

Statement by the HR Christian Schmidt on the financing of 2022 General Elections in BiH



*delivered to representatives of the media in Sarajevo on
Tuesday, 07 June 2022*

Check against delivery.

I took note of the long overdue decision taken yesterday by the BiH Council of Ministers which seemed to be a step in the right direction. After reviewing it, I have seen that it was good, but not good enough. After collecting detailed information in a joint session with representatives of the BiH Ministry of Finance and Treasury and the BiH Central Election Commission (CEC) this morning, it is obvious to me that the planned allocation is neither sufficient nor implementable.

As the financing of the elections, which are to take place on the prescribed date of 2 October 2022, is still not fully secured, it is urgent to make sure the elections can be conducted in due time.

I hereby order the following: The Central Election Commission will receive the sum of 12,528 million KM initially required for the preparation and organization of the elections as a special allocation. This does not exclude further allocations that may be necessary to secure the elections. This comes into effect as soon as it is published on the OHR website.

My decisions effectively replace the Council of Ministers' decision and provide the full 12,528 million KM to the CEC, while also providing durable, systemic solutions for automatic and continuous election funding as well as temporary financing should situations arise in which the budget is not adopted in the future.

I have to say that I am not happy that I had to make this decision. I am taking into account a lot of commitment of people in the BiH Parliament and in other places to make the elections happen. I have to say, it is not good. I am not happy, because it shows that responsible politicians are not in a position to organize what is in itself a procedural matter – the financing of the elections. To make it clear, for any elections, this is not a decision which goes about the Election Law itself. I know very well that there are a lot of discussions and a lot of things to talk about. I urgently encourage all in this country to realise that elections are not donations of parties to the people, but the basic right in a democratic country of the people to vote and present their opinion.

The election date has been long set and those responsible had been addressed with plenty of time to spare. The OSCE, European Union, USA and the High Representative sent a letter on 22 January of this year regarding the upcoming elections and their financing. We repeated it on 5 April but we did not receive a sufficient answer. I have to be very clear – as someone who knows that politics, discussions, and debates are about negotiations, decisions, and consent – anyone who believes they can play political games with basic requirements of democracy must be challenged.

The International Community will follow this very closely. BiH is in a crucial place in its history, at which it can move closer to the EU. The country that wants to join the EU should be able to organize its elections. This has to be done out of respect to the electorate, to every single person who is

prepared to vote in these elections of 2 October. These are the sovereigns, not anybody else.

As I have said, after some interesting developments yesterday, today it was up to me to make this order. We will sit down with the Peace Implementation Council, as we have discussed this issue several times. I thank the International Community for supporting the development of keeping the elections as the key, and for working jointly to bring BiH closer to the EU integration for the sake of the people.

I am convinced the preparations for the elections can now go smoothly and move ahead.

Thank you.