



**INSTRUCTION**  
**on conditions and procedures for accrediting election observers in Bosnia and**  
**Herzegovina**  
**(Consolidated text)**

Sarajevo, May 2024

Pursuant to Article 2.9, paragraph (1), item 2, and having regard to Article 17.10, paragraph (2) of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette 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 20<sup>th</sup> session held on May 3, 2024, adopted the following

## **INSTRUCTION**

### **on conditions and procedures for accrediting election observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

#### **(Consolidated text)**

### **CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **Article 1** **(Scope)**

The instruction on conditions and procedures for accrediting election observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the Instruction) shall lay down:

- a) the procedure of submitting requests for accreditation and the criteria for accrediting election observers (Article 17.3, Article 17.4, paragraph (1) and Article 17.5, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the BiH Election Law),
- b) the deadlines for submitting the application and the deadlines for taking a decision on the application (Article 17.7 of the BiH Election Law),
- c) consideration of application for accreditation of election observers (Article 17.10, paragraph (2) of the BiH Election Law)
- d) design, contents and distribution of the accreditation badges (Article 17.6 of the BiH Election Law),
- e) access of the accredited observer to the location of observing election related activities (Article 17.1, paragraph (2) of the BiH Election Law),
- f) revoking the status of an observer (Article 17.10, paragraph (1) of the BiH Election Law), and
- g) the design of the accreditation application and the accreditation badge (Article 17.6 of the BiH Election Law).

#### **Article 2** **(Definitions)**

Certain expressions used in this Instruction shall have the following meaning:

- a) an **observer** means a representative of a political subject, representative of an association and an international observer accredited in accordance with the provisions of this Instruction,
- b) an **association** means an association or foundation established in accordance with the laws on associations and foundations,
- c) an **international observer** means a representative of international government and international nongovernment organization, a representative of a foreign government and election officials, and
- d) an **accreditation badge** means a document issued by the BiH Central Election Commission according to which the observers exercise their right to observe electoral activities.

## **CHAPTER II. SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATION AND THE CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITING ELECTION OBSERVERS**

### **Section A. Observers of political subjects**

#### **Article 3**

#### **(Submission of application for accreditation of political subjects – Article 17.5 of the BiH Election Law)**

(1) The representatives of political subjects, certified by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: the BiH Central Election Commission), shall submit the application form for accreditation of the observers to observe work of the BIH Central Election Commission and work of the Main Counting Center to the BiH Central Election Commission. The representatives of political subjects shall submit the application form for accreditation of observers to observe work of the election commission, Center for voters' register, work at the polling station and other places of election-related activities to the election commission in the basic constituency within the constituency for which they are standing for the election.

(2) The accreditation application form submitted by a political party to the BiH Central Election Commission shall only be considered valid if it is signed by individuals who are listed as authorized representatives in the application for certification to participate in the election, and whose signatures are on file with the BiH Central Election Commission.

(3) The BiH Central Election Commission shall communicate with political subjects exclusively through the head office of the political party, coalition, independent candidate or lists of independent candidates or through a person authorized for representation before the BiH Central Election Commission.

(4) The accreditation application form submitted by the political subject to an election commission in the basic constituency within the constituency for which it stands for the election, shall only be considered valid if signed by persons, who are listed as persons authorized for representation in the application for certification to participate in the election, and whose signatures are on file with the BiH Central Election Commission or an election commission.

(5) A political subject shall submit the contact details (address, telephone/fax number and e-mail) together with the application form referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article.

(6) The application form for accrediting political subjects and the rules of conduct form, as well as the statement on the secrecy of the vote, shall be available at the BiH Central Election Commission and the election commissions.

(7) Accompanying the application form referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article, a political subject shall complete a list of nominated observers, containing name, last name, number of a valid ID card, national identification number, as well as rules of conduct form with signed statement on secrecy of voting for each nominated observer.

(8) The right of accreditation for observation of election-related activities referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article shall have political subjects that are on the list of political subjects determined by the BiH Central Election Commission according to the procedure applied to nomination of polling station committee" members.

## **Section B. Observers of associations**

### **Article 4**

#### **(Submission of the application for accreditation of associations – Article 17.1, paragraph (1) of the BiH Election Law)**

- (1) The representatives of association shall submit the application form for accrediting observers to observe all election-related activities to the BiH Central Election Commission.
- (2) In the application form the association shall specify:
  - a) Election-related activities it wishes to observe,
  - b) Contact details (address, number of telephone, fax and e-mail),
  - c) Basic constituencies in which it wishes to observe the activities,
  - d) Number of observers, and
  - e) The reason why it wishes to observe the electoral process.
- (3) The application form referred to in Paragraph (2) shall also include documents specified under Article 17.4, Paragraph (1) points 1) and 2) of the Election Law of BiH.
- (4) Along with the application form, the association shall provide:
  - b) List of nominated observers containing names and last names, numbers of valid ID card and national identification number of the observers,
  - c) An excerpt on registration of the association in the registry of associations with a competent body, which cannot be older than 60 days, and
  - d) Rules of conduct form and the statement on respecting secrecy of the vote.
- (5) Association shall apply separately for each basic constituency in which it wishes to observe electoral activities.

## **Section C. International observers**

### **Article 5**

#### **(Submission of the application for accreditation of international observers – Article 17.3 of the BiH Election Law)**

- (1) The representatives of the international observers shall submit the application for accreditation to the BiH Central Election Commission.
- (2) Representatives of international observers shall specify contact details on the application form and shall complete the list of nominated observers, containing name, last name, country that issued the passport and the passport number.
- (3) Representatives of international observers shall specify on the application form the activities they intend to observe. Representatives of international observers may observe specified activity in all basic constituencies of their choice.
- (4) A representative of an international organization shall sign a statement on the application form for accreditation that the said organization does not perform any activity on behalf of a political subject and that it shall adhere to the provisions of the BiH Election Law.

(5) Accompanying the accreditation form the international observers shall submit a document, signed by the authorized person, giving the reasons why they are interested in observing electoral process in BiH.

## **Section D. Observers at diplomatic and consular representation offices of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

### **Article 6 (Submission of the application)**

(1) Political subjects, associations and international observers may submit application form for accreditation of their observers to observe elections at a polling station designated for voting of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BiH citizens) at the diplomatic and consular representation offices of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: DCRO BiH) directly to the BiH Central Election Commission or through the DCRO BiH.

(2) The representatives of political subjects, associations and international observers shall complete a list of nominated observers, containing name, last name, country that issued the passport, passport number, number of valid ID card and national identification number, as well as the rules of conduct form and the statement on respecting secrecy of the vote for each nominated observer.

(3) Representatives of political subjects, associations and international observers shall specify on the application form in which DCROs BiH, designated for voting, they wish to observe the voting process.

(4) In addition to the obligations set forth by the BiH Election Law and this Instruction the accredited observers shall be obligated to follow specific safety procedures relevant to the work of the DCROs.

## **Section E. The criteria for accrediting observers of political subjects and associations**

### **Article 7 (Criteria for accrediting political subjects and associations – Article 17.4 and 17.5 of the BiH Election Law)**

(1) Political subjects and association may propose for observers only persons who are citizens of BiH and are 18 years of age.

(2) The BiH Central Election Commission shall reject the application for accreditation of a person:

- a) who is a candidate at the forthcoming elections;
- b) whose candidacy at the forthcoming elections was rejected or their name was subsequently removed from the list of candidates;
- c) to whom the BiH Central Election Commission imposed the sanction of illegibility to work at a polling station committee, Center for voters' register or at an election commission,
- d) who was proposed by a political subject that is not certified to participate at the elections;
- e) who is member of a polling station committee;
- f) who holds a mandate in the executive or legislative government in the constituency at the level for which they are standing for the elections (for municipal council and municipal mayor at the local election, and for the higher levels of authority for the general elections).

## **CHAPTER III. DEADLINES FOR SUBMITTING AND EXAMINING APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION**

### **Article 8**

#### **(Deadlines for receiving and examining applications for accreditation - (Article 17.7 of the BiH Election Law)**

- (1) The deadline for submission of the application accreditation form shall commence on the day elections are announced.
- (2) The final deadline for submission of the application for issuing accreditation to political subjects and associations is fifteen (15) days prior to the Election Day.
- (3) Competent election commission shall take a decision on applications referred to in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this Article no later than ten (10) days following submission of the application.
- (4) The final deadline for submission of applications for accreditation of international observers is seven days prior to the Election Day, and exceptionally the BiH Central Election Commission may approve a request for accreditation a day prior to the Election Day.

## **CHAPTER IV EXAMINING APPLICATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION OF ELECTION OBSERVERS (Article 17.10, paragraph (2) of the BiH Election Law)**

### **Section A. Applications of political subjects**

#### **Article 9**

##### **(Examining the applications of political subjects)**

- (1) The application forms for accreditation of political subjects shall be available on the web site of BiH Central Election Commission.
- (2) Political subjects shall submit completed accreditation application forms to the BiH Central Election Commission and to the election commissions, depending on whether they wish to be accredited to observe work of the Central Election Commission and work of Main Center for Counting or to observe work of the election commission, Center for voters' register or work at the polling stations and other locations of electoral activities.
- (3) Upon receipt of an accreditation application form, the BiH Central Election Commission and election commission shall verify if a political subject is certified to participate in the elections in the electoral unit belonging to a basic constituency for which political subjects had nominated their observers.
- (4) The verification referred to in paragraph (3) of this Article shall be made against the list of all political subjects, delivered by BiH Central Election Commission, that are certified in the electoral unit belonging to a basic constituency for which political subjects had nominated their observers.
- (5) BiH Central Election Commission and election commission shall retain the original of the application form together with rules of conduct form and the statement on respecting secrecy of the vote. The decision on accreditation and copy of the rules of conduct form and statement on respecting secrecy of the vote shall be delivered to the political subject as an applicant. The decision of the election commission on accreditation of a political subject shall be delivered to the BiH Central Election Commission. The list of accredited observers shall be distributed to all polling stations in the respective basic constituency to which the application pertains. Observers are required to wear their accreditation badges at all times.

(6) The BiH Central Election Commission and election commissions shall reject the application for accreditation by decision in the following cases:

- a) if certification of a political subject was annulled;
- b) if the proposed observer does not meet requirements referred to in Article 3 of this Instruction; and
- c) if a person was already nominated, namely if they were accredited by other political subject or an association.

## **Section B. Applications of associations**

### **Article 10 (Examining applications of associations)**

(1) The BiH Central Election Commission shall examine the applications for accreditation submitted by the associations, and if found that the association was founded or sponsored by a political subject, or it is involved in any activities on behalf of the certified political subject, it may reject the application or can approve the application if found that the association is neither founded nor sponsored by a political subject or that it is not involved in any activities on behalf of the certified political entity.

(2) The BiH Central Election Commission shall draw a list containing names of accredited observers, which is attached to the decision on accreditation of associations, and is integral part thereof, delivering it to all election commissions of basic constituencies in which the associations are accredited.

(3) Election commissions shall submit the list referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article to all polling stations in the basic constituency to which the application refers.

(4) If an association fails to provide evidence referred to in Article 4 of this Instruction, the BiH Central Election Commission shall reject the application form for accreditation of that association.

## **Section C. Applications of international observers**

### **Article 11 (Examining applications of international observers)**

(1) The BiH Central Election Commission shall on the day it announces elections forward the Decision on announcing the elections to the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant bodies aimed at timely dissemination of the information about the Election Day and election observation to the international observers and the states with which BiH has diplomatic and consular relations.

(2) The BiH Central Election Commission shall examine the application for accreditation of an international observer and it may reject the request if found that the international observer is involved in any activities on behalf of the certified political subject.

(3) The BiH Central Election Commission shall make a list of international observers whose applications for accreditation were approved and shall distribute the list to all election commissions of basic constituencies in which the international observers are accredited.

(4) If possible, the BiH Central Election Commission shall prior to the Election Day hold a briefing for the accredited international observers and shall then distribute information material for election observation in BiH.

(5) If the international observers fail to present evidence referred to in Article 5 of this Instruction, the BiH Central Election Commission shall reject the application for accreditation.

## **Section D. Observers at polling stations for voting in absentia and observers of mobile teams**

### **Article 12 (Observers at polling stations for voting in absentia)**

(1) Political subjects may have access to the polling stations for voting in absentia, namely to the polling station in which voters are registered in the excerpt from the Central Voters' Register to vote for the constituency in which the political subject is standing for the elections.

(2) Observers of associations may have access to the polling station for voting in absentia, namely to the polling station for which their application for accreditation was approved.

(3) Political subjects and association shall bear the responsibility to seek from the BiH Central Election Commission the information on the location of polling stations for voting in absentia that are situated in other basic constituencies. Political subjects and association shall contact the election commission of basic constituency in which the polling station for voting in absentia is located in order to accredit their observers.

### **Article 13 (Observers of mobile teams)**

Municipal/city election commissions shall prepare a work plan of the mobile team that shall contain its composition, working schedule and the route, which is delivered to an accredited observer upon their request.

## **CHAPTER V. DESIGN, CONTENTS AND DELIVERY OF ACCREDITATION BADGES**

### **Article 14 (Design and contents of the accreditation badge – Article 17.6 of the BiH Election Law)**

(1) The accreditation badge shall be rectangular in form and shall contain the following information:

a) In the upper part:

1) Logo of the BiH Central Election Commission;

b) In the middle:

1) Election Logo;

c) Below:

1) Name and last name of accredited observer,

2) Date of issuance and number of decision,

3) Signature of authorized officer who issued the accreditation badge;

d) next to the signature, in right corner:

1) Stamp of the election commission issuing accreditation badge, and

e) The type of the observer is indicated in the upper right corner:

1) for political subject the mark "PS" is given together with the code delivered by the BiH Central Election Commission,

2) for associations the mark "PU" with a number starting from number 1, and

3) for international observers the mark "MP" with a number starting from number 1.



(2) The accreditation badge for political subjects shall be white; for associations gray; and for international observers the accreditation card shall be light pink.

(3) The information on the accreditation badge shall be printed in languages officially used in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Cyrillic and Latin alphabet.

(4) The reverse side of the accreditation shall have the following text: “During observation of election process observers shall not disturb electoral activities and they shall respect the secrecy of vote. During observation of electoral activities, an observer shall wear the official accreditation badge and shall not wear any insignia or markings, which affiliate them with a specific political party, coalition, list of independent candidates, independent candidate and a candidate from the special list of candidates, representatives of national minorities.”

(5) Text from paragraph (4) of this Article shall be in English language on accreditation badges for international observers.

### **Article 15**

#### **(Distribution of official accreditation badge to political subjects)**

(1) The BiH Central Election Commission shall prepare official accreditation badges (hereinafter: accreditation badge) for observers of political subjects accredited to observe work of the BiH Central Election Commission and the work of the Main center for counting.

(2) The BiH Central Election Commission shall define design of the accreditation badge and shall deliver the latter to the election commissions, and election commissions shall be accountable for issuing and delivering accreditation badges to all accredited observers of political subjects in their basic constituency.

(3) Accredited observers shall collect accreditation badges referred to in paragraph (2) of this Article in the election commission of the basic constituency in which they are accredited for observing, by presenting rules of conduct form and the statement on respecting secrecy of the vote.

(4) During observing of electoral activity each observer shall be obligated to wear accreditation badge.

### **Article 16**

#### **(Distribution of official accreditation badges to associations)**

(1) The BiH Central Election Commission shall determine design of the accreditation badges (hereinafter: accreditation badge) and shall deliver it to the election commissions, and election commissions shall be accountable for distribution of accreditation badges to all accredited observers of associations in their basic constituency.

(2) When collecting accreditation, the representative of the association must present to the election commission signed rules of conduct forms and the statements on respecting secrecy of the vote of accredited observers.

(3) Election commission shall verify that the name of the association indicated in the statement corresponds to the name from the list of associations accredited by the BiH Central Election Commission.

(4) The election commission shall provide as many accreditation badges as there were signed rules of conduct forms and the statements on respecting secrecy of the vote.

(5) Accredited observer of association shall retain the signed rules of conduct form and the statement on

respecting secrecy of the vote referred to in paragraph (3) of this Article, thus ensuring that the person wearing accreditation badges is the person who signed the rules of conduct form and the statement on respecting secrecy of the vote.

(6) During observing of electoral activity each observer shall be obligated to wear accreditation badges.

**Article 17**  
**(Distribution of official accreditation to international observers)**

(1) Accredited international observers shall collect the accreditation badges at the premises of the BiH Central Election Commission by the Election Day at latest.

(2) During observing of electoral activity each observer shall be obligated to wear accreditation badges.

**Article 18**  
**(Distribution of official accreditation to observers at the polling stations in DCROs)**

(1) The BiH Central Election Commission shall be responsible to design and distribute the official accreditation badge to accredited observers to observe elections at polling stations in DCROs BiH designated for voting of BiH citizens.

(2) Accredited observers referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article shall collect the accreditation badges at the premises of the BiH Central Election Commission or at the DCRO BiH designated for voting.

(3) An observer shall be obligated to wear the accreditation badge during observing the elections at polling station designated for voting of BiH citizens at DCROs BiH

**CHAPTER VI. ACCESS OF ACCREDITED OBSERVER TO THE OBSERVATION SITE– (Article 17.1 and 17.2 of the BiH Election Law)**

**Article 19**  
**(Access of observer to the observation site)**

(1) Upon arrival to the observation site, an observer must present a personal identification document to an authorized person of the election management body.

(2) The authorized person shall examine the observer's identification document with a photograph in order to confirm that the observer's name is indicated on the accreditation badge.

(3) The authorized person shall record the name of the observers, name of the subject that accredited them and their accreditation badge number in the official log of the election management body, noting the time the observer arrived to, and, later on, the time the observer left the premises, in order to limit the number of observers to one observer at the same time at one location of electoral activities if they are observers of political subject and association.

(4) An authorized officer shall retain the identification document until the moment the observer leaves the site. When leaving, the observer shall be obliged to inform the authorized officers on leaving the premises, upon which they will be given the identification document back. When leaving the site, the observer shall retain their accreditation.

(5) The number of international observers present at a polling station is not limited, but it must not affect regularity of the electoral process.

(6) International observer may be accompanied by an interpreter at any place where they observe the

electoral activity.

## **CHAPTER VII ACCREDITED OBSERVERS IN THE MAIN COUNTING CENTER**

### **Article 20**

#### **(Access of accredited observers to the Main Counting Center)**

(1) Accredited observers shall be allowed to observe the process of counting of votes and all activities that take place in the Main Counting Center, to be recorded in the accredited observers' attendance sheet.

(2) Observers of one political subject in the Main Counting Center shall have the right to ensure that their observers simultaneously observe all activities taking place in the Main Counting Center, where one observer shall be assigned to observe one activity in line with the provisions of the Rulebook on operations and organization of work and determination of voting results at the Main Counting Center for the 2024 Local Elections.

(3) Accredited observers shall be allowed to move around the Main Counting Center within the areas marked as zones they are allowed to access. There shall be personnel of the Main Counting Center in each shift, who shall be assigned to keep the record of attendance of accredited observers, disseminate information to observers, organize tours of the premises of the Main Counting Center and answer questions about specific activities taking place within specific sections and groups.

(4) During the course of the tour of the Main Counting Center, the observers and visitors shall be required to adhere to the house rules and shall not be allowed to interfere in any way with the process of counting of votes and the ongoing activities, or disrupt the staff of the Main Counting Center in the discharge of their duties.

(5) All observers shall have access to the Book of Complaints of Accredited Observers and be able to use it to enter their comments, suggestions and observations.

(6) In addition to administrative assistant, questions of accredited observers referring to specific activities conducted in the Main Counting Center can be also answered by shift supervisors, department supervisors and group supervisors, within their scope of competence. Observers in the Main Counting Center shall be able to refer to the management of the Main Counting Center for any other questions pertinent to issues stipulated under special documents issued by the management of the Main Counting Center.

## **CHAPTER VIII. REVOKING THE STATUS OF AN OBSERVER**

### **Article 21**

#### **(Reasons for revoking observer status)**

(1) The election management body shall revoke the status of accredited observer and remove the observer from the observation site if:

- a) observer interrupts activities;
- b) observer does not respect secrecy of voting,
- c) observer does not wear official accreditation; and
- d) observer carries insignia which affiliate him/her with a certain political party,

**Article 22**  
**(Procedure of revoking the observer status)**

(1) In the process of removing an accredited observer from the observation site, a representative of the election management body should first warn the observer who is disrupting the electoral process. They should then take all other available measures and actions to cease the disturbance. If the accredited observer persists in such actions, the representative shall proceed to remove them from the observation site.

(2) Competent election management body shall inform political subject, association namely international observer about the accreditation being revoked.

**CHAPTER IX. FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 23**  
**(Annexes)**

Integral part of this Instruction are:

- a) (AP-1-IP) rules of conduct form and statement on respecting secrecy of the vote,
- b) Design of accreditation for international observers;
- c) Design of accreditation for political subjects; and
- d) Design of accreditation for associations.

**Article 23a**  
**(Use of masculine and feminine expressions)**

Words that are, for the sake of clarity, listed in one gender in this Instruction refer to both male and female genders without discrimination.

**Article 24**  
**(Regulations included in the Instruction)**

This Instruction includes the Instruction on conditions and procedure for accrediting election observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Official Gazette of BiH, no. 24/22) and Instruction amending the Instruction on conditions and procedure for accrediting election observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina number 05-1-02-2-591-1/24 of May 3, 2024.

**Article 25**  
**(Publication)**

This Instruction shall be published in the Official Gazette of BiH, Official Gazette of Federation BiH, Official Gazette of Republika Srpska, Official Gazette of the BiH District of Brčko and website of the BiH Central Election Commission [www.izbori.ba](http://www.izbori.ba).

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President  
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