

THE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF BIH JAN-SEPT 2011 – REPORT SUMMARY

After the 2010 elections in BiH, it took seven months to form the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH (PA BIH) and it was completed on June 26, 2011.

The Parliamentary Assembly has been working without a work program; the Budget of institutions of BiH and international obligations for 2011 has not yet been approved, and after its final "knock down" in the House of Representatives four months ago, there is still no new proposal. Also, there is no new proposed candidate for Prime Minister of the Council of Ministers, after the last candidate was not elected.

In the meantime, the current Council of Ministers has been working in a so called "technical mandate" and with significant delays, all of which directly reflect on the performance results of the Parliamentary Assembly BIH.

And the performance results, mildly speaking, are very modest. On 10 sessions held by the House of Representatives and 6 sessions held by the House of People in the first nine months of 2011, only 11 laws were approved by both houses, i.e. completed parliamentary procedure. Note that the number of rejected laws is dangerously close to the number of approved laws - as many as nine laws were rejected, with seven being rejected due to the lack of entity majority from RS.

Generally, the Parliamentary Assembly rejected almost one fourth of the laws (exactly 24,2%) approved by the Council of Ministers BIH in the period from 2007 to 2011. The majority of them did not pass due to negative votes from two thirds of MPs from RS - so called entity voting.

In terms of legislative activities, even the previous composition of the PA BIH was more efficient than the current one, given that in 2007 the PA BIH approved total of 32 laws, which is almost three times more than approved by the current PA BIH.

The comparison with our neighbors creates a usually depressing picture - in nine months of 2011, Croatian parliamentarians spent 58 days in session and approved 184 laws, which is 17 times more than the PA BIH. Or three laws more than the total number of laws approved by the previous composition of the PA BIH in four years of the previous composition and first nine months of the current composition (the previous composition approved 170 laws, plus 11 laws from 2011). So, no wonder why Croatia is at the EU's doorstep and why BiH is somewhere in a hazy and unsure distance.

Or why Serbia, which used to be behind BiH, is now way ahead and advancing even more on the road to EU. The National Assembly of Serbia approved 93 laws in the first nine months of 2011, while MPs spent total of 89 days in session. They approved 8,5 times more laws than the PA BIH in the same period, and spent 8,5 times more time in session.

The laws approved in 2011 spent on average almost nine months in parliamentary procedure. For example, the Law On Amending The Law On Use and Protection Of Name of Bosnia and Herzegovina (350 days or almost one year in parliamentary procedure). Among 24 laws that are still in procedure is the Proposal on changes and amendments to the Law On Participation of Members of Armed Forces Of BIH, Police Officers, Governement Officials And Other Employees In Peace Operations, from 2007, and the Proposal Law On Foreign Affairs From 2008.

This also testifies about government efficiency. Considering that joining the EU implies the adoption of *acquis communitare* and thousands of pages of legislations, with this pace, we, as a state, will never join the EU.

In terms of individual activity of representatives and delegates of the PA BiH over the course of the previous nine months, we can conclude that 13 initiatives were launched in the House of Representatives and no initiatives were launched in the House of People. A total of 137 representatives' questions were raised.

In a situation when a number of unemployed in BiH is increasing (approximately 530,000 unemployed persons), when the minimum pension in RS is 162 KM and 310 KM in Federation BiH, when foreign investments in BiH are insignificant, when the liberated visa regime is questioned, when IPA funds are also questioned due to disagreements within the current government, when the country has been functioning with the Council of Ministers in a technical mandate for nearly a year, and when the performance results of the PA BiH are catastrophic, BIH parliamentarians cannot see anything wrong in making monthly incomes in amounts between 5.500 and 7.500 KM. In other words, for a four-year term they "take" up to 300 000 KM from the budget of our country, which is the amount for which workers with average salary in BiH have to work for as long as 30 years or even longer.

From Jan 1 to Sept 30, the PA BiH held 86 sessions of all committees in both houses (including joint committee sessions) and considered a total of 655 agenda points (average of points considered per session is 7,6). Total of 74 hours were spent on considering 655 points and 86 sessions.

In terms of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Commission isn't nearly satisfied with the progress made with respect to harmonization of BIH legislation with *acquis communitare* in the last year, because many EU related laws are to be adopted. The report emphasizes and criticizes why changes of the Regulation on procedures in Houses of the state parliament, which aims to introduce fast track mechanisms for EU legislation, are not completed yet.