

**MONITORING OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA FOR THE PERIOD**

**12.10. – 31.12.2014**

**Summary**

**INTRODUCTION**

**REPUBLIKA SRPSKA IS THE ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL UNIT IN BIH THAT ESTABLISHED ITS LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT ON TIME IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEADLINES PRESCRIBED BY THE LAW.** Both the RS National Assembly and the RS Council of Peoples held their constituting sessions by December 31, 2014 by what time the Government was confirmed.

**THE AFFAIR OVER THE ALLEGED “BUY-OFF OF MPS” HAS PUT A STAIN ON THE EFFICIENTLY CONDUCTED PROCESS OF FORMING THE GOVERNMENT IN RS.** The lack of prompt and efficient reaction of the competent bodies, which should have investigated veracity of the information that appeared in the public, and that suggested possible corruption at top-level of the government, is a blow to the system, namely it undermines citizens’ confidence in the parliamentary democracy. The additional problem is the fact that the investigative bodies were dealing with the media intimidation, trying to discover how “the information had leaked” instead of dealing with the essence of the scandal – potential corruption in the political circles. Unfortunately, even months after the scandal the public did not get relevant official information about what actually had happened, which leaves enough room for speculations that are damaging both to Republika Srpska and to the parliamentary democracy as the civilization achievement.

**APART FROM THE AFOREMENTIONED AFFAIR THE CASES OF PARTY-SWITCHING IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ELECTIONS INDICATE LACK OF ELEMENTARY POLITICAL CULTURE AND MORALE ON THE POLITICAL SCENE, AS WELL AS THE WELL-KNOWN FACT THAT WE, HERE IN THE BALKANS, ARE CAPABLE OF RUINING AND MAKING THE BEST THINGS SENSELESS.** Extraordinary democratic achievement by which the MPs, and not the parties, were given the “ownership” over the mandate, is made senseless and disputable with immoral behavior and mandate trade-off, which ultimately means deception of the voters.

**RS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 12.10– 31.12.2014**

**AT THE ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER OF 2014 THE VOTERS IN REPUBLIKA SRPSKA HAVE SHOWN DISSATISFACTION WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PREVIOUS CONVOCATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND THE GOVERNMENT, WHICH IS REFLECTED IN CHANGE OF THE POWER OF CERTAIN POLITICAL PARTIES, BUT ALSO IN THE PERSONAL COMPOSITION OF THE NEW ASSEMBLY.**  Only 25 out of 91 MPs, who were members of the previous composition of the RS National Assembly entire period or a part of it, have again won the citizens’ confidence and have become members of the new convocation of the RS NA. Nevertheless, dissatisfaction was not of such a degree to cause change of the government – ruling collation has managed to win just enough mandates for a close parliamentary majority.

**AT ITS CONSTITUTING SESSION THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS VIOLATED ITS RULES OF PROCEDURES BY FAILING TO ELECT THE DEPUTY SPEAKERSOF THE RS NA.** The NA Rules of procedures, in its Article 8, precisely define that the RS NA is to elect the deputy speakers of the National Assembly at its first session once it, upon proposal of the President, passes the decision on the number of deputy speakers. Unfortunately, breach of the laws and regulations by the ones who should protect and respect them the most and putting narrow party interest before the interests of the society, are rather a widespread phenomenon in Bosnia and Herzegovina at all levels of authority. This phenomenon will certainly not be eradicated until a system of individual responsibility for delays and nonfulfillment of the obligations is put in place.

**IN A COUNTRY OBSESSED WITH NATIONAL AFFILIATION AND CONSTITUTIONALITY, THE FIGURES ON UTTERLY LOW NUMBER OF WOMEN IN OUR PARLIAMENTS GO BY UNNOTICED. THIS IS ONLY A REFLECTION OF THEIR INEQUITABLE POSITION IN THE SOCIETY AND ITS CONSERVATIVE, PATRIARCHAL CHARACTER.** There are only 17% of women in the new convocation of the RS NA (14 out of 83). This figure is even lower than the figures in the House of Representatives of the BiH Federation and the BiH Parliaments, which are around 23%.

**RS WAS THE ONLY ONE IN BIH THAT HAS ADOPTED THE 2015 BUDGET WITHIN THE DEADLINE PRESCRIBED BY THE LAW, I.E.BYTHE END OF 2014.** The budget of Republika Srpska for 2015, as well as the Economic Policy, were adopted in the RS NA on December 28, 2014 in the amount of 2,033 billion KM. However, the opposition and the Unions of the Employers’ Associations of RS had made some significant objections to these documents. The budget of the RS for 2015 entered into force after the RS Council of Peoples confirmed that the budget adopted in the NA does not violate the vital nation interest.

**THE NEW CONVOCATION OF RS NA HAS RESPECTABLE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE, IF WE DO NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE TRADITIONAL PAUSE IN JANUARY.** Apart from the constituting session the National Assembly held four special sessions in the period from October 10 to December 31, 2014, while the 5th special session was not held since it was not supported by majority in the RS NA. There were 24 items on the agenda of the sessions that were held in the monitoring period. Here we should mention – even though it is not in the focus of this report – that, following the January pause in sessions, the RS NA has continued its intensive work in February.

**EVEN THE NEW CONVOCATION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF REPUBLIKA SRSPKA DOES NOT PASS THE WORKING PROGRAMS ON TIME.** In the previous years the RS NA has been wasting the opportunity to pass its Working program before beginning of the year covered by the program, justifying such situation with the nonexistence of a defined deadline in the Rules of Procedure, and neglecting the common sense reasoning and the world practice as an argument. Unfortunately, the negative practice continues, so the Working program for 2014 was not adopted by the end of 2014. (On the contrary, in the second half of January the Speaker of the RS NA and the President of the Government were only discussing preparation of the NA Working program for 2015).

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNTIMELY AND POOR PLANNING ARE VISIBLE ON THE EFFECTS OF REALIZATION OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES.** The Working program of the RS NA for 2014 was adopted on March 5, 2014. Realization of 130 different documents in 2014 was planned by the Working plan, while the legislative part of the Working program envisaged realization of 58 laws. Out of 130 measures that were planned for realization in 2014 by the RS NA Working program, only 39 measures or 30% of what has been planned were realized in the period from January 1 to December 31, 2014. Out of 58 planned laws only 19 were adopted.

We hope that the new convocation of the NA (but also the Government) will learn something from the mistakes they had made in the past and that they will not just continue repeating them.

**OLD PROBLEMS AWAITED THE NEW GOVERNMENT TOGETHER WITH UNFULFILLED OBLIGATIONS FROM THE PAST. SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT OBJECTIONS THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION MADE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, AND THAT RELATE TO REPUBLIKA SRPSKA, ARE STILL NOT ADDRESSED AND ARE WAITING IN LINE.** Here we are not talking about something that the European Union needs, but about the interest of the citizens of Republika Srpska. The RS Development Strategy and the RS Social Inclusion Strategy are still not adopted. The changes and addenda to the Law on courts of RS that ensures alignment with the prerogatives of the HJPC based on the explanations given under the Structured Dialogue are also still not adopted. One can still observe shortcomings concerning independency and impartiality of the judiciary, as well as politicization of appointments that represents a cause for concern.

The European Commission concernedly noted constant growth of the indebtedness and continuance of practice of issuing short-term treasury bills and long-term treasury bonds aimed at financing budget deficit and loan repayment obligations. Higher fiscal deficits, significant foreign imbalance and very high unemployment rate are jeopardizing overall macro-economic stability.

And new problems and obligations are joining the old ones. The new Initiative of the European Union, which the RS NA also accepted, poses an obligation to the Government and the RS NA to plan and to implement serious reform intervention aimed at boosting economic power of the country, increasing number of employed people, and conducting serious fight against the corruption. What will happen with the promises, certified by the signatures of political party leaders, still remains to be seen.

**RS GOVERNMENT 12.10– 31.12.2014**

**REPUBLIKA SRPSKA IS THE FIRST ADMINISTRATIVE-TERRITORIAL UNIT IN BIH THAT GOT NEW GOVERNMENT IMMEDIATELY AFTER GENERAL ELECTIONS IN OCTOBER 2014.** The RS Government in technical mandate worked until December 17, 2014 when at the 2nd special session of the RS NA the proposal of ministers presented by the president of Government Željka Cvijanović, got the support of the majority in the RS NA. This is her second mandate as the president of the RS Government.

**GOVERNMENT OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA IS THE FIRST (AND FOR NOW THE ONLY ONE) IN BIH THAT EVEN IN THE PREVIOUS MANDATE GOT A WOMAN AT A LEADING POSITION.** Unfortunately it did not lead to a significant change either in Government’s performance or its composition in terms of increasing gender equality in the government institutions. Only 4 out of 17 ministerial positions in the new RS Government are occupied by women, which represents a decrease of 50% in regard to the previous mandate. The truth to be told, one should point out that the Prime Minister has been fighting for dignity of women during the discussions in the Assembly, often being faced with inappropriate behavior of some MPs, who instead of using their right as MPs to criticize her as a person leading the Government for all results that the Government is achieving, they were insulting her based on the gender, showing their poor upbringing and patriarchal mentality that generates unequal position of women in our society.

**IN THE PERIOD FROM THE ELECTIONS UNTIL THE END OF TECHNICAL MANDATE THE RS GOVERNMENT HAD A DECLINE OF ACTIVITIES IN REGARD TO THE PRE-ELECTION PART OF THE YEAR.** In the period from October 12 to December 31, 2014 the Government of Republika Srpska in technical mandate held 15 sessions (11 regular, 2 consultative and 2 special). A total of 543 measures were realized at the sessions held during the monitoring period, which is on average 36.2 measures of the agenda per session. Until the elections in October the RS Government realized 2183 measures at 65 sessions that were held in that period.

**DURING THE PREVIOUS YEARS THE CCI HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS WARNED OF IRRATIONAL BORROWING THAT ONLY HAS INCREASED PUBLIC SPENDING, WITHOUT STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY AND INCREASING NUMBER OF JOBS.** Out of the entire budget of the Republika Srpska for this year, which is 2 billion and 33 million KM, a quarter is to be used for repayment of debts – the plan is to pay 314.427.000 KM of the internal debt and 208.531.000 KM of the external debt in 2015. Just as a comparison we will mention that in 2011 RS had paid 93.000.000 KM of internal debt and 115.000.000 KM of external debt, and the budget was 1.6 billion KM. Four years later, the constant borrowing has led to the situation where the sum the RS needs to earmark for repayment of debts is two and half times higherthis year, and that the budget stability is maintained by new borrowing.

**THE GOVERNMENT OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA DID NOT ADOPT THE WORKING PROGRAM FOR 2015 BY THE END OF 2014.** Meaning that the Rules of procedures of the Government are violated. The Rules of procedures set forth that the Working program for a certain year has to be adopted by the end of the previous year. The excuses on elections used by both old and the new government are not in place, since on one hand the documents prescribing government’s obligations do not recognized situation of “waiting” for the new government to be elected so it could prepare the plan, and on the other hand the elementary logics say that an institution always has to have a working plan, and the plans are simply (more or less) revised after the government changes. Also, in this concrete case the excuse has to be additionally disregarded since in principle the RS Government is a government of continuity

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF UNTIMELY AND POOR PLANNING ARE VISIBLE ON THE EFFECTS OF REALIZATION OF PLANNED ACTIVITIES.** Out of 383 measures planned by the Working program of the RS Government to be realized in 2014, in the period from January 1 to December 31, 2014 a total of 244 measures were realized i.e. 64% of what was planned, while 139 measures or 36% of what was planned remained unrealized. If we observe only laws, we can conclude that realization of 59 laws was planned by the Working program of the RS Government for 2014, and by the end of the year 33 laws were considered, whereof only 19 laws planned by the Program are realized, while 14 laws were confirmed as a draft by the RS Government.

**conclusion**

We would like to underline the need for optimism at the very beginning of work of the new convocation. The optimism that, if from nowhere else, we could derive from the new European initiative for BiH that was signed by the leaders of all parliamentary parties in Republika Srpska whose Government and the NA are to plan and to implement a series of serious reform interventions that are prescribed by the aforementioned European initiative. The objective of the reform interventions is to finally boost the economy and to seriously increase number of jobs, as well as to fight against the corruption and to increase efficiency of the authorities.

The affair with the alleged “buy-off of MPs” - which unfortunately still has not been resolved by the state bodies, which should deal with cases of corruption, especially in the high political circles – is a poor start, but we do hope that continuation will be better, including more efficient work of the police-judiciary apparatus.

Apropos the Government and the Assembly, we will just remind that since 2007 the CCI has been underlining the need of government activities focusing on true problems of the citizens, at the same time detecting that poor selection of priorities and not poor efficiency is the main problem in the work of the government. The CCI has been persistently warning that even possible high efficiency of the work will not yield positive results in the lives of the RS citizens, because the objectives are not properly set, namely, the government is not focusing on solving the true problems of its citizens. We do hope that in the meantime the government has learned something from its own experience and the poor results; and that it will choose the right direction in the future with the assistance of the path set forth in the EU initiative. A direction that will lead to improvement of citizens’ lives, thus putting an end to disturbing drain of capable young people from this country.