of Article 16.5(1)(b) of the Election Law of BiH** means stating the name of the city and the country in which the institution has its seat.
- k) **Media** means all electronic, online and print media, as well as social networks.
- l) **Print media** means printed publications such as newspapers, tabloids, magazines, books and pamphlets, constituting means of mass communication intended to provide information of public interest.
- m) **Online media** means, for the purposes of this Rulebook, internet portals and other online platforms serving as communication tools intended to provide information of public interest.
- n) **Electronic media** means, for the purposes of this Rulebook, public and private television and radio stations holding an appropriate licence issued by the CRA.
- o) **Social networks** means internet-based or mobile platforms enabling two-way interaction through user-generated content and communications, i.e. media available on specific platforms designed to allow users to create content and interact with information and its sources.
- p) **The Press and Online Media Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina** means the self-regulatory body for print and online media.

Article 3 **(False Information during the Election Period)**

- (1) Political subjects shall be prohibited from disseminating false information through the media that could jeopardise the integrity of the electoral process and misinform voters.
- (2) In the event of a violation referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article, the Central Election Commission of BiH shall be authorised to conduct proceedings.
- (3) The media shall inform the public about the course and outcome of the proceedings referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article.

Article 4 **(Reporting by Electronic Media on the Activities of Officials)**

- (1) In programmes broadcast by electronic media, no political subject may enjoy a privileged position in relation to another political subject.
- (2) Officials at all levels of government who are candidates in elections shall not enjoy a privileged position in relation to other participants in the electoral process.
- (3) Reporting on the regular activities of officials at all levels of government shall be permitted within news and information programmes of electronic media, without direct or indirect reference to their candidacy in elections or party affiliation, whenever such activities arise from the legally prescribed scope of responsibilities of the bodies to which they belong.
- (4) Electronic media shall pay particular attention to ensuring that the principles of balance, equal access, fairness and impartiality are respected in information programmes, especially in current affairs programmes, interviews and discussions on current political topics, such as round tables, other debate programmes and similar formats, which are not directly related to the electoral activities of political subjects but may influence voters' attitudes.

Article 5 **(Ownership Structure of Online Media)**

- (1) *Online media that opt to report on the election campaign shall be obliged to provide public and transparent information on their ownership structure and to cover election activities in a fair, professional and competent manner, with consistent adherence to the journalistic code of ethics*

and generally accepted democratic principles and rules, particularly the fundamental principle of freedom of expression.

(2) *Online media shall display, in an appropriate place, information on the ownership structure of the media outlet, its name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and contact details of the responsible publisher and editor to whom complaints and objections concerning the reporting of the online media may be submitted.*

Article 6
(Use of Terms in the Masculine and Feminine Gender)

Words used in this Rulebook in one grammatical gender for the sake of readability shall, without discrimination, refer equally to both the masculine and feminine gender.

CHAPTER II. PERIOD FROM THE DAY ELECTIONS ARE CALLED UNTIL THE DAY OF THE OFFICIAL START OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Article 7
(Prohibition of Conducting a Paid Election Campaign by Political Subjects)

During the period from the day elections are called until the day of the official start of the election campaign, political subjects shall be prohibited from engaging in paid political advertising through electronic, online and print media, social networks or any form of paid public advertising, except for paid political advertising relating to the holding of internal meetings of party bodies and statutory bodies of political subjects (presidency, main board, assembly, congress, convention, etc.).

Article 8
(Prohibition on Broadcasting and Publishing a Paid Election Campaign by Media)

During the period from the day elections are called until the day of the official start of the election campaign, media outlets shall be prohibited from broadcasting and publishing paid political advertising, except for paid political advertising intended to inform members of the bodies and statutory bodies of political subjects about the holding of internal meetings of party bodies and statutory bodies of political subjects, under equal conditions for all political subjects.

Article 9
(Prohibition of Conducting a Premature Election Campaign by Political Subjects)

(1) During the period from the day elections are called until the day of the official start of the election campaign, political subjects shall be prohibited from conducting a premature election campaign aimed at informing voters and the public about the programmes and candidates of political subjects for the forthcoming elections.

(2) The prohibition referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article shall not apply to the organisation of lawful official meetings of party bodies and events of political subjects for purposes other than campaigning.

CHAPTER III. ELECTION CAMPAIGN PERIOD

Article 10 (Publication of Public Opinion Poll Results)

- (1) Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be prohibited from publishing the results of public opinion polls relating to voting and elections during the period from 48 hours prior to the opening of polling stations until the closing of polling stations.
- (2) Media in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be prohibited from reporting on any activity related to political and election campaigning during the 24-hour period prior to the opening of polling stations, when the election silence period begins throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The election silence period shall last until the closing of polling stations.
- (3) The prohibitions referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this Article shall also apply to the publication of previously prepared, already broadcast or printed content.

Article 11 (Notification of Political Subjects)

An electronic medium shall be deemed to have notified a political subject of the scheduled times for participation in special programmes provided that it is able to document such notification.

Article 12 (Direct Access Broadcasts)

- (1) Public electronic media shall determine the duration of direct access broadcasts on the basis of previous practice, the number of political subjects and other relevant circumstances, ensuring that each political subject is granted at least three minutes of direct access during the election campaign.
- (2) Equal conditions for direct access broadcasts shall be ensured for all political subjects.
- (3) The time allocated for direct access broadcasts shall be scheduled during prime viewing/listening hours.
- (4) Public electronic media shall determine, by drawing lots, the order of participation of political subjects in direct access broadcasts no later than seven days before the start of the election campaign. Political subjects shall be informed of the date and venue of the draw in order to ensure their presence.
- (5) Once established, programme slots in electronic media broadcasts may not be changed.
- (6) Public radio and television stations shall provide direct access broadcasts for all political subjects registered in the electoral unit belonging to the administrative-territorial unit that established the public electronic medium.
- (7) Public television stations shall broadcast direct access programmes in a format accessible to persons with visual and/or hearing impairments. Accessibility shall be ensured, inter alia, through sign language interpretation, subtitling or audio description.
- (8) The provisions of this Article shall also apply to private radio and television stations if they decide to organise direct access broadcasts for political subjects, taking into account the seat of the electronic medium, programme orientation and target audience.

Article 13 **(Paid Political Advertising)**

(1) Paid political advertising shall be permitted during the period from the day of the official start of the election campaign until the commencement of the election silence period, i.e. during the period of 30 days preceding election day.

(2) Political advertising rates shall be identical for all political subjects, and the rate cards shall be made available to the CRA and certified political subjects 15 days before the official start of the election campaign.

(3) Electronic media shall determine the time slots for paid political advertising no later than seven days before the official start of the election campaign. Media outlets shall have clear rules governing how decisions are made regarding the order and timing of political advertisements. In the event of a dispute concerning the order or timing of the broadcasting of political advertisements, electronic media shall resolve the matter through agreement with the political subject concerned and, if necessary thereafter, by drawing lots.

(4) Paid political advertising must be clearly identified as such and may not be broadcast during the period of at least 15 minutes before, during, or after a news programme.

(5) If political subjects are unable to organise the production of their political advertisements themselves, they may request such services from electronic media. Such production services may be charged. Fees charged in such cases must be equal for all political subjects receiving the same level of service.

(6) An electronic medium shall have the right to refuse the publication of paid political advertising if:

- a) the advertisement has not been ordered by means of a written order;
- b) the advertisement does not meet the technical and professional standards that have been clearly established and with which political subjects have been timely acquainted;
- c) the advertisement includes any discrimination or prejudice based on sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, social origin, as well as any other content whose purpose or effect is to prevent or jeopardise the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, of a person's rights and freedoms;
- d) the advertisement humiliates, intimidates, or incites hatred, violence or discrimination against a person or group on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, social origin, or on the basis of any other circumstance whose purpose or effect is to prevent or jeopardise the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis, of a person's rights and freedoms;
- e) the advertisement includes the participation of children;
- f) the advertisement is contrary to the regulations of the CRA.

(7) If electronic media consider that the content of ordered paid political advertising falls under points c), d), e) or f) of paragraph (6) of this Article, they may seek an opinion from the CRA, which shall issue a binding opinion regarding the content.

(8) If electronic media refuse to publish paid political advertising citing points c), d), e) or f) of paragraph (6) of this Article as the reason, the political subject whose advertisement has been rejected shall have the right to seek a binding opinion from the CRA regarding the content.

(9) The CRA shall issue the binding opinion referred to in paragraphs (7) and (8) of this Article within 48 hours and shall submit it to the Central Election Commission of BiH for information.

Article 14
(Promotion of Candidates of Both Genders)

- (1) During the election campaign, political subjects shall be obliged to ensure equal promotion of candidates of both genders in media appearances, public gatherings and other forms of election campaigning, with the aim of ensuring equality between candidates of both genders.
- (2) During the election campaign, political subjects shall ensure equal representation of their candidates for the presentation of their political programmes and the programmes of their political subjects, both through public and private electronic media.

Article 15
(Removal of Posters and Other Materials)

A political subject shall be obliged, within 15 days from the day the elections are held, to ensure the removal of all advertisements, placards, posters and other similar materials from areas designated for campaigning that were used for the election campaign of that political subject.

Article 16
(Plan and Schedule for Broadcasting Political Programmes)

- (1) Electronic media shall submit the schedule of planned political programmes to the CRA at least seven days in advance. Any changes to planned programmes or political broadcasts scheduled at short notice shall be reported to the CRA as soon as possible.
- (2) Electronic media shall maintain detailed records of the broadcasting schedule of political advertisements, the schedule and content of political programmes, as well as coverage of political events, and shall make such records available for public inspection. Such records shall be submitted to the CRA every Monday for the preceding week. These records shall include a report on received and fulfilled requests for paid political advertising. The CRA may at any time request from media outlets a consolidated report on political advertising and political programmes, as well as a report on the amount of airtime allocated to each political subject.

CHAPTER IV. PUBLIC ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND THE CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION OF BIH

Article 17
(Public Electronic Media)

- (1) Public electronic media shall be obliged to broadcast, free of charge and in full, radio and television spots, announcements and information of the Central Election Commission of BiH in order to ensure that voters are informed about all aspects of the electoral process.
- (2) If a public electronic medium refuses to act in accordance with paragraph (1) of this Article, the Central Election Commission of BiH shall file a complaint with the CRA for the initiation of the competent procedure.
- (3) The Central Election Commission of BiH shall timely notify the public electronic medium of the period during which radio and television spots, announcements and information of the Central Election Commission of BiH are to be broadcast, including the number of repetitions thereof.

CHAPTER V. STEREOTYPICAL AND OFFENSIVE CONTENT

Article 18 (Prohibition of Stereotypical and Offensive Content)

Conducting an election campaign through the media that contains stereotypical and offensive content in relation to men and/or women, or that encourages stereotypical and offensive behaviour based on gender, or a degrading attitude towards members of different genders, shall be prohibited.

Article 19 (Jurisdiction for Conducting Proceedings)

(1) The CRA, as the authority responsible for monitoring the operation of electronic media, shall apply its Rulebook on the Procedure for Resolving Violations of Conditions, Licences and Regulations of the Communications Regulatory Agency (“Official Gazette of BiH”, No. 77/21) in all cases where electronic media fail to comply with the provisions of Chapter 16 of the Election Law of BiH and the provisions of this Rulebook.

(2) Political subjects shall submit their objections concerning content published in print and online media in relation to election campaign coverage to the Press and Online Media Council, on the basis of the Press and Online Media Code and the accompanying guidelines of the Council on election reporting, and in accordance with the Council’s procedures.

(3) Complaints lodged by political subjects regarding the reporting of print and online media in Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be resolved by the Complaints Commission of the Press and Online Media Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina under an expedited procedure.

(4) The Central Election Commission of BiH shall have jurisdiction to decide on complaints concerning violations of Chapter 16 of the Election Law of BiH committed by a political subject.

Article 20 (Cessation of Applicability)

Upon the entry into force of this Rulebook, the Rulebook on Media Presentation and Public Advertising of Political Subjects during the Election Period (“Official Gazette of BiH”, No. 31/24) shall cease to apply.

Article 21 (Entry into Force and Publication in Official Gazettes)

This Rulebook shall enter into force on the day of its adoption and shall be published in the “Official Gazette of BiH”, the “Official Gazette of the Federation of BiH”, the “Official Gazette of Republika Srpska”, the “Official Gazette of Brčko District of BiH”, and on the website of the Central Election Commission of BiH, www.izbori.ba.

No.: 05-1-02-2-713-1/26
Sarajevo, 6 May 2026

President
Jovan Kalaba