

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION OF ELECTION MANAGEMENT BODIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Honorable chairman,
Distinguished guests,
Dear friends,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all please allow me to heartily greet you on behalf of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina and on my personal behalf. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the chairman, and also to the Mr. Zoltan Toth Secretary General of ACEEEO as well as all the members of Executive Board of the ACEEEO.

In my presentation I will explain some fact about Professional Education of Election Management Bodies in BiH.

The competent authorities responsible for the conduct of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the Election Commissions and the Polling Station Committees.

The basic principle of activity of bodies is independence and impartiality. Members of election commissions and Polling Station Committees are persons eligible to vote and with appropriate expertise and experience in the administration of elections.

The competent authorities responsible for the conduct of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina are:

- Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as central state election body
- Municipal Election Commissions, and
- Polling Station Committees in the year of elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

CENTRAL ELECTION COMMISSION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina consists of seven (7) members: two (2) Croats, two (2) Bosniaks, two (2) Serbs, and one (1) member from others. The members of the BiH Central Election Commission are elected for the period of five years. The new changes and amendments to the BiH Election Law propose extension of the BiH CEC members' mandate to seven (7) years.

The nominees for the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina are jointly nominated by the members of the Commission for Selection and Nomination. The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina nominees are legal experts with experience in the administration of elections and/or electoral experts and may not hold any office in the bodies of a political party, association or foundations organizationally or financially related to the political party, and may not be involved in any political party activity.

Commission for Selection and Nomination has seven members out of whom two are appointed by the President of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council from amongst members of the Council, three members are appointed by the Administrative Commission of the House of Representatives of Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina from amongst members of the Commission and two are appointed by the President of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina from amongst members of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In accordance with its procedures, the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina elects members of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the list of nominees.

MUNICIPAL ELECTION COMMISSION

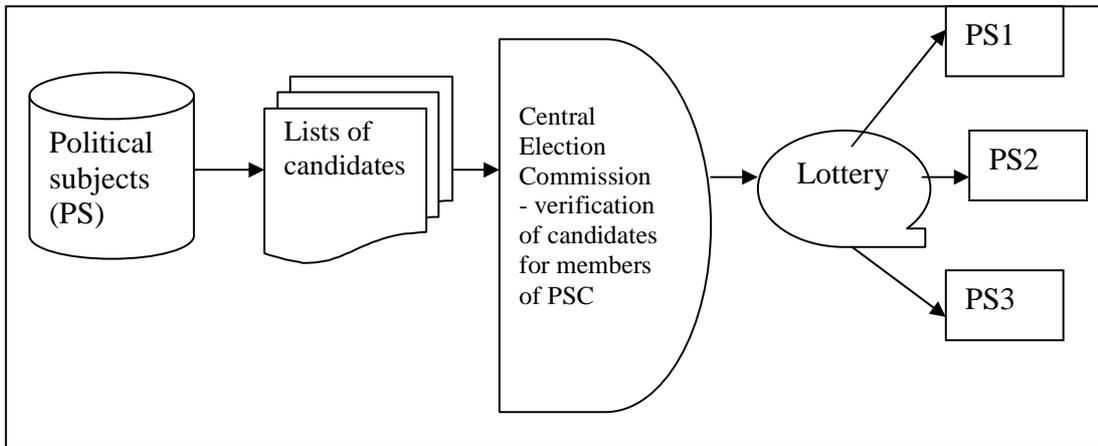
Municipal Election Commission consists of between three (3) or five (5) members. The Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina determines the number of the Municipal Election Commission members in accordance with the number of the registered voters and the size of a municipality.

The members of the Municipal Election Commission are appointed and dismissed by the Municipal Council, and they are subject to the approval of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Amongst the members of the Municipal Election Commission the Municipal Council/Assembly appoints the President, subject to the approval of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The new changes and amendments to the BiH Election Law propose that Municipal Election Commission in future consists of between three (3) or five (5) or seven (7) members.

POLLING STATION COMMITTEE

In addition to the Election Commission there are polling station committees as an important segment of the electoral administration. The Municipal Election Commission appoints polling station committees for each election. Depending on the number of voters registered for a specific station, three (3) or five (5) members of the polling station committees will be appointed, and the deputies. In the process of appointment of the Polling Station Committees, the political subjects play an important role since they propose members of the Polling Station Committees to the Election Commission. The basic requirement to be met for a list of candidates to become members of the Polling Station Committees, to be proposed by the political subjects, is that the candidates are verified for elections in given municipality. One representative of one political subject can be in the composition of the Polling Station Committees at the polling station to the maximum. Places and representation of the members of the Polling Station Committees shall be made by the lottery.



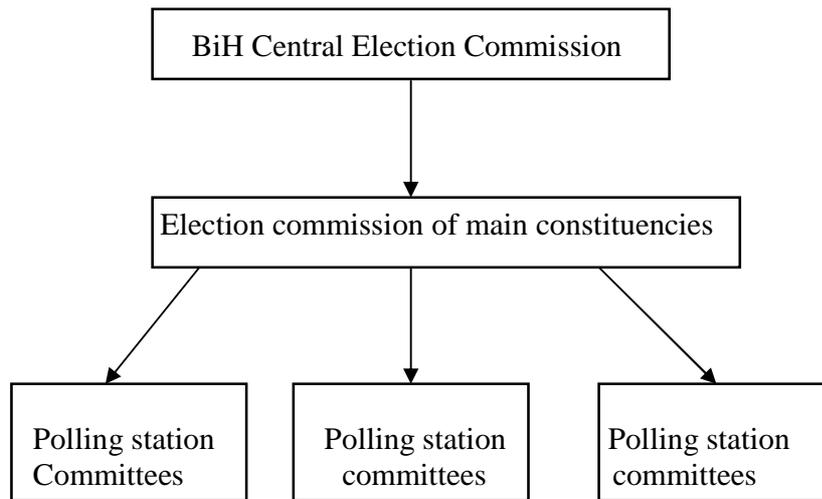
Manner of Selection of members of the Polling Station Committees

PLAN AND PROGRAM OF EDUCATION

Pursuant to Article 2.2, paragraph (4) of the Election Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina („BiH Official Gazette“, number: 23/01, 7/02, 9/02, 20/02, 25/02, 4/04, 20/04, 25/05, 52/05, 65/05, 77/05, 11/06 and 24/06), on May 16, 2006 the BiH Central Election Commission adopted Plan and program of permanent education of the members of the bodies responsible for administration of election.

This Plan and program stipulates the bodies which are responsible to realize educational program for members of the bodies for administration of elections, education executives, title and contents of the education, time and place, didactical-methodical means, certificates for issuance of passed education for the members of bodies for administration of elections, financial means necessary for realization, as well as all other issue regarding realization of obligatory and continuous education of bodies for administration of elections. Also, Article 11 of the Plan and program stipulates that an operation plan must be drawn for every calendar year.

Bodies for administration of elections to which this Plan and program refers are members of the BiH Central Election Commission and employees of the BiH Central Election Commission's Secretariat, members of the municipal election commissions, city election commissions of Mostar, Banja Luka and election commission of BiH District of Brčko and members of the polling station committees of the constituencies.



Picture 1. Overview of training process

Education of the members of the BiH Central Election Commission and CEC Secretariat's employees is done through seminars, round table discussions etc. Education of the members of the election commission of the main constituencies is done by members of the BiH CEC and CEC Secretariat's employees, who are assigned to this task by a decision of the BiH CEC, as well as members of election commission of the constituencies and other professionals upon a request by election commissions of main constituencies. With reference to the theme, education is conducted in municipalities and cities stipulated by the Plan and program, or centralized in the premises designated by the BiH Central Election Commission. In 2006, BiH CEC on two occasions organized educational seminar in regional centers, during June and September. In June members of the BiH CEC and CEC Secretariat employees held educational seminar in some regional cities: Sarajevo, Mostar, Gacko, Bihać, Laktaši (Banja Luka), Dobož, Brčko and Bratunac. This seminar was attended by 345 members of the election commissions of main constituencies, while in September that number was 415.

Education of the members of the polling station committees is done by the members of the election commission and if necessary BiH CEC Secretariat's employees based on a special decision of the BiH Central Election Commission. This training consists of familiarization of the polling station committees' members with voting and counting procedures, as well as with other tasks and obligations of the polling station committees' members.

Plan and program also envisages issuance of certificates for the members of election commission of the main constituencies, which are issued by the BiH Central Election Commission, and for the polling station committees' members the certificates are issued by the election commission according to the design and form set by the BiH Central Election Commission. Attendance at the education organized either by BiH CEC or election commission of the constituency is carefully kept, and only those who attended the whole course can receive certificate. BiH Central Election Commission had issued 313 certificates for members of the election commission of the constituencies in 2006.

New changes and amendments to the BiH Election Law foresee an obligatory professional exam for the members of the election management bodies, which would be conducted before the commission of the BiH Central Election Commission.

The BiH Central Election Commission on average organizes one scientific-professional conference in a year, which is also considered a type of professional education.

At the moment the BiH Central Election Commission strives to implement a new idea of an Election Academy. The concept of the Election Academy is as follows:

Regional Elections and election systems Academy (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina)

A) About Elections and election systems Academy

Elections and election systems Academy is established as a regional project aimed at permanent education of electoral officials at all levels of BiH and the countries in the region. The seat of the Academy is in Sarajevo, but lectures and study trips, as well as all other educational activities may be performed in other BiH centers and in other countries of the region.

B) Academy realizes its work through:

- Courses, seminars, symposiums, round table discussions and exchange of experience and opinions, aimed at education of beginners in field of elections and election systems;
- Publicist activities through publishing of magazines and other professional literature on elections and election systems of the countries in the region and world wide;
- Awarding of annual regional award to individuals and institutions whose practical or theoretical work has contributed to development of democratic, free and fair elections in certain countries of the region or in the region as whole.

C) There are following course levels:

1. **Main course** for members of municipal/city election commissions in BiH
2. **Intermediate course** for members of municipal and regional election commission of the countries in the region, according to specific interests and responsibilities in the election process (IT experts, lawyers,...)
3. **Advanced course** for members of the central election commissions of the countries in the region.

D) **Modularization.** All courses are organized in one or more modules. Deanery of the Academy shall decide on number and contents of the modules.

E) **Lecturers.** Lecturers at the Academy are experts from the countries in the region, nominated and appointed by the central election commission of the country concerned, which sign memorandum on establishment of Regional elections and election systems Academy. All appointed lecturers constitute Teaching-science council of the Academy, which decides on syllabus and other forms of educational activities of the academy.

F) **Deanery.** Deanery of the Academy is dean and assistant dean, nominated by the central election commission. They do not contract their work based on permanent (professional) engagement.

G) **Expenses.** All transport costs to and from Academy, accommodation and per diems are covered by institutions, which are sending their representatives of the Academy. Academy ensures working space, copying of literature and certificates on completed education. These costs will be covered by BiH Central Election Commission through its budget or based on an agreement with interested donors.

FURTHER STEPS

We would like to propose that the ACEEEO support/accepts the idea of the BiH Central Election Commission on establishing the Regional Election Academy among its member states or even to adopt the idea as its own project.

The Election Academy could become a regional election academy with the headquarters in Sarajevo, which would have a symbolic and an essential meaning. Symbolic because of Sarajevo, which is one of the cities that went through terrible events and essential because Sarajevo as a city is located in the heart of the region.

Further steps in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding professional education are more stringent criteria for election of Central Election Commission, Municipal Commission and polling station committees, so that a person that did not attend professional education cannot be elected.

Proposal to other member states is that every Central Election Commission of a member state publishes a bulletin, which publication has been already initiated by the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We would also like to propose adoption of a decision that the website of every Central Election Commission has an info site on education, something like an electronic library, through which Election Commission could exchange professional publications, regarding professional education of the members of the Election Commissions.

Having in mind that the elections are the most crucial event for the society of any country, we most sincerely hope that we will be able to establish Election Academy, of course with assistance and support of the ACEEEO.

We would also like to express our invitation for all state election commission from region, Europe and world wide to contribute in future to the development of the Election Academy

through provision of the lectures on the election system and processes having expertise and the knowledge on the world's election systems.

We would also be very pleased to welcome you in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the lectures on the election system and the elections in your countries for all those people, as there are many that would like to get more information about your work and achievements.

This is a short report about Professional Education of Election Management Bodies in BiH and I hope that it will be quite enough for some future activities of ACEEEO in this field.

Thank you very much for your attention.