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## PARLIAMENT'S ROLE IN ENGAGING CITIZENS IN ITS WORK

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*The research results are intended for the representatives and delegates who may forward further questions, suggestions and comments via email: [istrazivacki.sektor@parlament.ba](mailto:istrazivacki.sektor@parlament.ba). Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina may comment on the works, however, the Research Section is not able of responding to the comments and discuss the research itself. Information included in the research content is relevant at the time of research preparation and shall not be subject to update upon publication. The research does not reflect the official position of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (PABiH).*

# PARLIAMENT'S ROLE IN ENGAGING CITIZENS IN ITS WORK

## Introduction

Cooperation of public authorities and public (citizens and civil society organisations) is of great importance and one of the fundamental values of democratic societies. By engaging public in the decision-making process, the authorities ensure legislative transparency and accountability, improve their reputation and become closer to the public. On the other hand, by such engagement public gets a possibility to actively participate in the political life of their country and influence the legislation by improving its efficiency. Also, civil society organizations (CSO) often possess high-quality information on certain issues and therefore could be an alternative expert source of information and knowledge on the subject matter to the authorities in the decision-making process. In this way citizens and public authorities become equal partners who contribute to better legislation that will directly have impact on their lives and property.

This research paper presents the possibilities for the citizens and CSO of Bosnia and Herzegovina to get duly informed on the overall work of the highest state legislative body – the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the modes of their active participation in the decision-making process.

Freedom of thought, conscience, and expression as well as freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with other are guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also, the transparency of the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina is guaranteed by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives.

Civil society can influence the legislative process in several phases<sup>1</sup>:

- Drafting Stage: Civil society organisations can lobby to be included in government working groups on draft legislation and via the internet web platform "[eKonsultacije](#)"<sup>2</sup>.
- Public Hearing Stage: Interested citizens, experts and CSO can participate in the public hearing on draft laws and share their opinion with the legislators on the proposed legislation.
- Amendment Stage: Civil society actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot submit legislative amendments themselves. However, they can, through authorized proponents, submit their amendments to the legislative proposal.

## Legal framework and ways of citizens' participation

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, legal framework regarding citizens' participation in the decision-making process at the state level includes the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This framework

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<sup>1</sup> Public Hearings Manual: <https://www.parlament.ba/Publication/Read/3617?title=public-hearings-manual:-2006.&siteId=241>

<sup>2</sup> e-Consultations: "The platform enables citizens and civil society organisations to access via the Internet the complete and timely information on the legislative processes. It also provides a reliable communication channel for citizens' participation in public policy making. The ideas, suggestions and additional information collected in this way will be used for improvement of public policies under the jurisdiction of the BiH institutions.", <https://ekonsultacije.gov.ba/>

gives opportunity to the interested citizens and civil society organisations to actively take part in the decision-making process of the highest legislative body of BiH and contribute to better legislation. By involving citizens in its work, the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH becomes closer to the citizens who elected them to work for their interests, increase its transparency and accountability and improve the level of democracy in the society.

The *Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina* ensures that all persons within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms that include, among others, freedom of thought, conscience, expression, as well as freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others.<sup>3</sup> Also, 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1966 and 1989 Optional Protocols thereto are applied.<sup>4</sup> In addition to that, the Constitution stipulates that the work of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH will be public, i.e. "Decisions of the Parliamentary Assembly shall not take effect before publication" and "both chambers shall publish a complete record of their deliberations and shall, save in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with their rules, deliberate publicly."<sup>5</sup>

Another legal tool, *Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples and the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives*, regulate the work of bicameral Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (PABiH). They, inter alia, stipulate the transparency of the Parliament's work and the modes of citizens' participation in the work of PABiH.

The work of the PABiH is transparent and the public is regularly informed of Houses' work in a due time, in its entirety and objectively. Speakers of the Houses are obliged to ensure the transparency of the work of the Houses and the committees.<sup>6</sup>

The information on the work of PABiH is regularly published on the internet site of [PABiH](#) that is also available in [English](#). Complete minutes from debates in the Houses, legislative activities and the most important work-related activities of the Houses and their committees are uploaded and accessible to the public in electronic form. This material may be accessible in print media as well, in accordance with the capacities of the PABiH. However, information whose disclosure is deemed as potentially detrimental to the legitimate objectives of the certain categories is not subject to the disclosure provision. These are:

- a. foreign policy, interests of defence and security and the protection of public security;
- b. interests of monetary policy;
- c. prevention of crime and detection of crime;
- d. protection of the procedure for making decisions by a public institution; provision of opinions, advice or recommendations by a public institution, an employee of a public institution, or any person who carries out a duty for or in the name of a public institution and does not include facts, statistics, scientific or technical information;

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<sup>3</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article II, paragraph 3. Enumeration of Rights:

<https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pdf/vazniji-propisi/Ustav%20BiH%20-%20E.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Annex I Additional Human Rights Agreements to be Applied in Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>5</sup> Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Article IV, paragraph 3. Procedure, subparagraph h) and i)

<sup>6</sup> Article 27, paragraph 1, subparagraph i) of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives of the PABiH (Unofficial consolidated version „Official Gazette of BiH“, no. 79/14, 81/15 and 97/15):

<https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pdf/vazniji-propisi/Neslubeni%20precisceni%20tekst%20-%20Poslovnik%20PD%20-%20B.pdf>

and Article 23, paragraph 1, subparagraph i) of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples of the PABiH (Unofficial consolidated version „Official Gazette of BiH“, no. 58/14, 88/15, 96/15 and 53/16): <https://www.parlament.ba/data/dokumenti/pdf/vazniji-propisi/Neslubeni%20precisceni%20tekst%20-%20Poslovnik%20DN%20-%20B.pdf>

e. other exceptions defined by the BiH Freedom of Access to Information Act.<sup>7</sup>

Bills, material for sessions of committees and other proposals submitted to the PABiH, except the material classified in accordance with the *Law on the Protection of Secret Data*, are also published on the internet site of PABiH, as well as adopted laws, after being published in the “Official Gazette of BiH”. Other proposals and acts adopted by the Houses and its working bodies may be published in media.<sup>8</sup>

The sessions of the Houses are directly live-streamed on the internet site of [PABiH](#). Also, the House sessions are recorded and final transcript of the sessions are prepared and published on the internet, as per detailed regulation of the Collegium.<sup>9</sup>

Under the *Freedom of Access to Information Act of BiH* and under the same conditions, the PABiH allows all interested parties to have access to available information. All interested subjects may request the information by sending the [Request for access to information](#) that is available on the internet site of PABiH.

Citizens and representatives of the media can attend the sessions of the Houses and committees. They have seats reserved for them on a space available basis, as determined by the Collegium. However, the sessions, or part of the sessions may be closed for the public if issues classified as secret state, military, official or business secrets, in accordance with the law or other regulations made under the law, are discussed<sup>10</sup> or during the session of the Committee for the Preparation of the Election of the Council of Ministers of BiH (government) at which a person nominated to the position of the Chair of the Council of Ministers of BiH, Minister or Deputy Minister, is supposed to answer questions.<sup>11</sup>

PABiH has developed an internal document *Instruction on the attendance of the representatives of non-governmental and other entities to the sessions of the House of Representatives and House of Peoples of the PABiH*. It prescribes in detail the way how and when the representatives of CSO may attend the Houses' sessions. They may attend them after the Collegium of the House has approved their written request for session's attendance. If the representatives of CSO would like to address the MPs, they should request it in writing. Maximum time allowed to them for addressing MPs is 5 minutes.<sup>12</sup>

Civil society can influence the legislative process in PABiH during:

- Amendment Stage - Although civil society cannot directly submit their legislative amendments to the legislative proposal, they can do it through authorized proponents.

Authorized proponents are members of parliament, the committees of both Houses, a Joint Committee, as well as the Presidency of BiH and the BiH Council of Ministers, within their

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<sup>7</sup> Article 96 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 86 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>8</sup> Article 97 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 87 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>9</sup> Article 94 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 84 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>10</sup> Article 98 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 88 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>11</sup> Article 51, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives

<sup>12</sup> Instruction on the attendance of the representatives of non-governmental and other entities to the sessions of the House of Representatives and House of Peoples of the PABiH, February 2013

respective responsibilities<sup>13</sup> and they may submit written amendments within ten days of the day when the draft law was adopted in the first reading. Members of the competent committee may submit amendments until the end of consideration of the draft law in the committee.<sup>14</sup>

- Public Hearing Stage - Citizens and CSO can participate in public hearings on draft laws/amendments to the law organised by the PABiH.

Although there is no legal provision obliging parliamentary committees to hold hearings on any given subject under any circumstances, other than amendment to the BiH Constitution after the House adopts it in the first reading<sup>15</sup>, the House<sup>16</sup> or committee<sup>17</sup> may decide to open a public hearing on a draft law, after it has been adopted in first reading, but before it comes into amendment phase or on amendments to the law. This hearing takes place within 30 days of its announcement published on the internet site of PABiH and, depending on the topic and if committee/house decides so, in media. Such hearings involve all interested parties, relevant institutions and individuals.<sup>18</sup> Interested citizens and civil society organisations register for the participation and debate in the registration form provided by the competent committee.

During the hearing all registered citizens and representatives of CSO present their opinions on issues related to the draft law/amendments to the law. They may also submit their papers and other material presented during the hearings, which are then attached to the committee's conclusion of hearings.<sup>19</sup>

After the hearings, the competent committee prepares a report and attach to it the transcript of the public hearing, if any, as well as the papers and materials submitted by other participants in the course of the hearing.<sup>20</sup>

Committee or House may decide to open another types of public hearing for oversight and investigating purposes, when it is necessary to collect all information and expert opinions and find certain solutions in the area of the committee competency. This hearing is, in principle, open for the public. However, it may be partially closed for the public if the discussed issues are sensitive for national or personal security; that decision is up to the discretion of the committee members.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Article 104, paragraph 1 and 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 94, paragraph 1 and 3 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>14</sup> Article 118, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 109, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>15</sup> Article 142, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 133, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>16</sup> Article 112, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 103, paragraph 5 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>17</sup> Article 114, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 105, paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>18</sup> Article 114 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 105 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>19</sup> Article 115 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 106 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>20</sup> Article 116 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 107 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>21</sup> Article 40, paragraph 1, 2 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 35, paragraph 1, 2, and 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

Committees can, also, hold public hearings to receive citizens' views about the proposed budget, and hearings to question Ministers and officials about the preparation, goals and expected results of the budget.<sup>22</sup>

In the last five years, from 2013 until today, in PABiH were held:

- 7 public hearings on draft laws/amendments to the law,
- 1 public oversight hearing (not open for public),
- 2 public topical debates.

They are all available on the web site of PABiH, sorted according to the period of convocation of PABiH.<sup>23</sup>

In order to provide to the citizens, CSO and MPs more detailed information on the public hearings conducted by the parliamentary committees, OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Legislative Strengthening Program funded by USAID prepared a *Public Hearings Manual* that is available on the internet site of PABiH.

This Manual refers specifically to the committee meetings organized with the aim of receiving expert and other public advice on draft legislation, draft regulations or policy issues. It gives simple answers on public hearings – what are they, why, when and where are they organised, and who organises them. It also gives advices to the committees how to evaluate a need for a Public Hearing; how to select experts from the government, opposition and civil society stakeholders to testify at a public hearing; on logistic team; on conducting information campaign; logistics, agenda, and follow up procedures.

The Manual also provides an overview of the measures which civil society may use to lobby for holding public hearing by the Parliament; how to prepare for participation in public hearing through developing or enhancing expertise on the subject matter; how to monitor and evaluate progress of the legislation during the post-hearing follow-up phase; and keeping the media involved in order to highlight successes or failures of parliament to accommodate public input.<sup>24</sup>

### **Communication between MPs and citizens**

The Rules of Procedure of both Houses of PABiH define the right and obligation of the members and working bodies to communicate with the citizens and civil society organisations:

- PABiH members have right of freedom of expression and obligation to address issues of political and public interest which they exercise through communication with citizens and non-governmental organizations at public gatherings and in the media;<sup>25</sup>
- Collegium of the House has the responsibility to cooperate with, among others, associations of citizens;<sup>26</sup>
- Committees may, in exercising duties within the scope of their competencies, cooperate

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<sup>22</sup> Citizens, Parliament and the Audit Office: Public Control of State Spending:

<https://www.parlament.ba/Publication/Read/3616?title=citizens,-parliament-and-the-audit-office:-public-control-of-state-spending&siteId=241>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.parlament.ba/Event/Category/6?MandateId=8&CategoryId=3>

<sup>24</sup> Public Hearings Manual: <https://www.parlament.ba/Publication/Read/3617?title=public-hearings-manual:-2006.&siteId=241>

<sup>25</sup> Article 10 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>26</sup> Article 20, paragraph i) of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 18, paragraph i) of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

with appropriate bodies and institutions at all levels of government, as well as with citizens and their associations.<sup>27</sup>

Citizens of BiH have a possibility to communicate with members of parliament, caucus or any working body through email or phone. Their contact information is available on the internet site of PABiH.

PABiH is not present on social media yet, but is considering how to integrate social media into the outreach strategy in the future. However, some MPs are present on social media individually and citizens may contact them directly.

### **Visit to the building of PABiH**

In 2005 PABiH launched the program “Open parliament” which hosts organized groups of visitors. Through a series of organized study visits, main goal is to bring closer the work of the highest BiH legislative body to general public, to increase its level of transparency and awareness about its role in the process of democratization of BiH society.

Through this program visitors of PABiH are informed about its work and functions, legislative process, a method of decision-making at the sessions of the Houses, voting system, seating arrangement in the Chamber for MPs, staff, the Council of Ministers, media representatives, CSO and international organizations.

Visits are organized from Monday to Friday from 9.00 to 16.00, exceptionally on weekends. The groups have to register for the visit by filling out the Registration form that is published on the internet site of the PABiH within section "[Visit Parliament](#)".

During the visit to the PABiH, visitors may meet with one or more MPs to discuss the issues they are interested in. However, these meetings should be requested in advance. MPs are very interested in this way of communication with the visitors and happy to answer all questions visitors may have. Also, the visits conducted in English are open for the foreign visitors.

Since the opening of the Project, total of 23,214 visitors have visited PABiH. These are the numbers of visitors to PABiH in the last five years:<sup>28</sup>

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of visitors to PABiH</b>
2017	<b>1,705</b>
2016	<b>1,518</b>
2015	<b>2,183</b>
2014	<b>1,920</b>
2013	<b>1,778</b>

The most common groups visiting PABiH are students, pupils from high-school and primary school, even kindergarten, domestic and international study groups and delegations, etc. Agenda of the program is adapted for each group.

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<sup>27</sup> Article 38 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 33 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>28</sup> Source: Public Relations Section of PABiH

In addition to these visits, PABiH very often, on the request, organizes seminars and lessons for students with different topics, such as legislative process, defence, public relations, etc.

In the building of PABiH there is a specially designed and equipped room “Visitor Centre” with 50-80 seats. It is used for holding different types of presentations and lectures for visitors. Through multimedia presentations visitors can learn about the history, importance and basic responsibilities of PABiH.

Variety of printed publications and brochures produced by the PABiH are also available for the visitors in the building.

For interested citizens who are not able to visit the PABiH building, there is a link on the [virtual tour](#) of PABiH.

For the time being, there are no “Open days of the Parliament” in the PABiH and all visits to the Parliament are organised through the described “Open Parliament” program.

Interested citizens, students, research scientists and others have an access to the Library of PABiH that possesses about three thousand library items: books, periodicals, audio/visual editions and electronic databases from the fields of law, politics, international relations, public administration, European integration, economics, sociology, history, geography and other. The entire library holdings can be searched via e-catalogue.<sup>29</sup>

### **Engagement of citizens in the work of PABiH**

Citizens of BiH and CSO are very interested in the work of PABiH. There are several CSOs that regularly attend the sessions of the Houses and working bodies, follow the work of this legislative body and prepare reports on it. Also, there is a high interest of the CSO and citizens – experts in certain field to participate in public hearings on draft laws. They are all very well informed about the tools they may use in order to engage in the work of PABiH.

PABiH does not record statistical data, such as number of initiatives of citizens, participation in public debates. However, information on citizens’ participation in public hearings can be found in the transcripts of the public hearings.

### **Public informing**

The *Communication Strategy of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Period 2016-2019* resulting from the *Strategic Plan of the Secretariat of PABiH for Period 2016-2019*, was adopted in 2015. Main goal of the Communication Strategy is to identify any shortcomings in internal and external communication of PABiH, provide the ways of their rectification and ensure transparency, timeliness and integrity of communication.

Important part of this Strategy is a process of communication with the external publics, as the transparency of PABiH is guaranteed by the BiH Constitution and the Rules of Procedures of both Houses. Based on the mentioned documents, PABiH has adopted the “*Rulebook on Communication*” that regulates in detail communication of the Secretariat of the PABiH with public as well as the internal communication within the PABiH.

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<sup>29</sup> Parliamentary Library: <https://www.parlament.ba/Content/Read/213?title=Parlamentarnabiblioteka&lang=en>



In this regard, PABiH strives to keep the public informed, in duly manner, on all relevant issues related to its work, through official announcements that are published on the internet site on a regular basis. The statistics<sup>30</sup> of these are:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of statements</b>
2017	<b>847</b>
2016	<b>906</b>
2015	<b>919</b>

PABiH also prepares weekly announcement of all sessions of working bodies that will be held in the following week. This form of informing media and CSO is very warmly received by them and often present a basis for their daily agenda. On the internet site of PABiH, interested public may subscribe to weekly [Newsletter](#) of PABiH.

Also, on the PABiH internet site, public may find a monthly calendar of the PABiH activities that Collegiums of the Houses prepare on a monthly basis. This calendar includes dates in which sessions of House, joint sessions of both Houses, sessions of international organization in which MPs of PABiH will take part, sessions of committees and joint committees, caucuses, Collegium of House and Joint Collegium and other activities. This monthly calendar may be adjusted to the need of the House.<sup>31</sup>

PABiH internet site is integrated with intranet OWIS system that enables the users to access all documents from current and previous convocations.

Other methods of direct communication of MPs with public is through press-conferences, media statements, written statements, participation in TV shows and written publications.

Freedom of Access to Information Act in BiH is strictly implemented in the PABiH and the responses to all requests are prepared even before the expiration of the deadline (15 days), as prescribed by this Act.

PABiH edits and issues own publications in languages officially used in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in foreign languages in order to present and promote the work of the Parliamentary Assembly. These include: Publications about PABiH, overview of the legislative activity of PABiH (by year and by convocation) Guide for MPs, Rules of Procedure of both Houses, brochures on committees and working bodies, posters representing certain events organized by the PABiH or legislative process, thematic publications, monographies, etc.

PABiH and its working bodies organize numerous conferences, round tables, workshops, exhibitions, etc. where interested civil society stakeholders, academic community, international organisations etc. are invited to participate as attendees or speakers. Information on all these events is published on the internet site of PABiH. It is important to say that the PABiH facilities are open for public, so CSOs, universities, international organizations and others are welcome to organise their own events upon a request which is subject to approval.

PABiH has no parliamentary TV channel, but the public may follow the sessions of Houses are on the internet site of PABiH. Only the joint sessions of both Houses are broadcast live on TV

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<sup>30</sup> Source: Public Relations Section, PABiH

<sup>31</sup> Article 66 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

and radio. These sessions are held at least once a year with a topic “Representatives (Delegates) Ask – the BiH Council of Ministers Responds”.<sup>32</sup>

### Recommendations from international organisations and CSO

#### • The Group of States against Corruption - GRECO

In its Fourth Round Evaluation Report, Bosnia and Herzegovina “*Corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors*”<sup>33</sup> which was adopted at GRECO’s 70th Plenary Meeting at the end of 2015<sup>34</sup>, GRECO has recommended, inter alia, to Bosnia and Herzegovina to:

- introduce precise rules defining and facilitating public consultation processes of legislation in Parliament, and assure effective compliance thereafter; and
- enhance the transparency of the parliamentary process by introducing rules for parliamentarians on how to interact with third parties seeking to influence the legislative process.

In its last, Fourth Evaluation Round<sup>35</sup>, from May 2018<sup>36</sup>, GRECO has assessed the measures taken by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the recommendations and concluded that this recommendation has been partly implemented, since:

- “the authorities of BiH reported on the amendments in the Rules of Procedure of the respective parliaments that provide transparency of both plenary and committee work as a general rule and that an online platform (“eKonsultacije”) was launched in 2016 as an effort to open communication channels between citizens and three parliaments (at the state and entity level).
- the issue of lobbying remained unregulated in BiH, so GRECO repeated “the outstanding need to develop principles, rules and procedures that give parliamentarians clear directions on how they are permitted to engage with lobbyists and other third parties seeking to influence the legislative process”.

#### • Centre of Civil Initiatives (CCI)

In its *Report on Monitoring of the PABiH work 01.01.2017. – 31.12.2017*, CCI states that the most positive segment of PABiH work is its transparency that has achieved very respectable level that is additionally enhanced by the new design of its internet site. It represents a positive example to other institutions of government in BIH for its functionality and quantity of provided and updated data.

CCI states that the previous recommendation to PABiH from 2009 to publish the result of voting by each MP was accepted by PABiH and those data are now available on the internet site. However, CCI Report states that the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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<sup>32</sup> Article 172, paragraph 1 and 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives and Article 160, paragraph 1 and 2 of the Rules of Procedure of the House of Peoples

<sup>33</sup> Fourth Round Evaluation Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina:

<http://www.refworld.org/publisher,COGRECO,COUNTRYREP,BIH,,0.html>

<sup>34</sup> Published in February 2016, following authorisation by Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>35</sup> Fourth Evaluation Round “Corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges and prosecutors”: <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-evaluation-round-corruption-prevention-in-respect-of-members-of/16808acd50>

<sup>36</sup> Adopted by GRECO at its 79th Plenary Meeting (Strasbourg, 19-23 March 2018)

is still the only parliament in the region whose plenary sessions are not directly broadcasted on TV.<sup>37</sup>

- **Civil Society Promotion Center (CSPC)**

CSPC in its Report in 2014<sup>38</sup> gave a number of recommendations to all parliaments and other institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The following one are still valid for PABiH:

- make decision on establishing units for cooperation with civil society organizations that would follow and assist the work of CSO and involve them duly in the decision-making process; incorporate such units in the Internal act on internal organisation of the institution.
- amend the legislation which will enable the citizens of BiH to follow the sessions of the parliament through Public Broadcasting Service.

### **Role of the Research Section of the PABiH**

Work of the Research Section of the PABiH is exclusively related to the work and competence of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to *Internal Rules on Filing and Processing a Research Request*, which contain principles of confidentiality and publicity of work of the Research Section.

In that regard, the Section prepares the research papers upon request (of the Houses, the Collegium of the Houses, working bodies, caucuses, MPs, secretaries of the Houses and Common Services and other parliamentary bodies) and upon its own initiative. Selected research papers are published on the internet site and all research papers on the intranet portal of the PABiH, without the name of the requester.

Research Section has published around one third of the research papers since 2007. These are mostly papers that could be of greater public interest. Through these papers public may get information on the focus of interests of MPs and on the topics that have been discussed in PABiH. Some of the research papers have been used as further reference in the study papers of BiH Universities and CSO.

As a rule, papers are published within two months after the completion of the Research Paper, however upon request of the ordering party, the research paper may also be published earlier or later, but not later than six months after the completion of the Research Paper.

Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina may comment on the research papers, however, the Research Section is not able to respond to the comments and discuss the research.

Although the Section has no direct contact with citizens and their engagement in the work of PABiH, the Section has received a couple of requests from the committees and MPs to prepare research papers that were used as an input material for the public hearings. These papers were distributed to the public that attended these hearings.

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<sup>37</sup> Report on Monitoring of the PABiH work 01.01.2017. – 31.12.2017:  
<http://www.cci.ba/download/docs/IZVJESTAJ+O+MONITORINGU+RADA+PS+BiH+I-XII+17+.pdf/420f9fad4830e47d8ab52a8c1d6086ac>

<sup>38</sup> Analyses of the legal, institutional and fiscal framework for the Civil Society Organisations in BiH, Participation of the CSO in the decision and policy- making process:  
<http://civilnodrustvo.ba/media/45438/analiza-u%C4%8De%C5%A1%C4%87e-organizacija-civilnog-drustva-u-procesu-dono%C5%A1enja-odluka-i-politika.pdf>