

Bošnjak National Council Elections in Light of Serbia's EU Accession Process

Roundtable Summary

The Council for Inclusive Governance (CIG) held another session of the Regional Forum on 24 September 2014 in Belgrade on the topic of October elections for the Bošnjak National Council in Serbia.¹ The Forum began addressing this issue in December 2013 aiming to contribute to a regular and peaceful process and to electing a Council recognized and supported by political forces. Given that the stability of the region is among top priorities in the Western Balkans, CIG invited a number of members of the diplomatic core in Serbia to share their opinions about the election process with the members of the Forum and to identify the key challenges in electing a minority council recognized by all. The goal of the roundtable was also to identify priorities of the new Bošnjak National Council and the ways for establishing its better cooperation with the state institutions.

The roundtable was part of a project supported by the Open Society Foundation in Belgrade.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The roundtable participants offered the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. This Forum session offered a rare opportunity for an agreement among the competing parties for the election. They agreed to avoid a similar situation created four years ago which resulted in creation of two parallel councils. The goal is to form a national council that would be accepted by all and that would perform its functions according to the Serbian Constitution and Serbia's legislative framework.
2. It is necessary to continue the debate aiming to secure a fair election process including the signing of a code of conduct by the participating citizen's lists, political parties, and members of the Forum for both pre- and post-election period.
3. Talks between the lists and mayors should continue in order to secure the participation of the representatives of the electoral lists in the local electoral commissions, thus contributing to the monitoring of the process.
4. Talks should continue under the guidance of the Forum members in order to reach an agreement to recognize the election results and pledging to avoid irregularities during the election.
5. Talks should continue with the help of the Forum members on reaching a general agreement on inclusion of all elected members in the Bošnjak National Council's

¹ The present participants of the Regional Forum come from the municipalities of Nova Varoš, Novi Pazar, Prijepolje, Priboj, Raška, Sjenica, and Tutin.

executive bodies and work of the Council according to the four areas prescribed by the Serbian law.

6. All of the above-mentioned documents should be part of a comprehensive agreement. It was agreed that a Forum member Zibija Šarenkapić would host the next Forum meeting in Novi Pazar to discuss and sign an agreement regarding the election for the Bošnjak National Council.

Follow-up information

A forum member, Zibija Šarenkapić, supported by the OSCE office in Novi Pazar, led the consultations with the lists at the local level during the two weeks following the roundtable. On October 10, 2014, in Novi Pazar, the heads of the two electoral lists, Sulejman Ugljanin (United Bošnjak List) and Jahja Fehratović (For Bošnjaks, Sandžak and mufti), as well as the mayors of Sjenica and Tutin, signed a document that included an agreement of a peaceful election process, the participation of the two electoral lists' representatives in monitoring the election, and on inclusive approach within the Council after the elections. The heads of the electoral lists also agreed to initiate broad consultations and public debates on the most important issues that are under the Council's competence.

The Forum will continue to support the functioning of the Council and monitor its activities.

List of Participants

Forum Members

Goran Bašić, Center for Research of Ethnicity, Belgrade
Aida Ćorović, Member of Parliament of Serbia, Democratic Party
Branislav Dilparić, President of the Municipal Assembly of Nova Varoš, Socialist Party of Serbia
Esad Džudžo, President of the Bošnjak National Minority Council in technical mandate
Enis Imamović, Member of Parliament of Serbia, Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak
Semiha Kačar, Director, Sandžak Committee for Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms, Novi Pazar
Fahrudin Kladinčanin, Program Coordinator, Academic Initiative Forum 10, Novi Pazar
Šemsudin Kučević, Mayor of Tutin, Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak
Meho Mahmutović, Mayor of Novi Pazar, Sandžak Democratic Party
Darko Milutin, Lux Development, Belgrade
Hazbo Mujović, Mayor of Sjenica, Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak
Meho Omerović, Chair, Committee of Human and Minority Rights, Parliament of Serbia, Social Democratic Party of Serbia
Zibija Šarenkapić, Director, NVO Cultural Center Damad, Novi Pazar
Ahmedin Škrijelj, Legal Advisor of the Parliamentary Group of the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak
Lazar Rvović, Mayor of Priboj, Serbian Progressive Party
Teo Taraniš, Research Coordinator, Academic Initiative Forum 10, Novi Pazar
Samir Tandir, Vice President, Bošnjak Democratic Community of Sandžak
Sulejman Ugljanin, Member of Parliament of Serbia, President of the Party of Democratic Action of Sandžak

Member of the Diplomatic Corps

Vladan Avramovic, Political Advisor, Embassy of Great Britain
Mario Barfus, Project Manager, Novi Pazar Training Facility, OSCE Mission to Serbia
Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Ambassador, Embassy of the Republic of Turkey
Dominic-Haydn Braithwaite, First Secretary, Embassy of Great Britain
Kevin Furey, Human Rights Officer, U.S. Embassy
Leo D'aes, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium
Nils Ragnar Kamsvaag, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway
Michael Kirby, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Thomas Linders, Royal Netherlands Embassy
Grant Morrow, Political Officer, U.S. Embassy
John Piletich, Political Affairs Officer, UNOB
Jean-Daniel Ruch, Ambassador, Embassy of the Swiss Confederation
Julien Stauffer, Attaché, Embassy of the Swiss Confederation
Ranko Skrbic, Ambassador, Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina
Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, Country Representative, UNORC/UNDP
Laurent Stokvis, Ambassador, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands
Graeme Tyndall, Project Centre Manager, EU Progress
Almir Vučelj, OSCE Novi Pazar
Wolfgang Wagner, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the Republic of Austria
Peter Wiebler, Democracy and Community Development Team Leader, U.S. Embassy

CIG and the Open Society Foundation

Shpetim Gashi, Vice President, Council for Inclusive Governance

Alex Roinishvili Grigorev, President, Council for Inclusive Governance

Jadranka Jelinčić, Director, Open Society Foundation

Igor Novaković, Representative in Serbia, Council for Inclusive Governance

Aleksandra Šanjević, Program Coordinator, Open Society Foundation