

# **The General Framework Agreement: Annex 3**

## **ANNEX 3**

### **Agreement on Elections**

In order to promote free, fair, and democratic elections and to lay the foundation for representative government and ensure the progressive achievement of democratic goals throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, in accordance with relevant documents of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska ("the Parties") have agreed as follows:

### **Article I: Conditions for Democratic Elections**

1. The Parties shall ensure that conditions exist for the organization of free and fair elections, in particular a politically neutral environment; shall protect and enforce the right to vote in secret without fear or intimidation; shall ensure freedom of expression and of the press; shall allow and encourage freedom of association (including of political parties); and shall ensure freedom of movement.
2. The Parties request the OSCE to certify whether elections can be effective under current social conditions in both Entities and, if necessary, to provide assistance to the Parties in creating these conditions.
3. The Parties shall comply fully with paragraphs 7 and 8 of the OSCE Copenhagen Document, which are attached to

this Agreement.

## **Article II: The OSCE Role**

1. **OSCE.** The Parties request the OSCE to adopt and put in place an elections program for Bosnia and Herzegovina as set forth in this Agreement.
2. **Elections.** The Parties request the OSCE to supervise, in a manner to be determined by the OSCE and in cooperation with other international organizations the OSCE deems necessary, the preparation and conduct of elections for the House of Representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina; for the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina; for the House of Representatives of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; for the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska; for the Presidency of the Republika Srpska; and, if feasible, for cantonal legislatures and municipal governing authorities.
3. **The Commission.** To this end, the Parties request the OSCE to establish a Provisional Election Commission ("the Commission").
4. **Timing.** Elections shall take place on a date ("Election Day") six months after entry into force of this Agreement or, if the OSCE determines a delay necessary, no later than nine months after entry into force.

## **Article III: The Provisional Election Commission**

1. **Rules and Regulations.** The Commission shall adopt electoral rules and regulations regarding: the registration of political parties and independent candidates; the eligibility of candidates and voters; the role of domestic and international election observers; the ensuring of an open and fair electoral campaign; and the establishment, publication, and

certification of definitive election results. The Parties shall comply fully with the electoral rules and regulations, any internal laws and regulations notwithstanding.

**2. Mandate of the Commission.** The responsibilities of the Commission, as provided in the electoral rules and regulations, shall include:

- a. supervising all aspects of the electoral process to ensure that the structures and institutional framework for free and fair elections are in place;
- b. determining voter registration provisions;
- c. ensuring compliance with the electoral rules and regulations established pursuant to this Agreement;
- d. ensuring that action is taken to remedy any violation of any provision of this Agreement or of the electoral rules and regulations established pursuant to this Agreement, including imposing penalties against any person or body that violates such provisions; and
- e. accrediting observers, including personnel from international organizations and foreign and domestic non-governmental organizations, and ensuring that the Parties grant accredited observers unimpeded access and movement.

**3. Composition and Functioning of the Commission.** The Commission shall consist of the Head of the OSCE Mission, the High Representative or his or her designee, representatives of the Parties, and such other persons as the Head of the OSCE Mission, in consultation with the Parties, may decide. The Head of the OSCE Mission shall act as Chairman of the Commission. In the event of disputes within the Commission, the decision of the Chairman shall be final.

**4. Privileges and Immunities.** The Chairman and Commission shall enjoy the right to establish communications

facilities and to engage local and administrative staff, and the status, privileges and immunities accorded to a diplomatic agent and mission under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

## **Article IV: Eligibility**

1. **Voters.** Any citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina aged 18 or older whose name appears on the 1991 census for Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be eligible, in accordance with electoral rules and regulations, to vote. A citizen who no longer lives in the municipality in which he or she resided in 1991 shall, as a general rule, be expected to vote, in person or by absentee ballot, in that municipality, provided that the person is determined to have been registered in that municipality as confirmed by the local election commission and the Provisional Election Commission.

Such a citizen may, however, apply to the Commission to cast his or her ballot elsewhere. The exercise of a refugee's right to vote shall be interpreted as confirmation of his or her intention to return to Bosnia and Herzegovina. By Election Day, the return of refugees should already be underway, thus allowing many to participate in person in elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Commission may provide in the electoral rules and regulations for citizens not listed in the 1991 census to vote.

## **Article V: Permanent Election Commission**

The Parties agree to create a permanent Election Commission with responsibilities to conduct future elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Article VI: Entry into Force

This Agreement shall enter into force upon signature.

For the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

For the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

For the Republika Srpska

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## Attachment to Annex 3 on Elections

Document of the Second Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Copenhagen, 1990.

Paragraphs 7 and 8:

(7) To ensure that the will of the people serves as the basis of the authority of government, the participating States will

(7.1) – hold free elections at reasonable intervals, as established by law;

(7.2) – permit all seats in at least one chamber of the national legislature to be freely contested in a popular vote;

(7.3) – guarantee universal and equal suffrage to adult citizens;

(7.4) – ensure that votes are cast by secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedure, and that they are counted and reported honestly with the official results made public;

(7.5) – respect the right of citizens to seek political or public office, individually or as representatives of political parties or organizations, without discrimination;

(7.6) – respect the right of individuals and groups to establish, in full freedom, their own political parties or other political organizations and provide such political parties and organizations with the necessary legal guarantees

to enable them to compete with each other on a basis of equal treatment before the law and by the authorities;

(7.7) – ensure that law and public policy work to permit political campaigning to be conducted in a fair and free atmosphere in which neither administrative action, violence nor intimidation bars the parties and the candidates from freely presenting their views and qualifications, or prevents the voters from learning and discussing them or from casting their vote free of fear of retribution;

(7.8) – provide that no legal or administrative obstacle stands in the way of unimpeded access to the media on a non-discriminatory basis for all political groupings and individuals wishing to participate in the electoral process;

(7.9) – ensure that candidates who obtain the necessary number of votes required by law are duly installed in office and are permitted to remain in office until their term expires or is otherwise brought to an end in a manner that is regulated by law in conformity with democratic parliamentary and constitutional procedures.

(8) – The participating States consider that the presence of observers, both foreign and domestic, can enhance the electoral process for States in which elections are taking place. They therefore invite observers from any other CSCE participating States and any appropriate private institutions and organizations who may wish to do so to observe the course of their national election proceedings, to the extent permitted by law. They will also endeavour to facilitate similar access for election proceedings held below the national level. Such observers will undertake not to interfere in the electoral proceedings.

**Office of the High Representative**