

# Inter-Party *Dialogues*

## European Parliament – Narodna Skupština

### WORKING DOCUMENT

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue

17-18 September 2021, Belgrade

(Second round)

The Second round of the second phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue process with the *Narodna Skupština* of Serbia facilitated by the European Parliament took place on 17 and 18 September in Belgrade. The Dialogue focused on finding consensual solutions for achieving equitable access to media and the integrity of the electoral process and has been guided by two underlining principles: proposed solutions should not contradict the existing legislative framework and should be in line with the OSCE/ODIHR recommendations from the previous electoral cycles, the European Commission's country progress reports and the European Parliament annual resolutions.

The Co-facilitators underlined the role, the responsibility and accountability of the Government, the Parliament, and the competent authorities regarding the proper implementation of the current existing legal framework in order to have fair conditions for political parties. Moreover, they called on the institutions of Serbia to undertake additional actions which will lead to the overall improvement of the electoral conditions, increase the trust in the electoral process and setting up a level-playing field ahead of the next elections, first and foremost for the benefit of the citizens. At the same line, the Co-facilitators called on all broadcasters in Serbia, to strictly adhere to the highest standards of balanced and objective reporting in accordance with the Law. They also addressed the issue of abuse of public office by public officials in the electoral period.

Based on the Conclusions of the Inter-Party Dialogue from July 2021, the Dialogue discussed and elaborated further the solutions proposed in the draft Working Document, which reflect on most of the crucial issues affecting the electoral process in Serbia. The Co-facilitators proposed a range of deliverable measures to improve the electoral conditions ahead of the next elections.

The Co-facilitators agreed, inter alia, on the establishment of a 12-Member temporary supervisory body, composed of six Members proposed by the Regulatory Authority of Electronic Media (REM). The other six Members will be selected from the rank of the overall opposition in the country (3+3 format), nominated by the Speaker of the National Assembly in consultation with the Inter-Party Dialogue Co-facilitators. This body will perform, amongst others, media monitoring of RTS and RTV and private national broadcaster and will inform the public about its findings.

According to the proposal, the REM will also adopt a binding rulebook for the National Public Broadcaster (RTS and RTV), in line with OSCE/ODIHR recommendations, to better regulate the election campaign as well as appropriate recommendations for private broadcasters.

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Co-facilitators also agreed to temporarily add six Members (3+3 format) from the rank of the overall opposition in the country to the standing composition of the Republic Electoral Commission, so as to increase confidence in the electoral process.

They agreed to adopt concrete measures to improve the integrity of the electoral process including periodic publication and audit of the Voter Registry.

The Co-facilitators highlighted the urgency to reform the public financing of election campaign costs in order to ensure a more equitable distribution of financial resources to submitters of electoral lists. They also underscored the important role of national minorities and the need to improve the conditions for their participation in the electoral process.

Timely implementation of the proposed solutions is of utmost importance for a more inclusive electoral process and all involved institutions commit to implement these conclusions in good faith. As a result, the “Table with measures and their implementation path” was agreed by the Co-facilitators and presented to the participants.

The Co-facilitators reminded that the success of the improvement of the electoral conditions and the overall political climate in the country lies in the hands of all political actors, decision makers and institutions in Serbia. The European Parliament will continue to assist and support Serbia and the Serbian Parliament in the development and reform process.

A follow-up which will take stock on the progress of the implementation of these conclusions will be organized.

The Co-facilitators of the Inter-Party Dialogue call on the authorities to invite OSCE/ODIHR and the European Parliament to deploy an election observation mission to Serbia.