

OHR's Statement at the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference in Banja Luka

Parliament Approval of Ministerial Nominees Requires Responsibility from BiH's Authorities

Amendments to the Law on the Council of Ministers, adopted by BiH Parliament on Wednesday, will transfer responsibility for vetting Ministers and their Deputies from the OHR to the BiH institutions. The amendments testify to the continuing systematic transfer of responsibilities from the OHR to the appropriate institutions in BiH.

This is a welcome move which should enhance the relationship between Government and Parliament, will help ensure that candidates for high public office meet basic requirements in terms of electoral eligibility and personal integrity and make Executive appointments much more transparent.

The amendments mean that after the elections, the nominating authorities – the Presidency in the case of the Chair of the Council of Ministers and the Chair of the CoM in the case of the Ministers will now need to obtain information on candidates' academic qualifications, employment history, criminal record (if any), wartime activities and personal finances and submit such information to the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) which will verify the information provided.

Information on the electoral eligibility of nominees will also need to be submitted to the Central Election Commission in order to confirm whether a nominee meets the eligibility requirements prescribed by the Election Law.

The amendments also provide for the creation of a Committee on Preparation for Election of the Council of Ministers of the House of Representatives – a Parliamentary Committee within the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, which would include one representative from each of the caucuses in the BiH Parliament.

Based on all information provided, the Parliamentary Committee will then decide whether to recommend to the BiH House of Representatives to approve the nominations of candidates for the Chair of the Council of Ministers, Ministers and Deputy Ministers.

The OHR has supported this development as a further step in BiH's institutions taking responsibility for running this country. Only by becoming fully sovereign can this country move towards the EU.

This latest transfer of competencies means that Parliamentarians must demonstrate greater competence and responsibility.

These amendments aim to make the appointment process as open and transparent as possible and through this transparency prevent unsuitable candidates, who would clearly not have the support of the public, from being nominated in the first place.

We are confident that SIPA and the Central Election Commission will be fully prepared by the announcement of the election results to carry out several aspects of this technical process.

Opinion poll published in Fokus not OHR's

And just one more information from OHR today. The research published yesterday in Fokus was not OHR's. The OHR at times carries out opinion polls, however, we haven't carried out any opinion polls for the past two months. In our earlier polls we did not find the results that Fokus published.