

# Statement of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, the OSCE Mission to BiH and the Council of Europe on the Election Campaign

6 September 2018

Tomorrow is the first day of the official campaign for the 2018 General Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Elections are a fundamental aspect of democracy, in which citizens of BiH will exercise their right to make political choices about the future.

All politicians bear the responsibility to create an atmosphere of dialogue and tolerance. We urge them to conduct an election campaign free from negative, divisive and irresponsible rhetoric, and to focus on issues of real importance to the citizens, such as the rule of law, job creation, improvement of public services and tackling corruption. In spite of some progress under the reform agenda, these and other significant challenges remain. They should be addressed after elections, and therefore deserve attention in the election campaign.

Elections must be free and fair. The BiH authorities at all levels, political parties and candidates must ensure the integrity and the security of the electoral process. International and domestic election observers should be allowed to perform their duties without hindrance. Media freedom, pluralism and responsibility are essential for an open and free democratic debate and need to be exercised and

respected.

We encourage all eligible voters to exercise their democratic right by casting their ballot on October 7.