

NDI Mission Calls for Timely Implementation of Election Technology Ahead of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2026 General Elections

June 19, 2026

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina - The National Democratic Institute (NDI) today presented the findings and recommendations of its international pre-election assessment mission (PEAM) to Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), highlighting both the opportunities and challenges facing the country ahead of the October 4, 2026 general elections.

The high-level delegation visited the cities of Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar from June 14–19, 2026 to assess preparations for the elections, evaluate the broader electoral and political environment, and offer practical recommendations that could still be implemented before election day.

Though recent elections have generally been well administered, they have also been beset by polarizing ethnic divisions and allegations of malpractices by political contestants. In particular, longstanding and pervasive concerns about illegal voting, improper counting of ballots, and manipulation of results have undermined public confidence in elections. Against this backdrop, there is near-universal support among voters, civil society and political parties across BiH for the use of election day technology. However, significant delays in their adoption have left election authorities with a compressed timeframe to finalize regulations, test equipment, train election officials, educate voters, and build confidence among political contestants and the public.

“The new election day technology has the potential to help reduce widespread concerns about illegal voting, improper counting of ballots and manipulation of results,” said Tanja Fajon, former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia and leader of the delegation, while noting the need for all state and entity institutions to support the Central Election Commission (CEC). “Regardless of the outcome of these elections, the use of election day technologies can enhance public confidence in the process and results which, in turn, can also more broadly strengthen the country’s democratic institutions.”

The delegation also noted that political parties and civic organizations have raised serious concerns over the lack of information regarding how the election day technology will be implemented as well as the limited time available to educate voters on how it will affect the voting process. Concerns were also expressed that the new technology could necessitate changes to the ballot paper design. These potential changes could see candidate names replaced with numbers, making preferential voting confusing, potentially disenfranchising voters. While time is limited, implementation of the new technology by the CEC is now underway and the commission should address these and other issues in consultations with political parties and civil society.

The delegation further recognized the essential role played by civil society organizations in enhancing transparency, accountability, and integrity of the elections, including deploying citizen observers to assess all stages of the process, conducting voter information campaigns, tracking the misuse of administrative resources and public funds, promoting the participation of women and youth, and monitoring online information and campaigning. However, interlocutors also highlighted that serious concerns remain regarding an uneven and shrinking civic space, as well as funding challenges that undermine authentic civil society.

“Civil society plays a vital role in supporting the democratic process. While it is the election authorities who conduct elections, transparent, participatory, and accountable elections are not possible without the vibrant participation of civic organizations,” said Richard L. Klein, NDI’s Global Director of Elections. “For the October elections, civil society groups should be important partners for the electoral administration and political stakeholders.”

With just over 100 days remaining until election day, the delegation urged all stakeholders to focus on practical measures that can still be implemented to strengthen public confidence in the process and presented the following urgent recommendations:

- All state and entity level institutions should expeditiously provide all required support to the CEC for the conduct of the elections and the use of election day technology.
- While ultimately the decision lies with the CEC, it should consult on the implementation of election day technology with all political parties and civil society.
- CEC should provide the public and all electoral stakeholders with clear timelines for the implementation of election day technology, provide timely and frequent updates on its implementation, and establish regular platforms for engagement with all political parties and civil society.
- Reflecting the urgent need for comprehensive voter education, the CEC, political parties and civil society as well as the media should all engage in campaigns to inform citizens on how election day technology will affect voting, counting and transmission of results.
- The CEC should provide detailed information on the use of technology on election day, such as the number of voters verified with biometrics and through manual procedures for each polling station.
- In line with the United Nations Special Rapporteurs’ report recognizing election observers as human rights defenders, the CEC should simplify and reduce the requirements for accreditation of citizen observers to remove unnecessary barriers.

Beyond these summary recommendations, the full report contains detailed recommendations to help ensure all eligible citizens are able to vote on election day and their votes count.

The delegation was led by Tanja Fajon, former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Republic of Slovenia. The delegation also included Carsten Schürmann (Germany), Election Technology Expert and Professor of Computer Science at IT University Copenhagen; Natalia Slepuhin (Moldova), civic activist and Executive Director of civic organization Primăria Mea (My

City Hall); Mark Stevens (United Kingdom), Independent Elections Expert; Borislav Spasojevic, Senior Advisor for Southeast Europe, International Republican Institute (IRI); and Richard L. Klein, Global Director of Elections, NDI.

The delegation carried out its work on a strictly nonpartisan basis in accordance with the [Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation](#). The findings and recommendations were made in reference to international and regional standards for credible elections. The delegation recognizes elections ultimately belong to citizens and that it is the people who will ultimately determine the credibility of their own elections.

During the mission, the delegation met with a wide array of election stakeholders in Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar, including: the Central Election Commission (CEC); Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA); Personal Data Protection Agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina (PDPA), party leaders from across the political spectrum; civil society actors; nonpartisan citizen election observer groups; media practitioners; and members of the international and diplomatic communities.

The delegation is grateful for the warm welcome and cooperation it received from all interlocutors with whom it interacted. The delegation's work was made possible with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The findings and recommendations are solely those of NDI and the delegation.

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