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All contemporary political philosophers in one way or another maintain the opinion that the equality of people is one of the highest political ideals. It is almost universally accepted principle that members of a political community should be treated as equals and that "the state should equally take care of all its subjects and respect them". This principle does not represent the ideal principle of distribution of material goods but rather refers to equality in social relations. In other words, the true meaning of this opinion is that all citizens must have the same right to be treated with care and respect, and that this care and respect depend solely on their status as citizens and not on race, sex, religion, level of intellectual development, financial status or something else. Today, groups such as ethnic minorities, homosexuals and lesbians, as well as persons with disabilities, do not seek equal quantities of goods as an expression of equality of status and social acceptance as much as they are committed to social relations characterised by equality rather than hierarchy.

If we observe Bosnian and Herzegovinian society from this theoretical level, we can rightfully determine that it has not achieved these high ethical principles on equality of people. Possibilities for people, citizens of B&H, to equally, freely and undisturbedly participate in the electoral process has been achieved only principally, since in practice many social groups have been marginalised, not to say almost excluded from the electoral process.

How did this happen and how does this manifest?

First of all, one needs to know that Bosnia and Herzegovina today is marked by the two dominant social courses. Similar to all post-communist societies, B&H is also primarily characterised by political transition, carried out on the principles of liberal democracy aiming at pluralism and democratisation of society and reaching the Euro-Atlantic integration. Another social course, which more directly reflects on participation of marginalised groups in the electoral process, concerns the profound consequences of war of disintegration of Yugoslavia on the population of B&H.

Political transition and post-war material and moral destruction of society have generated considerable insensitivity of the dominant social groups towards the marginalised ones, including women as the most numerous group, national minorities, and all kinds of persons with special needs, from deaf and dumb persons, blind, bedridden, to persons in wheelchairs. Regardless of the visible improvements in exercise of the rights of these persons, we must admit that not enough has been done for these groups to go to the polls. Disabled persons, who, as compared with some other societies, make a significant part of the B&H population due to the consequences of the war, are in most cases not provided with the technical ability to vote. Polling places often lack adequate access for wheelchairs; they are often inadequately chosen so that the vote takes place on the higher floors of school or administrative building where the elderly and less mobile have difficult access; services provided for bedridden in their homes, for totally immobile persons, are neither sufficient nor prompt as a rule. People with hearing impairments generally have no technical aids for the vote, while people with vision impairments have no election materials printed in Braille. These are just

some of the disadvantages that prevent equal participation of minority social groups in the electoral process.

It is also true, and it has to be taken into account, that these population categories are not sufficiently self-organised, so their voice of protest in this matter is poor or almost not heard. In a poor society such as ours, the economic needs force these persons to primarily focus on their existential, material needs, while a wide range of their human and civil rights and opportunities remains unrealised.