

**NEW SOCIAL INITIATIVE**

# REPORT

| ON LOCAL ELECTIONS 2017



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK**

**DANIDA** | INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
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Confederaziun svizra

**Swiss Agency for Development  
and Cooperation SDC**

“This publication is realized with support of the project Democratic Society Promotion (DSP) – financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA) and managed by the Kosovar Civil Society Foundation (KCSF). The content of this publication is the responsibility of New Social Initiative and does not state or reflect the views or opinions of SDC, DANIDA or KCSF.”

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# SUMMARY

The election that took place on October 22, 2017 was the second election for mayors and municipal assemblies in all municipalities in Kosovo since the signing of the Brussels Agreement on April 19, 2013 between Belgrade and Pristina. The second round of elections took place on 19 November in 19 of the 38 municipalities in Kosovo, including one municipality with a Serb majority (Klokot Municipality). In the municipality of Parteš, the elections were reiterated on the same day because of the previous decision of the CEC to annul the results of the first round due to electoral irregularities. The election for Mayors and Municipal Assemblies was held shortly after the extraordinary parliamentary election in Kosovo in June 2017, and only a few weeks after the formation of a ruling coalition, which included the largest political entity from the Serb community - the Serb List.

Overall, the election day passed in a peaceful atmosphere, which is an improvement compared to the election in 2013, but it is noticeable that in the previous local election, political pluralism was more pronounced, especially in the majority Serbian environments.

The outcome was without major surprises, as the candidates for mayors of the Serb List won 9 out of 10 municipalities in the first election round. Following the repeated election in Parteš, and after the collective transfer of the representatives of the Civic Initiative Klokot-Vrbovac to the Serb List, this political party secured victory in all 10 majority Serbian municipalities, both in elections for mayors and in the election for councilors in municipal assemblies. In this way, Serb List cemented its position as the largest party of Kosovo Serbs, and the elections at the same time represent the “symbolic death” of the opposition. The Serb List independently won about 70% of all votes in ten majority Serb municipalities.

The turnout in majority Serb municipalities in 2017 was on a much higher level than in the 2013 local election. The total turnout in 10 municipalities with a Serb majority was about 43% and in line with the average turnout with the rest of Kosovo. Higher turnout than 2013 is the result of a significantly larger number of citizens who voted in four municipalities in northern Kosovo. The turnout of the citizens in the north

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to the elections is the impact of Belgrade's clear position and calls for the vote, as well as the general mobilization of the Serb List, to influence citizens to vote. In total, about 25,000 voters voted in the north of Kosovo, or about 43% of registered voters. This outcome is a sign that the institutional integration of Kosovo Serbs, envisaged by the Brussels Agreement, has significantly improved. Unlike the 2013 election, when only 13,000 voters in the north took advantage of their voting rights due to the call for a boycott, now the number was significantly higher.

However, the weaknesses of the Kosovo electoral system are not sufficiently addressed and timely, among other things, weaknesses related to voter registration, the training and professionalism of polling boards, limited incentives to prosecute criminal activities in the electoral process, as well as the lack of effective mechanisms for the execution of requests for the financing of campaigns, and regulation of sponsored programs in the media.

It is important to emphasize that the election process and pre-election campaign in the Serb-majority areas were significantly different from those in other municipalities. The electoral atmosphere in the majority Serb municipalities was marked by pressures on political candidates. This included pressures on individual candidates to withdraw from the electoral process and limited competition, which undermines the basic principles of the democratic process in these areas<sup>1</sup>.

There were several cases of intimidation of voters and candidates, as well as cases of votes and abuses of public resources. Several non-Serb list candidates withdrew from the election race on suspicion of being intimidated. The main opposition political parties, including the Independent Liberal Party (SLS), the Kosovo Serb Party (PKS), the CI SDP, did not nominate candidates for mayors in most municipalities with a Serb majority. Before the start of the election campaign itself, within several incidents, two cars of prominent opposition political candidates for mayors were burnt down<sup>2</sup>. Media sources say that the institutions that function in the Serbian system have participated in the pressure of candidates who are not within the Serb List in several Serb-majority municipalities. Such cases have resulted in the occurrence that certain persons have been terminated employment under unclear circumstances. Certain cases of intimidation of candidates are rarely reported. The atmosphere in the campaign was particularly tense in the north, with frequent violent incidents involving physical conflicts between supporters of rival parties, the Serb List and the PKS in Leposavić.

Political subjects from the Serbian community prioritized a door-to-door campaign (direct contact with voters), smaller voter meetings, local booths, and campaigns on social networks. Only the Serb List as the largest political party and the only one with support from Belgrade had the resources to organize large rallies and gatherings with citizens in all places with a larger number of inhabitants, that is, in almost all municipalities with a Serb majority. Several

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1 EU EOM Kosovo 2017: [Elections for Mayors and Municipal Assemblies in Kosovo - Final Report](#)

2 KoSSev: [http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/zvecan\\_izgoreo\\_automobil\\_dragise\\_milovica\\_tvrdi\\_da\\_je\\_pocar\\_podmetnut/12552](http://kossev.info/strana/arhiva/zvecan_izgoreo_automobil_dragise_milovica_tvrdi_da_je_pocar_podmetnut/12552)

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political subjects, including CI SDP, refrained from organizing larger gatherings to prevent any pressure on their candidates and supporters. Several lists complained (CI SDP, For our Zvečan, PKS) that they were forbidden to advertise on certain media, for which they claimed were under the influence of the Serb List. During the election campaign, there were cases that could be reported using public resources for the purpose of the campaign. Employment in public services increased particularly noticeably, both in institutions of the Kosovo system and those operating under Serbian legislation. This situation was seen in the municipalities where the Serb List representatives were in power, as well as in the municipalities where the Kosovo Serb Party had the position of Mayor.

Both election days were generally calm and went down without major incidents. The voting and counting process was in most cases conducted in a transparent manner, based on the reports of our observers. However, certain aspects of the voting and counting process must be addressed in order to further improve the electoral process. It is particularly important to improve the performance of polling boards, because the procedures for vote counting are not fully respected. Also, it is important to pay attention to the need to improve the understanding of the electoral process by the voters themselves. Voting assistance is often requested, but not always by voters who are not able to vote. The secrecy of voting is jeopardized by the practice of family and group voting. Moreover, access to voting centers for people with disabilities was often difficult.

In line with an agreement between the Central Election Commission (CEC) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the OSCE provided technical support to the Municipal Election Board (OIK) in four northern municipalities. On election day, the OSCE provided technical support in all polling stations in the north. A total of 225 OSCE members were present at the 44 polling stations and 86 polling stations. At any moment, at least two OSCE members were present at each polling station, as well as during vote counting and the transport of ballot boxes to the Counting Center and the results in Kosovo Polje. Unlike the 2013 municipal elections, marked by violence and numerous irregularities in the north, according to OSCE reports, the election day on October 22 went down without any security incidents.

Political subjects did not enable increased participation of women in politics among their priorities in the election campaign. In general, women were not sufficiently present in the audience at campaign events and received limited support from their respective parties in the election race.

## METHODOLOGY

This document is a product of the research within the project 'Greater Participation for Better Engagement' implemented by the New Social Initiative under the 'Promotion of a Democratic Society' scheme led by the Kosovo Foundation for Civil Society, funded by the Swiss Cooperation Office in Kosovo (SCO-K).

The aim of the project is to contribute to the understanding of electoral processes and their importance in order to increase Kosovo Serb involvement in decision-making at the local and central level. Data presented in this report are based on a qualitative and quantitative field research and relevant literature, conducted in the period from August 2017 to April 2018.

Theoretical research consisted of collecting, reviewing and analyzing written information, such as laws and sub-legal acts, electoral reports of other observers, and media reports. Field research included 10 roundtables held in ten Serb-majority municipalities, field reports of 10 local coordinators<sup>3</sup>, and online questionnaires. Accredited local coordinators carefully monitored electoral processes, including visits to public events (debates, public meetings, presentations), and reported from the field on a weekly or monthly basis.

All reports of local coordinators, as well as information on the election process, are available on the web portal [www.izborinakosovu.net](http://www.izborinakosovu.net), which was created within the project. In the electoral phase, the NSI also prepared the Serbian Electoral Manual<sup>4</sup> which, among other things, contains information on local and central elections, as well as on certified political subjects and their lists.

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3 Izbori na Kosovu Web Platform: [www.izborinakosovu.net](http://www.izborinakosovu.net)

4 <http://www.izborinakosovu.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/BULETIN.pdf>

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## POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The election on October 22, 2017 for the mayors and municipal assemblies was the second local election that took place in the territory of Kosovo, or in all 38 municipalities, as a result of the signing of the Brussels Agreement on April 19, 2013 by Belgrade and Pristina under the auspices of the European Union. This election was held several months after the early parliamentary election on June 11, 2017, and only a few weeks after the formation of the government. Voters were invited to elect their mayors and councilors through a proportional system with preferential voting in 38 municipalities.

Out of a total of 91 political entities certified to participate in the local election, 54 were from the Albanian community, 24 from the Serbian, 3 from Turkish, 3 from Bosniak, 2 political subjects from the Ashkali community, 1 Egyptian, 1 from the Roma community, and 25 independent candidates. All political subjects competed independently, unlike the parliamentary elections when two election coalitions were formed. No political entity from the Serbian community had a female candidate for a mayor, as a lower list carrier, but the gender quota of 30% was respected.

The Serb List, the largest political party in the Serbian community in Kosovo, supported by Belgrade, dominates the political scene in the majority Serbian municipalities since 2013 (then as C. I. Srpska and since May 2017 as a political party). This party had its candidates for mayors and councilors in all ten Serb-majority municipalities, as well as candidates for councilors in 11 municipalities where the Serbian community is not in the majority. The Serb List was a clear favorite for the victory in the elections in all major Serbian municipalities. Given that it was supported by Belgrade, and strengthened by the resources that allowed it to lead an overwhelming campaign, it was hard to expect anyone to jeopardize its supremacy.

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In addition to the Serb List, another 23 Kosovo Serb political entities reported their participation in the elections. Nevertheless, the Serb List had minimal competition in the mayoral elections. Apart from the municipalities of North Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavic, Klokot and Parteš, where several candidates made their candidacy and where an interesting competition could be expected, in other municipalities, the candidates of the Serb List did not have credible counter-candidates. In interviews with observers, representatives of certain parties said they did not want to nominate their candidates for mayors, believing that the election game is unfair and that they could not compete with the Serb List supported by Belgrade.

Oliver Ivanović of the CI SDP was a competitor to Goran Rakic, leader of the Serb List, and for the second time re-elected the mayor of North Mitrovica. The Civic Initiative 'For Our Zvečan' nominated Dragiša Milović as candidate for the Mayor of Zvečan municipality in the election race against the candidate of the Serb List Vučina Janković, as well as the list of candidates for councilors.

In the municipality of Leposavic, the Mayor of the previous election cycle, Dragan Jablanovic (PKS), was competition in the mayor elections to the previous president of the Municipal Assembly and the President of the Provisional Authority, Zoran Todic (Serb List). Former Serb List leader Aleksandar Jablanovic registered his political party - the Kosovo Serb Party (PCS) just before the parliamentary elections, with which they also competed for elections for mayors and municipal councils in the municipality of Leposavić.

In the municipality of Klokot, three civic initiatives that participated for the first time joined forces against the Serb List: Active Citizens' Initiative (AGI), National Unity (NJ), and Civic initiative Klokot-Vrbovac (GIKV) and supported the GIKV candidate Božidar Dejanović for the Mayor of this municipality. In the municipality of Parteš, the Civic initiative Narodna sloga presented Nenad Cvetkovic as candidate for mayor in the race against the candidate of the Serb List Strahinja Spasic. In other municipalities, the candidates of the Serb List did not have any challengers who could jeopardize their supremacy.

Compared to the previous election cycle in the six majority Serb municipalities in the south of Kosovo, a smaller number of political subjects participated in the elections. Unlike the local elections in 2009 and 2013, when the established political parties, the Independent Liberal Party (SLS) and the Progressive Democratic Party (PDS) had significant support from citizens and candidates for mayors in all municipalities, in the October 22, 2017 elections, SLS did not have candidate for mayor in any of the municipalities, and the PDS had a candidate only in Ranilug. By 2013, the SLS was the leading party in all six majority Serb municipalities in the

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south of Kosovo. In the municipality of Strpce, the candidate of the Serb List, Bratislav Nikolić did not have an opponent from the Serbian community.

The results were without major surprises, as the candidates for mayors of the Serb List won 9 out of 10 municipalities in the first election round. After the repeated elections in Parteš, and after the collective transfer of the representatives of CI Klokot Vrbovac to the Serb List, this political party secured victory in all 10 majority Serb municipalities, both in the elections for mayors and in the elections for councilors in municipal assemblies. In this way, the Serb List has cemented its position as the largest party of Kosovo Serbs, and the elections at the same time represent the “symbolic death” of the opposition. The Serb List independently won about 70% of all votes in ten majority Serb municipalities.

The turnout in majority Serb municipalities in 2017 was on a much higher level than in the 2013 local elections. The total turnout in 10 municipalities with a Serb majority was about 43% and in line with the average turnout with the rest of Kosovo. Higher turnout than 2013 is the result of a significantly larger number of citizens who voted in four municipalities in northern Kosovo. Higher turnout in the north is a consequence of Belgrade’s public invitation to vote, as well as the general mobilization of the Serb List to influence citizens to vote. In total, about 25,000 voters voted in the north of Kosovo, or about 43% of registered voters. This exodus is a sign that the institutional integration of Kosovo Serbs, envisaged by the Brussels Agreement, has significantly improved. Unlike the 2013 election, when only 13,000 voters in the north took advantage of their voting rights amid calls for a boycott, the number was now significantly higher.

## ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION DAY

The election campaign can be characterized as generally calm in most municipalities in Kosovo, with the exception of some Serb-majority municipalities.

Political subjects from the Serbian community prioritized a door-to-door campaign (direct contact with voters), smaller voter meetings, local booths, and campaigns on social networks. Only the Serb List as the largest political party and the only one with support from Belgrade had the resources to organize large rallies and gatherings with citizens in all places with a larger number of inhabitants, that is, in almost all municipalities with a Serb majority. Several political subjects, including CI SDP, refrained from organizing larger gatherings to prevent any pressure on their candidates and supporters. Several lists complained (CI SDP, For our Zvečan, PKS) that they were forbidden to advertise on certain media, for which they claimed were under the influence of the Serb List. During the election campaign, there were cases that could be reported using public resources for the purpose of the campaign. Employment in public services increased particularly noticeably, both in institutions of the Kosovo system and those operating under Serbian legislation. This situation was seen in the municipalities where the Serb List representatives were in power, as well as in the municipalities where the Kosovo Serb Party had the position of Mayor.

None of the political subjects from the Serbian community included women's participation among their priorities in the period of the election campaign. Women were generally insufficiently present in the audience at events. Apart from that, women did not receive sufficient support from their parties in the pre-election race.

People with disabilities were not sufficiently involved in the election activities, and their access to pre-election meetings was denied. Political subjects from the Serbian community did not include people with special needs in their programs, nor did their involvement in political life. None of the political subjects had any person with disabilities among their candidates.

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## First round of elections October 22, 2017

The election campaign in the first round of local elections, based on observer reports, was marked by examples of pressures directed at candidates and supporters of the opposition. This includes, according to the EU Election Observation Mission in Kosovo, "individual pressure on candidates of political entities other than the Serb List to withdraw from the campaign" limiting their place to run the election campaign.<sup>5</sup> Several rival candidates of the Serb List have withdrawn from the election race, allegedly as a result of intimidation. The largest opposition parties, including the SLS and the PKS, did not have their candidates for mayors in most municipalities with a Serb majority.

In the municipalities of Klokot and Parteš, institutions functioning in the Serbian system were allegedly involved in the pressure on employees and family members who were on the lists of opposition political subjects. However, pressures are rarely reported to the Kosovo judiciary and ECAP. These widespread allegations of pressure on candidates had a negative impact on the campaign in these areas, and added general distrust to the electoral process. The pre-election period was particularly tense in the north, with violent incidents between the members of the Serb List and the PKS in the municipality of Leposavić.

During the election campaign, there were cases that could be subduced under the misuse of public resources for the purpose of the campaign. Employment in public services increased particularly noticeably, both in institutions of the Kosovo system and those operating under Serbian legislation. This situation was seen in the municipalities where the Serb List representatives were in power, as well as in the municipalities where the Kosovo Serb Party had the position of Mayor.

The election day itself passed in a calm atmosphere with no significant incidents. Based on the reports of our coordinators, election observers and international missions, several sporadic incidents were observed with attempts at successive voting in majority Serb municipalities. No voter pressure was detected near the polling stations.

Despite the expected incidents in Leposavić, during the election day in northern municipalities, there were no reported security incidents. The presence of KFOR, Kosovo Police and EULEX has significantly contributed to the increase in security and served as a measure of deterrence. In the south, in the municipality of Gračanica, a fight occurred between voters at the polling station. In Gračanica there were also allegations of organized voting of members of the Roma ethnic community. In Klokot, two people were detained due to an incident during the electoral process.

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5 EU EOM Kosovo 2017: [Final Report on the Mayoral and Municipal Assembly Elections 2017 in Kosovo](#)

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In the election, 11 813 voters outside of Kosovo submitted their registration, out of which 4 076 from Serbia. Out of that number, 10,476 applications were accepted and 3,244 accepted applications were from Serbia. The key reasons for rejecting the applications were: inappropriate personal documents and inability to prove identity. The CEC received 7,221 voting ballots outside Kosovo, of which 6735 were accepted and 886 rejected. Delays in delivering the ballot papers and the lack of identification documents are cited as grounds for the rejection of applications.

During the election day, two buses with Central Serb voters heading for Novo Brdo were stopped at the Bela Zemlja Pass. They continued their way to polling stations by transporting them to private cars.

Personal documents, issued by the institutions of the Republic of Serbia, were accepted in four northern municipalities as proof of identity. Persons who possess these documents could vote if their name was on the voter list. Two representatives of the PDK in the election committees in North Mitrovica briefly refused to accept such documents as evidence of identity. After the intervention of the PDK member of CEC and international representatives, they began to accept these documents.

## Second round November 19, 2017

The campaign for the runoff of the election in Klokot was marked by the collective transfer of representatives of CI Klokot Vrbovac and their candidate for mayor Božidar Dejanović into the Serb List. The Serb List also called on voters to give Dejanovic support in the elections, rather than their previous candidate Strahinja Spasić.

The counting of votes in one polling station in Parteš municipality was problematic because of the involvement of political subjects in the process. In this polling station, there were a total of 203 blank ballots that did not have a trace of ink but with recesses indicating the possible use of disappearing ink.

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## REPORTS BY MUNICIPALITIES

### MUNICIPALITIES WITH A SERBIAN MAJORITY

#### North Mitrovica

A total of 21 797 voters were registered in the municipality of Mitrovica. 8 000 voters directly voted in polling stations while 598 voters voted on conditional basis. The total response was 39.45%. 7 964 valid ballots were received, while 141 were invalid and 173 were blank.

Nine political subjects proposed candidates for councilors: Serb List, Civic initiative "Freedom, Democracy, Justice" - Oliver Ivanović (CI SDP), Alliance for New Kosovo - AKR (Aleanca Kosova e Re), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo – AAK (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës), the Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës), the Movement Self-Determination (Levizja Vetevedosje), the Most party (Ura) party and the Bosniak coalition Vakaf.

The candidates for the Mayor of Mitrovica municipality were proposed by four political subjects: Goran Rakic (Serb List), Oliver Ivanović (CI SDP), Gondže Čauši (PDK) and Betim Osmani (AKR).

In the elections for the Mayor, Goran Rakic - Serb List won 5372 or 67.45% votes. Oliver Ivanović, candidate of CI SDP won 1475 or 18.52% votes, Gondže Čauši, PDK candidate won 763 or 9.58%, while Betim Osmani, the AKR candidate, won 354 or 4.45% votes.

The municipal assembly of North Mitrovica has 19 council seats. The Serb List won 14 council seats (67.14% or 4918 votes), CI SDP Oliver Ivanović 3 (14.35% or 1051 votes) and PDK 2 council seats (8.16% or 598 votes). Of the 19 councilors in the convening of the assembly since the 2017 election, 7 are women.

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Just one day after the announcement of the names of the confirmed candidates for councilors and mayors, the Elections Complaints and Appeals Panel (PSC) received the first requests for the withdrawal of candidatures. Two candidates for councilors CI SDP Oliver Ivanović withdrew their applications with the identical text. Both candidates reasoned that this political subject was misleading, that their name was used for the campaign, and they publicly supported the Serb List.

Immediately after that, CI SDP leader Oliver Ivanović spoke in an interview for the Kossev portal. Ivanović said that the candidates' allegations of "misleading" were untrue and that they were the result of threats and blackmail from the Serb List. The candidates for councilors who withdrew their candidacies refused to comment on the media.<sup>6</sup>

On 5 September, an emergency press conference was held for two candidates for mayors and list carriers in North Mitrovica and Zvečan - Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović on the occasion of the new withdrawal of the candidacy for councilors in Zvečan. The filing of criminal charges was announced to both Serbian and the Kosovo prosecutors against, as it was stated, threats to the candidates. Ivanović said that the most severe pressures were recorded in the municipalities of North - North Mitrovica and Zvečan, and that "torture" was performed against all candidates of the CI SDP list who work in health care and education institutions, and also in private companies. Ivanović called for the reaction of all security officials in Kosovo, but also all the authorities in Serbia, to dissuade them from this kind of proceedings.<sup>7</sup>

On 8 September, on the occasion of Ivanović's statements in a press release, Goran Rakic, candidate for mayor for the Serb List, made a statement. Rakic said that the pressures and threats Ivanović speaks of were paranoid beliefs, that the Serb List "presented citizens in the last elections with a clear program of defense of state and national interests in Kosovo and Metohija" and that the Serbian people "almost unanimously supported this list as proven responsible and credible people."<sup>8</sup>

The head of the office for Kosovo and Metohija, Marko Djuric, called on the citizens of October 2 to vote for the Serb List, which "only enjoys the support of the Republic of Serbia and its institutions". "To everyone who will appear in the upcoming elections against the Serb List, and therefore against the state of Serbia, I only say one thing: they should not hope that they will be in the coalition with the Serb List after the elections, because this is not just about the conflict of the program, here is the conflict of values and relations with politics, life, Kosovo and Metohija and Serbia."<sup>9</sup>

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6 Kossev: [Ivanović after the withdrawal of candidacies: Pressure from the Serb List, it is sad what they do to people](#), 1 September, 2017

7 Kossev: [Ivanović and Milović seek urgent reaction from Serbia's top and security authorities in Kosovo: Pressures, torture of employees, illegal lists ...](#), 5 September 2017

8 Srpska lista: [Oliver Ivanović je čitao dok su Srbe proterivali!](#), 8 September 2017

9 Srpska lista: [Đurić: Pozivam građane na KiM da glasaju za Srpsku listu](#), 3 October 2017

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CI SDP leader Oliver Ivanović first criticized Djuric in his statement to Beta agency, saying “the divisions that Djuric is talking about are dangerous”.<sup>10</sup>

On October 3, the current mayor and candidate for the mayor for the Serb List, Goran Rakic, responded to Ivanović’s claims that Marko Djuric, the director of the Kosovo Office, divides the Serbs in Kosovo. “The proof of how much Djuric divides the Serbs is that Oliver Ivanović, who is so fiercely attacking him today, gave millions of dollars for defense from the budget of the Office for Kosovo and Metohija, without which he probably would still be sitting in a casemate.”<sup>11</sup>

On October 4, candidates for mayors of the municipalities of North Mitrovica and Zvečan, Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović held a press conference. Ivanović said that pressure continued on the people from his list CI “For our Zvečan” of Dragiša Milović, and the latest thing, according to him, is to call all subordinates by directors of institutions to direct talks. “They received suggestions from all heads of departments, managers, that they keep their employees absolutely under control in their companies, that they break down their resistance with repeated threats, and to direct their votes to the Serb List. This is wrong and it represents legal and political violence.” Ivanović added that he would no longer invite the state of Serbia to engage if, in his words, the last call does not respond positively. “Our state can and must resolve this situation. No political or private interest may be more significant than the national”<sup>12, 13</sup>

The main observer of the European Union Election Observation Mission for elections for mayors and municipal assemblies in Kosovo in 2017, Alojz Peterle commented exclusively for Kossev on pre-election events in Serbian municipalities in the North. He stated that the EU monitoring mission is aware of the pressure exerted on candidates and political subjects and that the EU election observation mission received credible reports on politically motivated dismissals of employees in public institutions. “The pressure on candidates and voters from Serb majority communities in Kosovo limited the campaign activities of those entities that compete with the Serb List and its candidates,” Peterle said.<sup>14</sup>

On October 17, candidates for mayors of the municipalities of North Mitrovica and Zvečan announced the filing of criminal charges against TV Most, as well as editors-in-chief of this television. The applications are submitted due to the pre-election video broadcast on the Most, in which, as they stated at the press conference, strong charges were made against them. Ivanović and Milović will file a criminal complaint and “against the ordering party”. They called

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10 Facebook profile: [Oliver Ivanović, Za sve one koji nisu uspeali da pronađu nedeljnik Vreme i pročitaju intervju](#), 2 October 2017

11 Radio kontakt plus: [Rakić: Oliver Ivanović je primer, da u Srbiji zahvalnost najkraće traje](#), 3 October 2017

12 Radio kontakt plus: [Ivanović o predizbornoj atmosferi; Milovićeva supruga smenjena sa mesta načelnika](#), 5. oktobar 2017.

13 Vesti online: [Srpski nokauti u kosovskom ringu \(2\): Kriminalci u stranačkim uniformama](#), 10. oktobar 2017.

14 Kossev: Peterle: [Pritisak na kandidate i birače na Kosovu ograničava kampanju onih koji se nadmeću sa Srpskom listom](#), 16. oktobar 2017.

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the video “malicious” and TV Most a “pro-regime” television. TV Most reacted without taking responsibility for “the content of any pre-election video broadcast on a paid time slot”.<sup>15</sup>

The Serb List announced a press release stating that “the Serb List was appalled by the political manners of Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović, who, laughing cynically in the faces of journalists, threatened with retaliation to the Serbian television Most just because it dared broadcasts pre-election videos, the content of which was nothing but an unmistakable truth about their political and other malversations.” Additionally, the statement says that the Serb List would stand in protection of TV Most.

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On October 18, the President of the Municipal Election Commission said that “All members of the polling boards of political parties participate in trainings on the work of polling boards, and no one complained about pressure or submitted a request for withdrawal,” as reiterated in response to an earlier statement by the leader of the CI SDP, Oliver Ivanović - that pressure was put on their controllers at polling stations for the forthcoming local election - claiming that “incorrect information” is being placed by this political entity.

On October 18, the President of the Municipal Election Commission said that “All members of the polling boards of political parties participate in trainings on the work of polling boards, and no one complained about pressure or submitted a request for withdrawal,” as reiterated in response to an earlier statement by the leader of the CI SDP, Oliver Ivanović - that pressure was put on their controllers at polling stations for the forthcoming local election - claiming that “incorrect information” is being placed by this political entity.<sup>17</sup>

The last day of the election campaign was used by political actors to urge citizens for the last time to go to the polls and vote for their option. The Serb List held the final conference, while CI SDP leader Oliver Ivanović addressed the citizens at a press conference held in the premises of this political subject.

In the polling station at the secondary technical school Mihailo Petrović Alas in Kosovska Mitrovica, at 7 am, all polling stations were opened on time, a total of 8. Representatives of the OSCE were also present at the polling stations besides the CEC observers. There were no crowds in front of the polling stations or in the city itself. In addition, there were no incidents in polling stations. The president of the Electoral Commission for North Mitrovica, Slobodan Dimitrijević, said that all polling stations in Mitrovica were opened on time, with the exception of one polling station in Suvi Dol, which was opened with about 45 minutes of delay.

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15 Kossev: [Milović i Ivanović pokreću tužbu protiv TV Most. TV Most “ne preuzima odgovornost” za sadržaj spota](#), 17. oktobar 2017.

16 Kossev: [Srpska lista zaštitice TV Most od “nasilja”: Novinari ne plašite se satelita Prištine, nastavite profesionalni rad u interesu Srba](#), 17. oktobar 2017.

17 Kossev: [OLK Severna Mitrovica: Nijedan član biračkih odbora se nije požalio na pritisak, pripreme bez problema](#), 18. oktobar 2017.

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Ivanović said in a statement to the journalists after the vote that there were minor irregularities, but much less than he feared. He also said that they had problems setting up their observers because the MEB introduced a rule that an observer could be at the polling station for 2 hours, which means that they would have to rotate the observers. A special problem was, Ivanović added, the many deceased people on the lists. He said that he found his parents on his lists, as well as some of his friends, while his son, who was 25, was not on the list.<sup>18</sup>

## Zvečan

A total of 9,069 voters were registered in the Municipality of Zvečan. 4 187 voters voted directly in the elections while 106 voted on conditional basis. The total voter turnout was 47.34%. The valid received ballots were 4056 while 102 were invalid and 97 were blank.

The Municipal Assembly of Zvečan has 19 council seats. The five political parties proposed candidates for councilors, such as: Serb List, Civic initiative For Our Zvečan, Democratic League of Kosovo - LDK (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës), Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës) and the Self-Determination Movement (Levizja Vetevedosje).

Candidates for the Mayor were Vučina Janković for the Serb List and Dragiša Milović for the Civic Initiative “For Our Zvečan”. Albanian political subjects did not have candidates for the mayor in this municipality.

On September 4, the candidate for council member CI “For our Zvečan” filed a request for withdrawal of the candidacy in which he stated that he was misled by this initiative and that he does not want his name to be used for the campaign “aimed at breaking the unity of the Serbian people in this region”. In addition, he gave support to the Serb List “which is the only true and honest fighter for the survival and remain of the Serbs”.<sup>19</sup> On September 5, an emergency press conference was held for two candidates for mayors in North Mitrovica and Zvečan - Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović on the occasion of withdrawing the candidacy for councilors in Zvečan. It was said that candidates for councilors for the upcoming local elections - who are not on the list of Serbs - were under pressure.

The filing of criminal charges was also announced to the Kosovo and Serbian prosecutors and a call was made to the Serb List and the Office of the Kosovo to “sit, if necessary, and see what the problem is, that these incidents would not continue”.<sup>20</sup>

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18 Radio Kontakt plus: [Mitrovica: Oliver Ivanović glasao u OŠ “Sv.Sava”](#), 22 October, 2017.

19 Kossev: [Još jedan kandidat za odbornika “doveden u zabludu”: Tomislav Dejanović sa Milovićeve liste podržao Srpsku](#), 4 October 2017

20 Kossev: [Ivanović and Milović seek urgent reaction from Serbia’s top and security authorities in Kosovo: Pressures, torture of employees, illegal lists ...](#), 5 September 2017

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On September 11, candidates for the mayors of North Mitrovica and Zvečan- Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović held a press conference for, as they stated, the pressure candidates from their lists suffered. It is said that the pressure is suffered by the wife of the candidate on the list “For our Zvečan” employed at the Public Health Institute.<sup>21</sup>

On September 20, the Serb List launched a humanitarian campaign to divide social assistance. The action included the socially most endangered families who are on the records of the Center for Social Work in Zvečan.<sup>22</sup>

On September 30, the current mayor of the municipality of Zvečan, as well as candidate for the mayor from the Serb List, Vučina Janković, addressed the citizens with a statement and invited them to go to the polls and vote for the Serb List.

At a press conference held on October 5, Dragiša Milović presented the latest example of what he believes is the continuation of pressure on his family. His wife - Dr Gordana Milović, after 17 years of specialist work, was removed from the position of head of the physiatry department of the Health Center in Zvečan, and, as he said, the possibility of on-call duty was canceled without explanation.<sup>23</sup>

The Manager of the Health Center and the candidate for the councilors of the Serb List in Zvečan, Ivan Vasić, denied Milović’s claims, stating that “Doctor Gordana Milović, as a specialist in physical medicine, has not been removed from the post of chief, but the annex to the labor contract has been changed. She was given the opportunity to be a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation.<sup>24</sup> On October 16, a private cable operator CD KiM from Zvečan was cut off an optical cable which terminated the program at the moment when this television broadcasted a show in which four candidates for mayors from the municipalities of the North of Kosovo visited: Oliver Ivanović, Dragiša Milović, Dragan Jablanović and Slaviša Biševac. The owner of the television believes that it was a deliberate sabotage that he is linking to the pre-election campaign for ongoing Kosovo elections. The cable was interrupted a few kilometers from the studio where the program was broadcast, or the center of Žerovnica in the municipality of Zenica, in an uninhabited part, near the road between Žerovnica and Zvečan itself. Milović said that it was another type of violence, in this case the media that creates an illusion that the truth is unacceptable and added that candidates and parties were unevenly represented in the media during this campaign.<sup>25</sup>

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21 Kossev: [Milović and Ivanović: The doctor had his specialization aborted, we ask the citizens to withstand the pressure](#), 11 September 2017

22 Kossev: Zvečan: [Podeljena humanitarna pomoć najugroženijima](#), 20 September 2017

23 Kossev: [Traje 5. Oktobar na Severu: “Zaposleni pod kontrolom načelnika i direktora da glasaju za Srpsku”](#), 5 October 2017

24 Kossev: [Šta o “smeni” supruge Dragiše Milovića kaže direktor Doma zdravlja u Zvečanu?](#), 5 October, 2017.

25 Kossev: [Prekinuta emisija sa kandidatima za gradonačelnike - Ivanovićem, Milovićem, Jablanovićem i Biševcom](#), 17 October, 2017.

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On October 17, Milović and Ivanović announced the filing of a criminal complaint against TV Most and the editor-in-chief of this television for the pre-election broadcast that was broadcast, in which strong charges were listed against them.<sup>26</sup> Milović also said that this was “one of the dreariest campaigns” in which he participated and that “what is happening in our area has been unseen for the past month”. In addition, he announced that CI For our Zvečan will not hold the final mitigation “primarily because of security”. We do not want to expose anyone to unnecessary fear, attack, or God forbid, car incineration,” he said.<sup>27</sup>

On October 9, the final rally of the Serb List was held, attended by the Director of the Office for Kosovo, Marko Djuric.

The election day passed peacefully without incidents. At the held elections, the Serb List won, with 13 seats (2601 or 69.30% of votes), CI For Zvečan won 5 (911 or 24.27% of votes), and the Self-Determination Movement one (100 or 2.66% of votes). Of the 19 councilors in the Assembly, 6 are women. Zvečan is the only municipality in Kosovo with a Serb majority who has a female president of the assembly.

When it comes to the elections for the Mayor, the candidate of the Serb List Vučina Janković won with 2863 or 70.59% of the votes, while the candidate of the CI For our Zvečan-Dragiša Milović won 1193 or 29.41% of the votes. Janković thanked the citizens for the support they gave him unconditionally and the fact that the elections passed peacefully and with dignity, without any incident. The first constituent session of the municipality of Zvečan was held on December 12. The mayor and councilors took oaths and elected the chairman of the assembly.

## Leposavić

A total 17 747 voters were registered in Leposavić municipality. 8089 voted in polling stations, and 434 was conditional. The total voter turnout was 48.03%. There were 8078 valid ballot papers, 146 were invalid, and 166 were empty. The Municipal Assembly of Leposavić has 19 council seats. 12 political subjects nominated candidates for councilors. (7 Serbian and 5 Albanian): Serb List, CI Democratic Initiative, CI SDP Oliver Ivanović, Kosovo Serb Party-PKS, CI Narodna pravda, CI Together, CI Equally for all, Self-Determination Movement (Lëvizja Vetëvendosje), Alliance for New Kosovo- AKR (Aleanca Kosova e Re), Alliance for the Future of Kosovo - AAK (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës), Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës), Social Democratic Initiative of Kosovo (NPK - Nisma për Kosovën).

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26 Kossev: [Milović i Ivanović pokreću tužbu protiv TV Most. TV Most “ne preuzima odgovornost” za sadržaj spota](#), 17 October, 2017.

27 Kossev: [Milović i Ivanović pokreću tužbu protiv TV Most. TV Most “ne preuzima odgovornost” za sadržaj spota](#), 17 October, 2017.

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The most active political subjects during the election campaign in this municipality were the Serb List and the Kosovo Serb Party. Public attention was drawn to the pre-election candidate for mayor of CI Narodna pravda - Nenad Radosavljevic, named "Voting instructions from the North of Kosovo: You are not a cloth. You are a human being" in which people are advised not to be pressured.<sup>28</sup>

On September 26, the Kosovo Serb Party (PKS) announced that a "serious incident and a fight between the present activists of the Serbian Progressive Party" occurred at the "pre-election rally" of the Serb List, in the village of Vračevo, in Leposavić municipality. It has been stated that the gathering ended "after several exchanges of knockouts, before the scheduled time".<sup>29</sup>

On the same day, the Serb List denied the claims of the Kosovo Serb Party in a press release. They said that a "minor family company registered as a political party led by a criminal clan, father and son Jablanovic, spread disinformation through social networks that there was an incident at the gathering in Vracevo, only to cause disorder among the Serbs."<sup>30</sup>

On October 8, there was an incident between two party supporters. The Kosovo Serb Party blamed the Serb List for this "attack".<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, the Serb List denied these claims, stating that it was untruths aimed at provoking "divisions and tensions among Serbs in Kosovo", while the Kosovo Serb Party is trying to "draw their attention away from its complete political disorientation and criminal activities."<sup>32</sup> On October 15, unknown persons with hoods threw Molotov cocktails on the billboard of the Serb List and demolished it.<sup>33</sup>

On October 17, in the statement of the Serb List, it was stated that the son of Dragan Jablanovic - Marko Jablanovic and another activist of the PKS "barged into" the Serb List election seat in Leposavić, and that they „were smothering the Serb Lists activists“, "cursed them" and "threatened with murder" and that Marko Jablanovic's wife allegedly hit a Serb List activist.<sup>34</sup>

On October 18, the manager of the Kosovo Office, Marko Djuric, visited Leposavić in order to "be informed firsthand about the increasingly frequent attacks on activists of the Serb Lists" in which, according to the testimonies of the victims, the activists of the Kosovo Serb Party and members of the family Dragana Jablanovic were included", stated in the press release of the Kosovo Office.<sup>35</sup>

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28 Kossev: [Uputstvo" za glasanje sa Severa Kosova: Niste krpa. Ostali ste čovek](#), 2 October, 2017

29 Kossev: [Iz Srpske liste bio na zboru harmonije i jedinstva u Vračevu...](#), 27 September, 2017

30 Srpska lista: [Kriminalni klan otac i sin Jablanović šire dezinformacije](#), 26 September, 2017

31 Kossev: [Leposavić: Sa kapuljačama na aktiviste PKS?](#), 9. oktobar 2017

32 Facebook page "Srpska lista Leposavić": [Statement of the Serb List Leposavić](#), 9 October, 2017

33 RadioKiM: [Molotov cocktail on the billboard Srpske in Leposavić](#), 16 October, 2017

34 Kossev: [Djuric in Leposavic for "assault" on Serb activists. PKS: Officials of the Serbian government are participating in the campaign for the elections of the Republic of Kosovo](#), 18 October, 2017

35 Kossev: [Djuric in Leposavic for "assault" on Serb activists. PKS: Officials of the Serbian government are participating in](#)

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On the same day, the Kosovo Serb Party held a press conference stating that the Serb List had “the intention to overturn the will of citizens from the North of Kosovo” that “power cuts” were planned during the election day, alleged “destruction of polling stations” in Zvečan and Kosovska Mitrovica and “insertion of false ballots” at the polling stations in Leposavić.<sup>36</sup>

On October 19, representatives of the Serb List visited the Center for Social Work in the municipality of Leposavić, where they were received by the director - Gradimir Nastic, who, according to the Serb List, was informed about the manipulations with socially vulnerable persons by the PKS. The director of this center and candidate for mayor Zoran Todic stated that representatives of the SCC misused the premises of the Center for Social Work using them for party purposes.

On the last day of the election campaign, the Kosovo Serb Party issued a statement stating that “representatives of the Serb List broke into the building for socially vulnerable persons and young couples” and, as stated in this announcement, prevented the planned allocation of apartments in the mentioned building.

The election day passed without incidents. The Serb List won the elections by 12 council seats (56.27% or 4158 votes), the Kosovo Serb Party won 6 (28.57% or 2111 votes) while the CI Democratic Initiative won one council seat (4.64% or 343 votes).

In the election for the mayor of the municipality, 3 candidates participated. The candidate of the Serb List Zoran Todic won, with 5105 or 63.20% of the votes. Dragan Jablanovic, the candidate of the PKS, won 2807 or 34.75% of the votes, while Nenad Radosavljevic won 166 or 2.05% of the votes for CI Narodna Pravda.

On 14 December, a constituent session of the local assembly was held, at which the mayor and councilors took oaths and elected the chairman of the Assembly. On January 31st, the first regular session was held at which the Committee on Policies and Finance and the Committee for Communities were formed, the chairman of the Assembly was elected deputy, and the budget report for Leposavić municipality for the period January - December 2017 was presented and discussed. On February 27, a second regular session was held, at which the Assembly's work plan for 2018 was adopted.

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[the campaign for the elections of the Republic of Kosovo](#), 18 October, 2017

36 Kossev: [Djuric in Leposavic for “assault” on Serb activists. PKS: Officials of the Serbian government are participating in the campaign for the elections of the Republic of Kosovo](#), 18 October, 2017

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## Zubin Potok

A total of 8400 voters were registered in the municipality of Zubin Potok. In the local elections, 3 819 voted in polling stations while 146 voted conditionally. The total turnout was 47.20%. 3370 valid ballot papers were received. 186 were invalid and 337 were empty.

5 political subjects submitted candidacies for council seats in the local Assembly: Serb List, Civic Initiative for Zubin Potok, Democratic League of Kosovo-LDK (Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës), Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës) and the Self-Determination Movement (Levizja Vetevedosje).

Stevan Vulović (Serb List) and Slavisa Bisevac (CI Za Zubin Potok) were nominated as mayors of the municipality. Candidate for the mayor for the Serb List, Stevan Vulović, said that during the election campaign there will be neither gatherings nor public appearances, and will allow citizens to decide for themselves who to vote for. During the election campaign, no public gatherings were held. The promotion of the candidate was done through social networks and in direct contact with potential voters. Posters of both political subjects from the Serbian community were visible on the territory of the municipality and in the center of Zubin Potok. The election day passed without incidents.

The local assembly has 19 council seats. Most of them, 13 council seats were won by the candidates of the Serb List (2445 or 71.76% of the votes). Two council seats were won by CI Za Zubin Potok (408 or 11.98% of votes) and LDK (285 or 8.37%), while the PDK won 1 seat (142 or 4.17% votes) and the Self-Determination Movement (127 or 3.73% votes). Of the 19 councilors in the local Assembly, 7 are women.

Stevan Vulović, a candidate of the Serb List, was elected mayor, who won 2691 or 79.85% of the votes, while the candidate of CI for the Zubin Potok, Slaviša Bisevac, won 679 or 20.15% of the votes.

On December 14, a constitutive session of the Municipal Assembly of Zubin Potok was held. On this occasion, the commission for the verification of mandates was formed, the councilors and the mayor held ceremonial statements, and the Speaker of the Assembly (Nemanja Jakšić - Serb List) was elected.

On December 27, the first regular session of the Assembly was held. Veselji Sefer (PDK) was elected unanimously as deputy chairman of the Assembly. Latinka Utvić (SL) was elected deputy mayor, while Agim Hasani (LDK) was elected deputy mayor for minorities. In addition, the Committee for Policies and Finance was also constituted. At the second session held on January 31, the community committee was formed, and on the third session held on February 27, the rulebook on the internal organization of the municipal administration was adopted.

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## Gračanica

A total of 21 163 voters were registered in the municipality of Gračanica. 8197 voters voted in polling stations while 736 voters voted on conditional basis. The total voter turnout was 42.07%. 7980 valid, 486 invalid and 340 blank ballots were received.

The municipality of Gračanica has 19 council seats. In the municipality of Gračanica, 7 political subjects submitted lists of candidates for councilors: the Serb List, the Progressive Democratic Party (PDS), the Independent Liberal Party (SLS), the Civic initiative "New Beginning", the Civic initiative "Central Kosovo", the Self-Determination Movement (Levizja Vetevendosje), Albanian Civic initiative (Iniciativa Qytetare Shqiptare),

Two candidatures for the mayor of the municipality were submitted to the Central Election Commission: Srdjan Popović (Serb List) and Aleksandar Čolić (CI New Beginning).

Almost all of the pre-election activities of political subjects were taking place outside the headquarters of the municipality in Gračanica, in the surrounding towns located on the peripheries of the municipality that were previously neglected in the infrastructural and economic sense. The only party that organized an election rally was the Serb List.

Shortly before the election, the candidate of the Serb List for Mayor Srdjan Popović accused all other Kosovo Serb political entities of being under the control of Pristina, and that only the Serb List was working to unify all Serbs.

The election day passed without major procedural irregularities or incidents.

In the elections held, the Serb List won 12 council seats (4,996 or 64.54% of votes), Independent Liberal Party won 3 (1116 or 14.42% of votes), Progressive Democratic Party 2 (799 or 10.32%), while the Albanian Initiative (365 or 4.72% votes) and the CI New Beginning (233 or 3.01% of votes) won one council seat each. Of the 19 councilors in the Assembly, 7 are women.

The candidate of the Serb List, Srdjan Popović, was elected mayor, who won 6985 or 87.53% of the votes, while Aleksandar Čolić, CI New beginning candidate, won 995 or 12.47% of votes.

On 15 December, a constitutive session of the Municipal Assembly of Gračanica was held, at which committee mandates were verified, ceremonial declarations/oaths of councilors and mayors were held, and the chairman of the Assembly was elected. On January 25, the first regular session of the Assembly was held.

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## Klokot

There were 3742 voters registered in the Municipality of Klokot. In the first round of local elections, 2333 voters voted in polling stations while 74 voted conditionally. Total turnout was 64.32%. There were 2303 valid, 33 invalid and 35 blank ballots.

The Municipal Assembly of Klokot has 15 council seats. The political subjects that participated in the local election are: Serb List, Civic Initiative Klokot-Vrbovac, Active Citizens Initiative, Civic Initiative National Unity, Civic Initiative Klokot-Mogila (Qytetare Klokot Mogill), Albanian Initiative for Klokot (Initiative Shqipëtare për Klokot), The Kosovo Initiative (Nisma për Kosovën), the Democratic Party of Kosovo (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës – PDK).

Candidates for the mayor were: Strahinja Spasić (Serb List), Božidar Dejanovic (Civic Initiative - Klokot-Vrbovac), Naser Sabani (Democratic Party of Kosovo-PDK), Mervan Redzepe (Kosovo Initiative - Nisma për Kosovën) and Nehat Redžepi (Albanska inicijativa za Klokot-Inicijativa Shqipëtare për Klokot).

On September 20, a group of citizens, among whom there were several candidates for councilors in local elections, blocked the building of the municipality of Vitina, in the village of Vrbovac, which functions in the system of the Republic of Serbia because several workers were fired. The president of the Active Citizens' Initiative, Goran Marinkovic, explained the blockade with the words: "We blocked the building of the municipality in order to stop the dictatorship and intimidation of the people, because we were fired for not being like-minded. We are all Serbian, but we are against the current Mayor Srećko Spasić, who is terrorizing the people of our municipality, threatened me with the words 'I will destroy your family' because my wife is a candidate for a council member on the list Active Citizens Initiative"<sup>37</sup>

On October 4, two employees of the Municipality of Vitina, Goran Marinkovic and Aleksandar Rakic, returned to work by handing over the Decision on the annulment of the decision to terminate the employment relationship, which stopped the blockade of the municipal building, but on October 10, they would get the termination orders again. This time, another employee of the municipal authority who was previously removed from the position of a member of the Provisional Authority - Slobodan Stojilkovic, who is the carrier of Active Citizens Initiative in this municipality, was dismissed. In addition to the alleged failures in work as the termination decisions indicated, this time, the reason for this was the organization of protests and the blockade of the municipal building.<sup>38</sup> The most active election campaigns in this municipality were the Serb List and CI Klokot-Vrbovac, who held a large number of pre-election rallies with citizens in the pre-election period, conducted an active campaign on social networks and distributed promotional material throughout the municipality.

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37 Kossev: [The citizens blocked the building of the Vitina municipality](#), 20 September, 2017

38 Kossev: [Workers of the municipality of Vitina fired again, now once more?](#), 10 October, 2017

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The election day passed without incidents. The municipality of Klokot recorded the highest turnover in majority Serbian municipalities.

The Serb List won the elections for councilors, winning 6 council seats (857 or 38.94% of votes), CI Klokot-Vrbovac won 3 council seats (510 or 23.17% of votes), the Albanian Initiative for Klokot won 2 (162 or 7.36 % votes), Active Citizens Initiative-1 (162 or 7.36% of votes), PDK-1 (110 or 5% of votes) NISMA-1 (92 or 4.18%) and CI Klokot-Mogila -1 (87 or 3.95% of votes). Of the 15 councilors in the Assembly, 4 are women.

In the first round of elections for Mayor, Strahinja Spasić -Serb list won 985 or 42.77% of the votes, Božidar Dejanovic- CI Klokot Vrbovac-856 or 37.17% of votes, Nehat Redzepi CI Albanians for Klokot -299 or 12.98% of votes, Mervan Redzepi NISMA - 106 or 4.60% of votes, Naser Shabani PDK 57 or 2.48% of votes.

On November 13, election campaign began officially for the runoff of local elections. In the majority of Serbian municipalities, the second round of local election for the mayor of the municipality was held in Klokot and Parteš. Candidates for the mayor in the runoff in the municipality were: Strahinja Spasić - Serb List and Božidar Dejanovic - CI Klokot-Vrbovac.

On November 15, in the statement of the Serb List, it was announced that the candidate CI Klokot-Vrbovac joined all of its members with the Serb List.<sup>39</sup> On November 17, Dejanovic met with the Head of the Kosovo Office, Marko Djuric. Djuric thanked Dejanovic for “unifying the Serbian political forces” in Klokot and the readiness to “work in cooperation with the government in Belgrade to protect and promote the collective rights of Serbs”, as well as “economic strengthening of Serb communities in Kosovo”.<sup>40</sup> Due to Dejanovic’s accession to the Serb List, there was an unusual situation that the Serb List in the second round of elections for the Mayor of the municipality supported his “counter-candidate”.

On November 19, the runoff of the local election in Kosovo was held. 2076 voters voted in polling stations, 41 conditionally. The total voter turnout was 56.57%. There were 2074 valid, 25 invalid, 1 blank ballots.

According to the preliminary results, Strahinja Spasić from the Serb List received 1030, compared to 1020, won by Božidar Dejanovic for CI “Klokot Vrbovac”, but who was actually the one supported by the Serb List in the runoff of elections. After counting 17 conditional votes, 5 votes of persons with special needs and 19 received postings, it was determined that Božidar Dejanović - CI Klokot-Vrbovac won 1042 or 50.24% of the votes while Strahinja Spasić- Serb List won 1032 or 49.76% votes.

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39 Srpska lista: [Srbi jedinstveni u Klokotu u drugom krugu izbora za gradonačelnika](#), 15. novembar 2017.

40 Kossev: [After joining the Serb List: Dejanović with Djurić in Belgrade](#), 17 November, 2017

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The final results were announced no earlier than December 7, after the candidate Strahinja Spasić filed an appeal on the count of votes received by post. Those who came from Spasić's surroundings stated that they had voted for him by post, made statements before the notaries, and then they filed an appeal to the Election Complaints Committee, as well as criminal reports, in which they were told that the ballots were photocopied and fake, that is, voters' statements that they voted for Spasić and not for Dejanovic and that somebody had replaced their ballots.<sup>41</sup> The panel for appeals and complaints rejected Spasic's appeal as unfounded.

On December 21, the constituent assembly of the Municipal Assembly of Klokot was held. The mayor and councilors took oaths and elected the president of the Municipality Assembly. Žarko Dejanović, member of the civic initiative Klokot-Vrbovac, was elected President of the Assembly. During the election, three councilors left the session for the Serb List.

The first regular session was held on January 29, and on that occasion, the committee for policies and finances was formed. At the second regular session on February 28, the community committee was formed.

## Parteš

A total of 4694 voters were registered in the municipality of Parteš. In the first round of local elections, 2621 voted in polling stations while 94 voted suspended. The voter response was 57.84%. 2630 valid, 51 invalid, 8 empty were received ballots.

The Municipal Assembly of Parteš has 15 council seats. Only two political entities are registered to participate in local elections: the Serb List and the CI Narodna sloga.

The election campaign mainly focused on holding meetings with citizens and promotion through social networks.

The election day passed peacefully, without incidents. The victory in the elections for councilors was taken by the Serbian newspaper, winning 9 seats (1431 or 59.97% of votes) while the Civic initiative People's Party won 6 council seats (955 or 40.03% of votes). Of the 15 councilors in the local Assembly, 8 are women.

Regarding the elections for the mayor of the municipality, Dragan Petković-Serb List won the victory with 1571 or 59.73% of the votes, Nenad Cvetković- CI Narodna sloga won 1.059 or 40.27% of the votes.

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41 Kossev: [CEC verified the election results for municipal assemblies, still without final election results for mayor in Klokot](#), 29 November, 2017

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On November 1, the panel for appeals and complaints penalized the Serb List with 11,000 euros for manipulating the votes in the local elections in Parteš following a complaint filed by CI Narodna sloga candidate Nenad Cvetković.

However, on November 3, the Appeals and Complaints Panel annulled the election results for the Mayor in this municipality and ordered the Central Election Commission to repeat this vote. The election was annulled after it was established that the representatives of the Serb List offered financial compensation to support the elections. Immediately afterwards, SL issued a statement that the annulment of the Parteš election is a political decision of Pristina and a radical influence on the electoral will of voting. According to their statements, Pristina wants to install its candidate for Mayor of Parteš.

On November 5, the Serb List held a one-hour protest in all of the majority Serb municipalities, on the occasion of canceling the elections in Parteš. At the same time, an appeal was filed to the Supreme Court on the occasion of this decision of the Appeals and Complaints Panel. The Supreme Court rejected this appeal.

On November 19, 2360 voters voted in polling stations while 36 voted conditionally. The voters' response was 51.04%. There were 2149 valid, 25 invalid, 209 blank ballots. In the repeated election, the candidate of the Serb List - Dragan Petkovic won again, winning 1331 or 61.94% of the votes, while Nenad Cvetković-CI Narodna sloga won 818 votes or 38.06% this time.

On December 18, a constituent session of the local assembly was held, at which the mayor and councilors took oaths. On December 28, an extraordinary session was held in which the President of the Assembly was elected. On January 29, the first regular session was held at which the Committee for Policies and Finance and Committee for Returns and the Committee for Communities were formed and a list of priority projects for 2018 was adopted.

## Ranilug

A total of 5578 voters were registered in the municipality of Ranilug, of which 3039 voted at polling stations, and 205 conditionally. The total response was 58.16%. There were 3117 valid ballot papers, 68 invalid and 31 empty ballots.

The Municipal Assembly of Ranilug has 15 council seats. 5 political subjects proposed candidates for councilors: the Serb List, Progressive Democratic Party - PDS, Independent Liberal Party - SLS, Civic initiative "Freedom, Democracy, Justice" - Oliver Ivanović and NSK.

Four candidates were nominated for the Mayor of the Municipality of Ranilug: Gradimir Mikic (Serb List), Bojan Arsic (PDS), Boban Jevtic (CI SDP-Oliver Ivanović) and Ivan Dimić (NSK). Due to the death of candidates for Mayor Gradimir Mikic and candidate for council member Sasa Aleksic, there was a change in the candidate list of the Serb List. The then deputy mayor, Vladica

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Aritonovic, became a new candidate for the mayor and Vladan Aleksic a new candidate for councilors.

Regarding the election campaign, in addition to promotion on social networks, direct contact with potential voters, media appearances and participation in round tables, political subjects have also distributed promotional material throughout the municipality. The Serb List had the same promotional material for all municipalities in Kosovo that included the names, titles and photos of candidates for councilors.

The election day passed peacefully. The polling stations were open and closed on time, no incidents were reported during the election day. In this municipality, there were cases of non-acceptance of Serbian documents during the voting, although voters were registered in the voter register.

The Serb List won the elections with 12 council seats (2298 or 78.91% of votes), while the Progressive Democratic Party (254 or 8.72% of votes), the Independent Liberal Party (220 or 7.55% of votes) and CI SDP Oliver Ivanović (98 or 3.37 % of votes) won by one council seat. Of the 15 councilors in the local Assembly, 5 are women.

In the elections for the Mayor, Vladica Aritonovic (Serb List) won, by 2439 or 78.25% of the votes, Bojan Arsic (Progressive Democratic Party) won 343 or 11% of the votes, Boban Jevtic (CI SDP Oliver Ivanović) - 212 or 6.80% Ivan Dimić (Kosovo Progressive Force) won 123 or 3.95% of the vote.

On December 15, a constituent session of the local assembly was held where the councilors and the mayor took the oath. On this occasion, the Deputy Mayor was appointed as well as the directors of the municipal departments.

At the first regular session of the local assembly, held on January 31, the committee on policies and finance and the committee for communities was formed. The second regular session was held on February 28. At this session, the financial report for January-December 2017 was discussed and adopted.

## Novo Brdo

A total of 9848 voters were registered in Novo Brdo municipality. 5363 voted in polling stations while 212 voted conditionally. The total voter turnout was 56.61%. There were 5214 valid, 231 invalid and 57 blank ballots.

The Municipal Assembly of Novo Brdo has 15 council seats. 10 political parties proposed lists of candidates for approval: Serb List, Civic Youth Initiative, Progressive Democratic Party - PDS, Independent Liberal Party - SLS, Alliance for New Kosovo - AKR (Aleanca Kosova e Re),

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Democratic League of Kosovo - LDK (Lidhja Demokratike Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Partia Demokratike e Kosovës) and Alliance for the Future of Kosovo - AAK (Aleanca për Ardhmërinë e Kosovës) Civic Initiative for Novo Brdo (Initiative Qytetare për Novoberden) and the Self-Determination Movement (Levizja Vetevedosje).

Five political subjects proposed candidates for the mayor of the municipality: Svetislav Ivanović (Serb List), Ramuš Ahmeti (AKR), Bajruš Imeri (LDK), Fadilj Grbeši (PDK), Avdula Gaši (AAK).

Due to the area that this municipality occupies and the dissolution of the villages where the voters live, the pre-election campaign passed without major public gatherings and was mainly aimed at direct contact with candidates with voters.

The Serb List won 7 council seats (2564 or 51.15% of votes), LDK-3 (962 or 19.19% of votes), AKR-1 (254 or 5.07% of votes), Self-Determination Movement-1 (246 or 4.91% of votes) -1 (241 or 4.81% of votes), Civic Youth Initiative-1 (238 or 4.75% of votes) and SLS-1 (198 or 3.95% of votes). Of the 15 councilors in the Assembly, 5 are women.

Candidate Svetislav Ivanović (Serb List) was elected to the mayor by winning 3097 or 59.40% of the votes, Bajruš Imeri (LDK) won 1373 or 26.33% of the votes, Ramuš Ahmeti -348 or 6.67%, Fadil Grbeši (PDK) -248 or 4.76% Avdula Gaši (AAK) -148 or 2.84%.

The constitutive session of the Assembly where the councilors and the mayor took oath took place on December 14. Nebojsa Arsic (Serb List) was elected as the Chair of the Assembly at the extraordinary session on January 12, while Bajrus Imeri (LDK) was elected his deputy. On January 31, at the first regular session of the Assembly, the committee for policies and finances and the committee for communities were formed.

## Štrpce

A total of 13 781 voters were registered in the municipality of Štrpce. 7619 voters voted not to polling stations, in addition 267 voters voted conditionally. The total response was 57.22%. There were 7628 valid, 189 invalid and 15 blank ballots received.

The municipality of Štrpce municipality has 15 council seats. Three political subjects participated in the election race for councilor mandates. Serb List, Democratic Party of Kosovo - Partija Demokratike e Kosovës and Albanian Citizens' Initiative for Sirinička (Iniciativa Shqipëtare për Syrinikë).

Candidates for the mayor proposed three political subjects: the Serb List (Bratislav Nikolić), the Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (Fikri Hasani) and the CI Albanians for Sirinička (Jonuz Ahmetu). The pre-election campaign in this municipality is mainly guided through social networks and door-to-door. When it comes to public events, the CI Albanians for Sirinička (October 3) and the Democratic Party of Kosovo - PDK (October 18) held a public gathering

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with their followers while the Serb List in the center of Štrpce set up a stand where promotional material (October 12) was being shared. In addition, there were no other public gatherings.

The election day passed peacefully. The polling stations were open and closed on time, no incidents were reported during the election day. In this municipality, there were cases of dismissal of Serbian documents during the voting, although voters were registered in the voter register.

The Serb list won the election, with 74.04% or 5413 votes, while the PDK and the Albanian Initiative for Sirinička won the same number of votes, 12.98% or 949 votes. Accordingly, the Serb List won 11 council seats while the PDK and CI Albanians won 2 council seats in Sirinička. Of the 15 councilors in the local Assembly, 7 are women.

The candidate of the Serb List, Bratislav Nikolić, won in the elections for the Mayor for the third time, winning 5613 or 73.58%. Fikrih Hasani - PDK won 1014 or 13.29% of the votes, while Jonuz Ahmetu (CI Albanians for Sirinička) won 1001 or 13.12%.

The constitutive session of the local assembly where the elected councilors and the mayor took oath took place on December 14. Predrag Grbic, councilor for the Serb List was elected President of the Municipality of Štrpce, while the deputy chairman of the community was not elected because of the fact that the Ministry of Local Government did not receive an explanation on who the position belongs to, since both Albanian parties, PDK and CI for Sirinička won 949 votes. In the meantime, the Deputy Mayor was appointed as well as the directors of the municipal departments. At the regular session, held on January 29, on the proposal of the mayor, the Deputy Mayor for Communities, Fikri Hasani (PDK), was also elected. In addition, members of the Committee for Policies and Finance as well as members of the Committee for the Community were elected.

At the second regular session of the Assembly held on February 26, Deputy Chairperson for Communities, Garip Sahiti (PDK) was elected, the annual report of the Mayor's work was adopted, the financial report of the Mayor for 2017 was presented and the work plan for the work of the Assembly Štrpce for 2018 was adopted.

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## ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

The local elections in Kosovo are organized and implemented by a three-part structure composed of the Central Election Commission (CEC), 38 Municipal Election Commissions (OIK) and 2,505 Electoral Boards (BO).

The position reserved for the Serbian community in the CEC was vacant for a month because Nenad Rikalo withdrew from the position of accepting the position of Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development. The Serb List nominated Stevan Veselinovic, who took the oath on October 10 as a member of the CEC to the President of Kosovo.

Although CEC tried to publish information on its website in the shortest possible time for transparency, this body has often failed to publish the latest decisions on its website, especially those in Serbian.

The CEC did not fully implement the voter education campaign. Prior to the first round of elections, the CEC conducted a ten-day campaign with video broadcasts broadcast in the mainstream media, with the aim of educating voters how to properly fill in ballots in order to reduce the number of invalid votes. Given that RTK 2, as a medium with a national frequency in the Serbian language, is not broadcast in the north of Kosovo, four municipalities with a Serb majority were not exposed to this campaign. The total number of invalid votes in Kosovo was 8.7 percent, which is a slight improvement compared to the 2013 local elections, when the percentage of non-slipping ballots was above 10 percent. In the north of Kosovo, where there were no voter education campaigns, the total number of invalid votes was 24,095, or 2.39 percent.<sup>42</sup> Overall, in municipalities with a Serb majority, there were a total of 1,633 votes (with no votes cast), or 3.06%. The highest percentage of invalid votes in Serb majority municipalities was recorded in the municipalities of Gračanica 5.93%, Zubin Potok 4.87% and Novo Brdo 4.31%. Information, equally important

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42 Local election 2017: North Mitrovica 141 invalid ballots from a total of 8,000 (without conditional votes) - 1.76%, Zvečan 102 od 4,187 - 2.44%, Zubin Potok 186 od 3,819 - 4.87%, Leposavić 146 od 8,089 - 1.81%, Gračanica 486 od 8,197 - 5.93%, Klokot 33 od 2,333 - 1.42%, Parteš 51 od 2,621 - 1.94%, Ranilug 68 od 3,039 - 2.24%, Novo Brdo 231 od 5,363 - 4.31%, Štrpce 189 od 7,619 - 2.48%.

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to both voters and voting boards, about which personal documents are allowed to identify voters during the election day, have been addressed by the CEC very late without any clear instructions. On October 18, the CEC issued two statements, the first for voters in the voter lists, the other for voters who voted conditionally. Article 90 of the General Election Law defines that acceptable documents include a valid identity card, a valid travel document, a valid passport, a valid Kosovo driving license, a valid card of internally displaced persons or a refugee card, as well as expired documents issued by UNMIK. The CEC did not clearly explain whether the identification documents issued by the Republic of Serbia would be accepted in the voter identification in the regular voting. This was also not clarified to the members of the polling boards, which led to uncertainty during the election day, which led to the situation that Serbian documents were not accepted, although there is no legal basis for this.

Local elections were called on June 21 and members of the Municipal Election Boards were appointed on July 3, four days before the final results of the early parliamentary elections on July 8, 2018, and for this reason the CEC had to base nominations for MEC on the results of parliamentary election in 2014, that is, at the previous convocation of the Kosovo parliament. These nominations took into account the political subjects with strong results in the previous local elections, as well as political subjects from non-majority communities with relevant representation at the municipal level.

## Voting outside of Kosovo

The Central Election Commission received 11,813 applications for voting outside of Kosovo, and approved 10,476. The total number of votes by post was 7,621, of which 6,735 were approved, and 886 rejected, due to voting more than once, the lack of an identification document or because voters who did not apply for a vote outside of Kosovo voted. The largest number of votes was from Serbia (2,006), while Gračanica, Klina and Istok were the municipalities from which the most votes were received by post. 33 voters from Klokot (and one voter from Lipjan) filed complaints with the Appeals and Complaints Panel in which they claimed that someone else on their behalf had applied to vote outside Kosovo, thus excluding them from the voter list. These complaints were rejected because they were filed outside the scheduled time limit. Kosovo has no sufficient security measures on the abuse of identity when registering for voting outside of Kosovo, nor an effective legal measure for voters who found out that they were removed from the voter list after publishing the final voter lists.

In the first round of elections, a total of 1,366 votes for three candidates from the Serb community for the Municipal Assembly in the Istok municipality arrived by post.

In the municipality of Klokot, the candidate of the Serb List for the mayor who initially led in the runoff lost by ten votes due to 19 votes outside of Kosovo who voted for the candidate from the Civic Initiative Klokot-Vrbovac.

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## ELECTORAL IRREGULARITIES

The Election Complaints and Appeals Panel is an independent institution responsible for adjudicating election appeals, except for voter lists and media complaints. It consists of 10 judges, two of whom are women, including the President, appointed from the ranks of the Supreme Court judges.

For the first round of local elections, the Election Complaints and Appeals Panel initially partially rejected a complaint about bribery in the municipality of Parteš, which was submitted immediately after the election on October 22. The Panel penalized the Serb List with an amount of 11,000 euros for the 'illegal actions', but rejected the applicant's request to annul the elections in this municipality, with the explanation that the appellant was not prevented from filing a complaint after the official results were delivered. This appeal was subsequently approved, which resulted in a nine-day delay in the CEC to repeat the elections in the municipality of Parteš.

The candidate for the mayor for the Serb List, and then the mayor of the municipality of Parteš, allegedly agreed to pay the potential voters from 30 to 50 euros before voting for him. A recording of a telephone conversation between two men was delivered as evidence. The Complaints and Appeals Panel has found the appeal of the Civic Initiative Narodna Sloga as grounded and annulled the elections for the mayor in the municipality of Parteš in all polling stations. Although the prosecutor arrested two men who were involved in the purchase of votes and ordered them house arrest, but not the mayor, the candidate of the Serb List was reelected as mayor of the municipality in the repeated election.

Complaints regarding votes outside Kosovo in Klokot municipality have been submitted to the Panel on November 24. The candidate for the Serb List for the mayor (in the first round), Strahinja Spasić, lodged a complaint with the Panel during the counting of conditional votes and votes by mail that his observers noticed 19 votes by mail that were identical, or 1 original sheet and 18 copies of votes by post from Serbia. The evidence includes statements of five eyewitnesses, as well as statements by people who voted for this candidate by post, while in the runoff there was no vote for this candidate by post. As Strahinja Spasić was in the lead before counting votes outside of Kosovo, this problem determined the winner of the election race in this municipality. The Panel rejected the appeal of the candidate for the

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mayor of the Serb List as unfounded, because the investigated ballot papers arrived in three different envelopes and did not look like copies.

Regarding the appeal to the Supreme Court, the Serb List filed an appeal against the Panel because it rejected an appeal regarding votes outside Kosovo in the municipality of Klokot. On December 1, the Supreme Court fully supported the Panel's decisions and thereby confirmed the election results in Klokot.

Following the announcement of the final results of the Mayoral elections in Klokot on December 7, the candidate of the Serb List filed another complaint with the Panel on December 8.

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## ELECTORAL OBSERVERS

The Central Election Commission accredited a total of 33,862 observers in order to increase the transparency of the electoral process. More than 29,000 accredited observers were observers of accredited political subjects and of about 3,700 local civil society organizations.

The local elections in Kosovo were observed by the EU Election Observation Mission, which, on the invitation of Kosovo President Hashim Thaci on April 25, 2017, arrived in Kosovo on September 12. The Head of the Observation Mission was Alojz Peterle, member of the European Parliament and former Prime Minister of Slovenia. In the previous period, the EU Election Observation Mission also monitored the Local Elections 2013-14, as well as parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2017.

In addition to international observers, the local elections on October 22 and November 19, 2017 were also watched by a coalition of local NGOs called Democracy at Work, which had its observers in polling stations in Kosovo. About 3,000 observers observed the first round of local elections, while the runoff was observed by 1,784 accredited observers. Democracy at work has published a series of reports and press releases about the election campaign for both rounds of elections. Their info center collected the results that monitors collected in polling stations, and published voting results for both rounds of elections.

Finally, the election process at the level of ten Serb-majority municipalities was followed by the New Social Initiative, which monitored the elections in ten municipalities with a Serb majority.

## GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

None of the political subjects from the Serbian community included women's participation among their priorities in the period of the election campaign. Women were generally insufficiently present in the audience at events. Women did not receive sufficient support from their parties in the pre-election race either.

Women were present both for the local elections in 2017 both in the electoral lists and in the Assembly, but not as a result of the recognition of the importance of their participation in political life, but as a need to satisfy the quota prescribed by the Law on General Elections. In support of this claim is the fact that in 10 Serb-majority municipalities no woman from the Serbian community was a candidate for the mayor, and that no woman from the Serbian community was a list carrier.

Out of 204 candidates for mayors in Kosovo, only 8 were women. Two were in the runoff, but none has won, which is a negative indicator compared to the 2013 election, when a woman became mayor in Gjakova municipality for the first time. None of the political subjects from the Serbian community had a female candidate for the mayor. Also, none of the candidates had a female list carrier. On the other hand, political subjects from the Serbian community have abided by the 30% quota of their lists according to the Law on General Elections. Furthermore, all municipalities have respected the quota of 30% of the gender representation in the constitution of municipal assemblies, and only the municipality of Zvečan chose a woman as the president of the assembly.

The representation of women in the election administration was recorded as very low. Of the 11 CEC members, only the Chairperson of the Central Election Commission is a woman, and only 11% of female members were in the Municipal Boards. In the polling boards, 26% of women were represented, which is less than the promised 40% by political subjects. Only in the municipality of North Mitrovica, besides the municipality of Pristina, more than 40 percent of women in polling boards have been registered.

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## ATTITUDES OF CITIZENS OF MUNICIPALITIES WITH SERBIAN MAJORITY

The new social initiative has conducted a series of online questionnaires in order to understand public opinion, focusing on residents of municipalities with Serb majority. The questionnaires covered topics such as citizens' interest in the electoral process, information on the election process, attitudes on media reporting, pre-election campaigns, as well as the post-election period. The results of the questionnaire can be found in Annex 9, attached to this document.

More than half of the respondents (51.7%) think they are sufficiently informed about the local elections that were held late last year, while 29.9% think they are somewhat informed. In addition to the large number of respondents who think they are sufficiently informed, the majority of respondents showed high interest in the electoral process (86.2%). More than half of the respondents stated that they were most interested in candidates for the mayor (51.9%), while 31% were interested in municipal council candidates. Also, as many as 79.9% regularly or occasionally monitored the election process. Finally, even 3/4 respondents said they would (most likely) vote, while only 8% said they would not go to the polls. Half of the respondents think that the turnout is important, and 45.8% think that other issues such as candidates and programs for which they are voting also matter.

Regarding the disposal of information of the respondents, the majority showed good knowledge of the electoral process. 92.1% of respondents answered correctly when the first round of local elections was held. However, much fewer (39.5%) knew that the runoff of the elections was held one month after the first round. 97.4% declared that they knew all or most of the political entities that were running for elections in their municipalities. 68.4% of the respondents replied correctly that they voted for the councilors by selecting the desired list, and within that list, one candidate, while 13.2% answered that the vote was for a list and 5 councilors within that list, which is the way of voting for deputies in the parliamentary elections on Kosovo.

Over 2/3 respondents said they were following the news of the upcoming local elections, and 58.1% of them were only following news of elections in Serb-majority municipalities. The largest number of respondents (67.7%) were informed via social networks and online media (48.8%), while news on television and radio was followed by 38.7 percent. The majority of

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respondents think that the media could report more about the election process (45.2%), because more than half of them follow the news about current events and candidates and their programs.

60.1% of the respondents believe that the media reported enough about the local elections, and most of them (48.5%) regularly watched the internet portal Kossev. Electronic media (radio and TV) were monitored to a lesser extent, most often RTV Puls (39.4%) and Radio Kontakt Plus (27.3%). Half of the respondents believe that the media could report more about the candidates and programs they offer, and 1/3 thinks that the media could give more space to explain the electoral procedure and rules. Half of the respondents believe that not all media are unbiased in reporting, but most are. TV Most is listed as an example of biased reporting.

86.2 percent of respondents followed the election campaign in their municipalities, and the same number of respondents felt that political subjects were trying to inform citizens of the elections. 62% of respondents believe that the pre-election campaign went in a just and fair atmosphere (with few failures). 41.4% of the respondents believe that all candidates had enough space in the media and other forms of communication with citizens to present themselves to the citizens, while 27.6% think that even if the candidates have enough space, they think that the candidates themselves do not use these opportunities equally, that candidates do not invest equal effort, even though they are paid the same attention. On the other hand, 24.1% of respondents consider that some candidates occupy all time and space, while other candidates are not allowed to present themselves.

With the questionnaire distributed after the election, we came to the conclusion that 96.2% of the respondents followed the electoral process, and half of the respondents were partially satisfied that the pre-election campaign and election day had passed. 84.7% of the respondents are generally satisfied with the post-election atmosphere, that is, the results of the election and the way of addressing political subjects. The largest number of complaints about the election process was related to inadequate/insufficient media reporting (50%), the need for more stands/booths/media presentations in order to better inform the citizens about the candidates and their programs, and the need for greater accessibility of the electoral process to marginalized groups (23.9%).

Slightly fewer than half of the respondents participated in the electoral process in some way: 37.5% volunteered at the local election headquarters, 33.3% assisted the candidates in collecting signatures for candidacy, and 16.7% participated in the distribution of pre-selection material. 68% think that it is important that citizens participate as much as possible in the election process, exchange their views and support candidates for whom they plan to vote, while 24% think that citizens' participation must be impartial. ¾ of respondents would like to have more pre-election content in the upcoming elections, involving citizens and bringing them in contact with candidates, through public debates (64.3%) and public appearances of candidates with the possibility of asking questions (50%).

Only ten percent of respondents think that it is not important that political representatives remain in contact with citizens and involve them in the work of the municipality, and little more than half would like to participate in the work of their municipality in the next four years. A total of hope for lower

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unemployment and half hope for the improvement of the economic situation, while almost half of the respondents are afraid of the deterioration of the political situation and the withdrawal of the institutions of the Republic of Serbia from Kosovo.

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## MEDIA REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During the First and Second round of Kosovo municipal and mayoral elections in 2017, the New Social Initiative (NSI) has closely followed how the media in Kosovo Serb-majority areas were covering the electoral campaign, whether the legislation, as well as the rights of candidates and voters, were duly respected by the media that report in Serbian language in Kosovo.

Within its monitoring activities, NSI found that, overall, the campaign activities, as well as the voter information announced by the CEC were followed and reported by all the monitored media, thus respecting the rights of voters to receive this kind of information, and the right of candidates to impart information. Nevertheless, the right of the respective candidates to impart information were still to a certain extent disrespected by failures of the respective media to report on election-related activities in an unbiased manner, and, consequently, the voters' rights to receive information were not fully respected. Objective reporting may have further been disrupted by attacks that were directed towards certain media, threatening to cause (and causing) serious infringement of media freedom.

Before further analysis of the media reporting during Kosovo's local elections 2017, NSI would like to stress that Kosovo authorities should aim to protect the rights of the media to report freely, by investigating attacks on the media in depth, thus preventing self-censorship, and providing the media with the sense of security which is the main precondition for objective reporting.

Moreover, electoral legislation and rules reinstated by the IMC were violated several times by various media, including the Serbian-speaking ones, in both rounds of elections. Before the first round, the IMC issued the "Instructions for the behavior of the media during the elections", nevertheless, the violations of these rules by certain media show that there is still a need for better promotion of the rules for proper media behavior.

Public broadcaster continues to fail in providing service for all Kosovo communities, thus failing to fulfill communities' rights protected by the Constitution and its own

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constitutional obligation. This is an issue that has particularly disrupted proper voter education across Kosovo, as RTK was the main broadcaster responsible for disseminating voter education material via television. Although some other broadcasters also disseminated voter education campaign via TV, the public broadcaster normally has the crucial role in this process, and should be conducting that role in compliance with the law.

## Serbian-language media landscape

Kosovo has a pluralistic media environment, although the media, similarly to the communities, are divided alongside language barriers, which in various cases may have led to restrictions of the rights of citizens to receive information in their own language. In Kosovo, official languages are Albanian and Serbian, nevertheless, most media outlets broadcast in only one of the languages, mostly due to the lack of capacity, but also due to being focused on targeting specific ethnic groups, and, therefore, they broadcast exclusively in the respective languages of those ethnic groups. For instance, communities are in certain cases deprived of their right to receive information in their own language. For instance, the public broadcaster, i.e. Radio Television Kosovo (RTK) broadcasts in both official languages (RTK1 is the public broadcaster's channel in Albanian, and RTK2 is the public broadcaster's channel in Serbian). Nevertheless, the inhabitants of the four northern municipalities, who are predominantly Serbian-speaking, do not have access to RTK's channels.

The main sources of information for the Serbian-speaking communities are television, online, and social media. Apart from the public broadcaster, private TV channels in Serbian language are RTV Mir, TV Most, TV Herc and TV Puls.<sup>43</sup> Together with the New Press Production, they develop a jointly produced TV program in Serbian language, branded as a program of the Independent TV Network ("Nezavisna TV mreža"). The most popular informative radio stations in Serbian are Radio Kontakt Plus, Radio Kim, and Radio Kosovska Mitrovica, which are also available as online media. As for the news portals, there are KosSev – Kosovo Sever Portal and Gračanica Online.

Most mentioned media have their social media (Twitter) accounts and (Facebook) pages, where the material from their website is automatically posted, and which serve as sources of information for the vast number of population.

## Legal Framework

The right to disseminate and receive information and the freedom of expression<sup>44</sup> are guaranteed by the Constitution which also provides for freedom and pluralism of media and forbids censorship.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, non-majority communities "have guaranteed access to, and

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43 RTV Mir is operating in Leposavić municipality, TV Most in Zvečan, TV Puls in Gnjilane, TV Herc in Strpce, and RTV Kim in Caglavica village in Gračanica municipality. Access to these TV programs is mostly not limited to their respective municipalities.

44 Constitution of Kosovo, Article 40 Constitution of Kosovo, Article 40

45 Ibid, Art. 42

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special representation in, public broadcast media as well as programming in their language, in accordance with the law and international standards.”<sup>46</sup> According to the Constitution, Kosovo authorities are obliged to “take all measures necessary to secure an international frequency plan to allow the Kosovo Serb Community access to a licensed Kosovo-wide independent Serbian language television channel.”<sup>47</sup> In addition, non-majority communities have a constitutionally guaranteed right to “create and use their own media, including to provide information in their language through, among others, daily newspapers and wire services and the use of a reserved number of frequencies for electronic media.”<sup>48</sup>

As defined by the Constitution, the Independent Media Commission (IMC) is an independent body, which regulates the media, “issues licenses to public and private broadcasters, establishes and implements broadcasting policies and exercises other competencies as set forth by law.”<sup>49</sup> Kosovo has a Law on Independent Media Commission, aimed at determining its competencies. The IMC has a specific role during the electoral periods, where it performs media monitoring and ensures that the media broadcasters abide by the election laws and receives complaints against media. As defined by the Law on General Elections, there is a Code of Conduct for all journalists, editors, broadcast managers and publishers, issued by the Independent Media Commission, which shall be applicable to all aspects of campaign coverage and advertising. All complaints that allege violations of the Chapter VII of the LGE by the media shall be forwarded by the ECAP to the IMC for review and adjudication. A violation of the duties and responsibilities of the media may result in sanctions by the IMC.

## Media-related provisions of the Law on General Elections

- All broadcast public media shall air voter education material free of charge as requested and provided by the CEC.
- All media shall ensure that all certified political entities receive fair and equitable coverage during the electoral campaign, and all broadcast media shall ensure fair and equitable access to political discussion shows and debates for all certified political entities.
- Journalists, editors, broadcast managers, publishers and media owners standing as candidates to be elected in a public office, shall not contribute to or otherwise influence the content of their respective media.
- The publication or broadcast coverage of opinion polls and surveys during the campaign period and relating to the elections shall be accompanied by the total number of respondents, the name of the implementing company, the name of the party responsible for it, and the margin of error.
- Political advertising spots shall be no longer than 2 minutes (120 seconds).
- Broadcasters which choose to air paid political advertising are required to offer a minimum

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46 Ibid, Art. 59

47 Ibid

48 Constitution of Kosovo, Art. 59

49 Ibid, Art. 141

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number of minutes of free airtime to each certified political entity during the campaign period.

- No political advertising spots shall air within news programs. For this Article, news programs are defined to include sports and weather components of news broadcasts.
- Broadcasters shall ensure that every political advertising spot is clearly identified as such and shall clearly indicate the organization or individual responsible for it.
- Broadcasters are required to keep separate daily logs, provided by the IMC, of free access provided and advertising time sold to each certified political entity. These logs are to be prepared and submitted weekly to the IMC in accordance with the instructions provided. These logs shall be open for public inspection upon receipt.
- Broadcasters which choose to air paid political advertising shall offer one week prior to the start of the campaign period an unbiased and equitable schedule of free airtime, for political advertising spots, in writing to all certified political entities.
- Private broadcasters which choose not to air paid political advertising time to any certified political entity are not required to offer the minimum free airtime.
- Private broadcasters which choose not to air paid political advertising but do offer free airtime to any certified political entity shall provide similar free airtime to all certified political entities.
- The total time of aired free political advertising spots on one broadcaster shall have a maximum of 20 minutes per certified political entity.
- The price per second charged for paid political advertising spots shall be no higher than the lowest rate charged for that time and day of the week in the past six (6) months. Prohibition of media coverage:
  - o No person or media outlet shall broadcast or publish any material pertaining to campaign activity during the period commencing twenty-four (24) hours prior to the opening of the polling stations until the official close of the polling stations.
  - o No publication or broadcast of opinion poll and survey results relating to the election campaign, including exit polls, shall take place in Kosovo during the period commencing 24 hours prior to the official close of the polling stations and until the official closing of the polling process.

## Media Monitoring – Methodology

Following instructions as provided in the Guidelines on Media Analysis During Election Observation Missions, when monitoring how the media behave during an election, three sets of interrelated rights and duties are to be observed: those of the voters, the parties and candidates, and of the media themselves. NSI will, therefore, through media monitoring during the 2017 local elections period, try to qualitatively determine whether and to what level the following rights are being respected and fulfilled by the respective media:

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Voters' right to receive information;

- Candidates' right to impart information;
- Freedom of expression of the media.

Here, the fundamental question is: were the rights to freedom of expression of voters, candidates, and the media respected during the electoral process? Within the NSI's qualitative analysis of the behavior of media during the electoral period, particular attention will be paid to the following:

- Compliance of the media with Kosovo legislation
- Access granted to political subjects in the mass media
- Whether the coverage of political subjects and candidates in the media is unbiased, equal and equitable
- How and whether the voter education campaign is conducted in non-majority community areas
- Media-related complaints
- Violations of freedom of expression
- Comparison with previous elections - did the situation related to freedom of expression and media coverage improve or get worse?

The following media in Serbian language will be monitored:

- Televisions and radio stations: RTK2, RTV Mir, RTV Kim, TV Most, TV Puls, TV Herc, Radio Kontakt Plus
- Kosovo Sever Portal (portal Kossev)

Due to the limited capacities, monitoring will mostly be performed via Internet, through the online-available content of the monitored broadcasters. News, voter education campaign materials, as well as debates, discussions, shows, involving political subjects, and any election-related information, including complaints processes, will be monitored in a qualitative manner and included in NSI's overall qualitative assessment of the media coverage of 2017 local election.

## Overall assessment & compliance with the legislation

NSI media monitoring has shown that the coverage of election-related events and issues for the Kosovo municipal and mayoral elections 2017 was performed in a substantial manner by all the monitored media. Analyzing their published content, a conclusion can be drawn that most Serbian-language monitored media (RTK2, RTV Kim, TV Most, TV Puls, RTV Mir, TV Herc<sup>50</sup>, Kossev, Radio Kontakt Plus) have regularly been providing information to the voters on the latest developments regarding the electoral process. Moreover, most monitored media have provided

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50 TV Herc did not cover the electoral campaign for the first round of elections, while for the second round TV Herc covered only the campaign for the mayor of Klokot municipality. (Source: IMC reports on the media monitoring of electoral campaigns for the first and second round of Kosovo municipal and mayoral elections 2017)

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space to candidates to announce the beginning of the pre-electoral campaign, present their main plan and program, as well as to express concerns related to the electoral process.

The electoral campaign for the first round of municipal and mayoral elections officially started on September 22. Large part of the campaign of the Serb List and SDP – Oliver Ivanović in northern part of Kosovo, particularly in North Mitrovica and Zvečan, seemed to be negative in nature and directed mostly against one another.<sup>51</sup> CI SDP's leader, Oliver Ivanović, brought up security and intimidation in Serb areas as the main issues to be tackled.<sup>52</sup> Other political subjects mostly focused on other citizens' problems in their respective campaigns, such as unemployment and decreasing demographics.<sup>53</sup> Additionally, the Serb List's campaign in the municipalities south of Ibar river are mainly focused on the 'survival' and return of Serbian population and improvement of living conditions.<sup>54</sup> Campaign for the second round of elections lasted 5 days, between November 13 and November 17.<sup>55</sup> The only Serb municipality that had a second round was Klokot, and there was a runoff in Partes, therefore, although the campaign was followed by the Serb media, the elections were less present in the media than it was the case in the first round. One of the two topics mostly covered by the Serb media was an unexpected move of the Serb List which decided to support their opponent in Klokot.<sup>56</sup> The second topic which gained large space in the Serb media during the campaign for the second round was the alleged vote buying in Parteš, which, according to the candidate of "Narodna sloga", continued in the second round, despite that this was the reason for repetition of elections.<sup>57</sup>

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51 Most: ["SL: Part of the lie of Oliver Ivanović"](#), 28 September, 2017; Radio Kontakt Plus: ["Todosijevic: Milović for 12 years has not managed to solve the issues he mentions today"](#), 26 September, 2017, Kossev: ["Strong Srpska accusations on SDP staff: Ivanović is responding"](#), 28 September, 2017

52 RTV Kim: ["Ivanović: Security is one of the main problems"](#), 22 September, 2017

53 RTV Kim: ["SLS continued its campaign in Donja Gusterica"](#), 26 September, 2017; Kossev: ["CI Central Kosovo in campaign: For proper distribution of income and maintenance of demographic balance"](#), 26 September, 2017; RTV Kim: ["Rasic: The biggest challenge is to persuade the youngsters to stay"](#), 27 September, 2017; RTV Kim: ["SLS in Caglavica: They leave due to inadequate living conditions"](#), 28 September, 2017

54 RTV Mir: ["Popovic: Our goal is survival and better living conditions"](#), 21 September, 2017; RTV Kim, ["S. Ivanović: Priorities are survival and return"](#), 25 September, 2017

55 RTV Mir:

56 RTV Kim: ["The reversal: Srpska gave support to Dejanović"](#), 17 November, 2017

57 RTV Kim: ["Cvetković: Votes are still being bought in Parteš"](#), 13 November, 2017

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The monitored broadcasters informed the public regularly on the matters announced by the CEC, i.e. on various deadlines, publication of lists of candidates,<sup>58</sup> disqualification of candidates,<sup>59</sup> accreditation of observers,<sup>60</sup> campaign,<sup>61</sup> etc., thus respecting the right of voters to receive this type of information.

The main media-related issues that appeared during this electoral period were the following:

- Public broadcaster's voter education campaign limited in northern non-majority communities' areas
- Bias of certain media toward political entities
- Attacks on the freedom of expression of media
- Violations of the election legislation by the media

### Public broadcaster's voter education campaign limited in northern non-majority communities' areas

The public broadcaster, Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK), has its RTK2 television channel that is being broadcast in Serbian language, however, the northern municipalities which are predominantly Serbian-speaking do not have access to RTK2 TV program. In the electoral periods so far, RTK has had a major role in disseminating voter education materials prepared by the Central Election Commission. Nevertheless, the issue of inaccessibility to RTK2 in northern parts of Kosovo has still not been tackled, and remains an obstacle to the fulfillment of the constitutional obligation of the public broadcaster to be accessible to all communities in all parts of Kosovo - Constitution states that all the communities should "have guaranteed access to, and special representation in, public broadcast media as well as programming in their language, in accordance with the law and international standards".<sup>62</sup> Consequently, in the context of 2017 municipal and mayoral elections, the right of voters to equally receive information was not fully respected by the public broadcaster, RTK.

### Media Bias

Reporting related to political subjects certified for the local election has shown differences when it comes to different media. We have analyzed a specific topic to demonstrate how media reporting has reflected bias toward certain candidates.

Namely, withdrawal of candidates from various lists of Kosovo Serbian political subjects is a

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58 TV Most: ["Final list for councilors and mayors published"](#), 31 August, 2017

59 RTV Kim: ["85 candidates disqualified for Kosovo election"](#), 12 September, 2017

60 Kossev: ["Deadline for accreditation of observers for Kosovo local election has started"](#), 6 September, 2017

61 TV Most: ["A one-month campaign for local elections officially starts today in Kosovo and Metohija"](#), 21 September, 2017

62 Constitution of Kosovo, Art. 59

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topic that appears in these elections, as it was the case in the past parliamentary ones. Three candidates from the list of CI SDP Oliver Ivanović in North Mitrovica, withdrew their candidacies with a justification that they were 'misled' by this political subject, and supported the Serb List instead.<sup>63</sup> There were differences in reporting between different media outlets regarding the issue of withdrawals, which lead us to believe that there was bias of the respective media towards certain political subjects. Namely, the issue of candidates' withdrawals and alleged intimidation was covered by most monitored media, however, some provided only limited and selected information, therefore failing to give space to all parties involved to express themselves. In this case, TV Most has shown bias towards the Serb List, by presenting only this political subject's announcements and statements, and failing to present other political subjects' (i.e. CI SDP – Oliver Ivanović's) perspective and announcements on the matter. Although this particular issue, including most of reporting with regard to it, happened before the official start of the pre-electoral campaign, i.e. before September 22, the assessed bias has set the stage for the behavior of the media during the campaign itself.<sup>64</sup> Consequently, NSI compared the election-related news published online by the monitored media, and provided a comparative analysis which we provide below.

## Comparative analysis of media reporting on the withdrawal of candidates and intimidation allegations in Serb communities

Qualitative assessment of the comprehensiveness of media coverage of election-related events and issues within a respective period was made comparing the coverage of a specific topic, by all monitored media. The topic for comparative analysis was chosen after careful consideration of all election-related topics that are most in line with the interests of the Serb communities, and which would, consequently, be, or should be, covered by the Serb media covering these areas.

The comparative analysis was made for the period between August 30th and September 12th, and included all online-published news related to the issue of candidates' withdrawals and alleged intimidation in Serb areas, in order to compare how much and in what manner different media reported on this issue. In the Annex 1, full online media coverage of this for the period between August 30th and September 12 may be found.

The news about the withdrawal of candidates was reported by most of the monitored media. Namely, within this particular period (August 30 - September 12), three candidates from the list of CI SDP Oliver Ivanović in North Mitrovica, withdrew their candidacies with justifications that they were 'misled' by this political subject, and supported the Serb List instead, in almost identical written statements.

Some of the media have undertaken a more succinct investigation or reposted more

63 Kosev: "[New withdrawal of candidacy at Oliver Ivanović: Doctor decided to call voters to vote for Srpska](#)", 19 September, 2017

64 Bias was assessed by a qualitative, comparative analysis of the issue of withdrawal of candidates and intimidation allegations covered by the Kosovo Serb media, presented below

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comprehensive and multi-perspective-based information of the subject of candidates' withdrawal (Kossev, Kontakt Plus, Kim, RTV Mir). They provided multiple perspectives on the issue, including the views of leaders of CI SDP and announcements made by the head of the Serb List. On the other hand, TV Most<sup>65</sup> only informed about candidates' withdrawals, and their statements where they are granting support to the Serb List, without providing any CI SDP's insights on the matter.

A summary of media coverage of the issue of candidates' withdrawals between August 30 and September 12 is provided below:

- Kossev: reports on withdrawal of CI SDP candidates granting support to SL, seeks feedback from stakeholders involved (CI SDP Oliver Ivanović, withdrawn candidates, SL representative), reports on CI SDP leader's allegations on the Serb List having exerted pressure on candidates from his list to withdraw
- Mir: reports on withdrawal of CI SDP candidates granting support to SL, reposts Kossev's report on intimidation allegations
- Kim: reports on withdrawal of CI SDP candidates granting support to SL, reposts Kossev's report on intimidation allegations
- Most: reports on withdrawal of CI SDP candidates granting support to SL
- Kontakt Plus: no report on candidates' withdrawals

According to the provided summary of reporting on the issue of candidate's withdrawals and intimidation, and summary of election-related news provided below in Annex 1, we found that TV Most have provided limited information and have not given equal space to all candidates to express their perspectives on the particular issue of withdrawal of CI SDP's candidates, allegedly resulting from intimidation and pressure. While RTV Mir, RTV Kim, Kossev and Radio Kontakt Plus have been providing multiple perspectives of various political subjects on the matter of withdrawals resulting from alleged intimidations and pressure of candidates, TV Most has mostly been providing only the Serb List's statements on the matter, failing to give voice to others involved.

In addition, there was a Serb List allegation on bias of RTK2 journalists against it, in favor of another political subject. Namely, on September 21, there were reports by the Serb List on the alleged involvement of RTK 2 journalists in political action. As the Serb List alleged, during a political protest in Vitina, the behavior of RTK 2 journalists was deemed unprofessional due to the actions directed against the Serb List. As the Serb List stated, RTK2 TV journalists allegedly suggested to one of the interviewed protesters how to attack the Serb List by holding the paper from which he read the text that, allegedly, in its basis had a political attack on the Serb List. Consequently, the Serb List demanded that the leadership of RTK2 take responsibility and resign

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65 ["The final list of candidates for councilors and mayor has been published"](#); ["Ivaz and Antić withdraw candidatures for councilors of CI SDP"](#); ["Tomislav Dejanović withdrew his nomination for councilor"](#); ["Goran Rakić: What is the credibility of those who lecture us"](#); ["Djuric: Local election in Kosovo is of national importance"](#)

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due to the political actions of its employees.<sup>66</sup> RTK 2 denied the Serb List's allegations, stating that "their journalists are objective and professional,"<sup>67</sup> and that they did not have anything to do with the alleged political action. As far as it could have been followed, this issue ended here, with no related complaints known to have been filed. In addition, the disputed video recording has not been made public.

## Attacks on the freedom of expression of media

Another media-related issue happened to Kossev on Friday, September 29, when their website suffered a hacker attack making it non-operational for several hours.<sup>68</sup> Kossev believe the attack may be related to the publishing of the article "Milović about the "twilight zone": Everyone who thinks differently becomes an enemy,"<sup>69</sup> which was published shortly before the attack. The interviewee was Dragiša Milović, the leader of CI "For our Zvečan". Nevertheless, no investigation on the issue seems to have revealed any further evidence. On October 19, TV Most and Radio Kosovska Mitrovica have also reported that a hacker attack on their websites was ongoing.<sup>70</sup>

In October, media-related incidents continued. On October 16, an optical cable of the private cable operator CD KiM from Zvečan was cut off during the broadcasting of a debate with four candidates for mayors from the northern municipalities (Dragiša Milović, CI for our Zvečan, Oliver Ivanović, CI SDP, Dragan Jablanović, PKS, and Slaviša Biševac, CI For Zubin Potok) which was filmed the day before. The owner of CD KiM, Dragan Mlađović, said that he believes that this act is a "deliberate sabotage linked to the pre-election campaign for ongoing Kosovo elections."<sup>71</sup>

## Violations of the election legislation by the media

Campaign activities were followed by all the monitored media, although TV Most continued being selective, reporting only on campaign-related activities of the Serb List. On September 25, the IMC published the "Instructions for the behavior of the media during the elections"<sup>72</sup>, so as to improve the implementation of the LGE and help the media to behave in compliance with the law. In these instructions, the IMC emphasized the following:

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66 Tv Most: "[Srpska List: Scandalous behavior of RTK2 journalists](#)", 21 September, 2017

67 Kontakt Plus: "[Our journalists are objective and professional](#)," says RTK2 response to the statement of Srpska List", 21 September, 2017

68 Kossev: "[After a full-day hacking attack, KoSsev is functioning again](#)", 29 September, 2017

69 Kossev: "[Milović about the "twilight zone": Everyone who thinks differently becomes an enemy](#)", 29 September, 2017

70 Kossev: "[TV Most and Radio Kosovska Mitrovica: „A hacker attack on us is taking place](#)", 17 October, 2017

71 RTV Kim: "[Zvečan: Optical TV cord cut off during a pre-electoral TV show](#)", 17 October, 2017

72 NKM: "[The IMC's Guide to Media Behavior During the Elections](#)", 25 September, 2017

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- clear identification of campaign videos and audio messages, and clear indication of an organization or an individual responsible
  - rules for assigning free airtime
  - rules for publishing election-related polls
  - rules of the electoral silence.<sup>73</sup>

Serb-speaking media seem to have mostly complied with the legislation and rules established and promoted by the IMC. Nevertheless, in both rounds of elections, warnings and fines were issued by the IMC to several Serbian-speaking broadcasters. TV Most, TV Puls and TV Mir broke several rules, according to the IMC and were fined for those violations.

The IMC media monitoring report for the first round of elections states that TV Most and TV Puls aired political videos longer than two minutes, but after a notification about the violation by the IMC, they complied with the rule prescribed by the Article 49.1, LGE, which prohibits airing of political videos longer than two minutes. Moreover, TV Most and TV Puls were reportedly airing unidentified political videos, which means violation of Article 49.6, LGE, and, again, after the notification by the IMC, they started complying with the law.<sup>74</sup>

Furthermore, TV Most was reported to have violated the Code of Ethics for audio-visual broadcasters, as the language used in the campaign video of the Serb List contains elements of “defamation”. This language, the IMC further states, contains attacks on honesty, integrity or personal characteristics, as well as unfair criticism of other candidates such as CI SDP, CI For our Zvečan and Party of Kosovo Serbs (PKS).<sup>75</sup>

The presence of children in political videos is the violation of Article 9.7 of the Code of Ethics, and it was reported to have been committed by TV Most that aired a video of the Serb List which had children in it, and TV Most did not comply with this rule even after being notified about the violation. TV Most was also reported to have broken the electoral silence.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, there were appeals submitted to the IMC, on the work of TV Most. Oliver Ivanović, the leader of CI SDP, submitted an appeal on the lack of space to present the program on TV Most, as well as on the content of the Serb List video which was, according to Ivanović, not in line with the Code of Ethics. Via email, TV Most delivered proof to the IMC that political entities were notified on time on terms and prices for one second of the broadcasting program. In addition, after a notification sent by the IMC on October 16, TV Most responded that they would try to provide space to Oliver Ivanović until the end of the campaign.

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73 Ibid, pg. 1-4.

74 Ibid, pg. 9-10.

75 Ibid, pg. 10

76 Report on the media monitoring during the electoral campaign for local elections 2017 (first round, 21 September – 22 October, Independent Media Commission (IMC), November, 2017, p. 10-11.

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However, the IMC reports that by the end of the election campaign, Oliver Ivanović was not offered space to present his political program.<sup>77</sup>

Mr. Ivanović confirmed that he was sent the pricelist for programs and advertisements, however, all terms for broadcasting political videos from 17:00-23:00, between 16th and 20th of October were taken. On November 8, the IMC brought a decision that TV Most broke the articles 48 and 49.2 of LGE, by failing to provide equal space to all certified political subjects, and sanctioned TV Most with one thousand (1000) euros fine.<sup>78</sup>

Candidates Dragiša Milović (For our Zvečan), and Dragan Jablanović (PKS), also filed appeals on the Serb List's video. After IMC's notification on violation, TV Most stopped broadcasting this video, but continued airing the one that had children in it, having been broadcast since October 16.<sup>79</sup>

RTV Mir from Leposavić was also fined by the IMC, in the amount of one thousand (1000) euros, for broadcasting campaign videos longer than 2 minutes (120 seconds), i.e. longer than it is prescribed by the law.<sup>80</sup>

In their media monitoring report, the IMC indicated that TV Most and TV Puls were providing more space to the Serb List during the electoral campaign in the first round.<sup>81</sup>

The second round of elections was held on November 19, with a five-day long campaign from 13-17 November. On this day, the second round for mayoral elections was held in 19 municipalities in Kosovo and a runoff was held in one municipality. Violations of the electoral legislation for the second round by the Serbian-speaking media were mostly related to the violation of the electoral silence. Namely, TV Mir, TV Most and TV Puls were found to have broken the electoral silence, and were, consequently, fined by the IMC for their misconduct. On the election day, November 19, TV Mir aired a statement of Dalibor Jevtic, Minister for Communities and Return, in which he calls voters to vote for the Serb List.<sup>82</sup>

TV Puls and TV Most also aired campaign activities during the period of the electoral silence, whereas TV Most aired the Serb List's statement and a video with Božidar Dejanovic, a CI Klokot-Vrbovac candidate for mayor in Klokot municipality,<sup>83</sup> and TV Puls also broadcast a video with

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77 Ibid, pg. 12-13.

78 Decision on the Case No. 2017/200 IMC vs TV Most, Independent Media Commission (IMC), November, 2017

79 Ibid, pg. 13.

80 Decision on the Case No. 2017/208 IMC vs TV Most, Independent Media Commission (IMC), November, 2017

81 Report on the media monitoring during the electoral campaign for local elections 2017 (first round, 21 September – 22 October, Independent Media Commission (IMC), November, 2017, p. 8.

82 Decision on the Case No. 2017/226 IMC vs TV Mir, Independent Media Commission (IMC), December, 2017

83 Decision on the Case No. 2017/224 IMC vs TV Most, Independent Media Commission (IMC), December, 2017

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Božidar Dejanovic, a CI Klokot-Vrbovac candidate for mayor of Klokot, on November 18.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, during the second round, Serbian-speaking media were mostly covering Klokot municipality, as the only Serb-majority municipality where the second round of election took place. TV Most provided more space to the Serb List candidate, Strahinja Spasić, 67.5%, than to Božidar Dejanovic from CI Klokot-Vrbovac, who had 32.5% coverage on TV Most. TV Mir covered only the Serb List activities, whereas TV Puls provided significantly more space to CI Klokot-Vrbovac (71.63%), than to the Serb List (28.36%), according to the findings of the IMC.

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84 Decision on the Case No. 2017/225 IMC vs TV Most, Independent Media Commission (IMC), December, 2017

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# ANNEXES

## Annex 1 - Election Vocabulary

In order to have the public understand the terms used in public in the abundance of information during the election campaign and the conduct of the elections, they need to know their meaning. Here we list some of the basic terms that it is necessary to know in order to participate in the elections in an informed way:

POLITICAL ENTITY refers to a political party, a coalition, a civic initiative or an independent candidate;

POLITICAL PARTY refers to the organization of persons who have voluntarily joined based on common ideas, interests or attitudes, in order to influence the choice of their candidates;

CITIZEN INITIATIVE refers to a group of persons who have voluntarily joined based on equal ideas, interests or attitudes with the aim of choosing their candidate but who do not want to form a political party;

COALITION refers to the agreement of two or more political entities. A coalition must be notified in advance to the CEC;

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE refers to a candidate for a councilor of a municipal assembly or a mayor who is not a member of any political party or civic initiative and who is not running within a political party;

CERTIFIED POLITICAL ENTITY(IES) refers to a political entity, or a political party, a coalition of political parties, a civic initiative and independent candidates that are certified by the CEC, in accordance with the law and CEC rules;

CEC refers to the Central Election Commission;

MEC - Municipal Election Commission;

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BC - The polling center refers to a building where one or more polling stations are located, which are intended for voting and must have a courtyard of 25 meters in diameter from the entrance to the building;

BM - The polling station refers to a room, a hall or similar object intended for voting on election day, with a yard of 25 meters from the entrance to the building where the polling station is located;

BO - Electoral Board

BS - The voter list refers to the list of all voters

KBS - Final Voters List

OBS - Municipal Voters List

The EAP refers to the Election Appeal Panel, the independent body charged with the consideration of appeals and complaints relating to the election process.

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## Annex 2 - Results of the questionnaire

### Online questionnaires on local elections 2017

- The results are in percentage next to each answer
- For multiple choice questions, the percentage for one answer is calculated as the number in relation to the total number of individuals who answered the question, and not the total number of answers (therefore, not all answers total together 100%, but each answer for itself, a percentage of the total number of responses); For example, on question 1, 50 people answered, option A was selected by 25 people, that is 50% (out of the total of 50 people who responded); Option B was selected by 50 people, which is then 100% (out of the total of 50 people who answered it), C was chosen by 5 people, or 10%, etc.

#### Questionnaire 1 - Interest

Total Replies: 87

1. Do you think you are sufficiently informed about the upcoming local elections in Kosovo?
  - a) I think that I am sufficiently informed – 51.7%
  - b) I think I'm somewhat informed – 29.9%
  - c) I think I am insufficiently informed – 14.9%
  - d) I do not think I am informed at all – 3.4%
2. Do you and to what are you interested in the upcoming local election in Kosovo?
  - a) I am very interested – 49.4%
  - b) I am interested to a certain extent – 36.8%
  - c) I am not particularly interested – 10.3%
  - d) I do not care at all – 3.4%
3. What interests you most about the upcoming local election in Kosovo?
  - a) Candidates for the Mayor – 52.9%
  - b) Candidates for deputies in the municipal assembly – 31%
  - c) Programs proposed by the candidates – 40.2%
  - d) Nothing of the above – 12.6%
4. Do you follow the election campaign in your municipality?
  - a) I follow it regularly – 47.1%
  - b) I follow it from time to time – 32.2%
  - c) I seldom follow it – 13.8%
  - d) I do not follow them at all – 6.9%

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5. Do you plan to vote in the upcoming election?

- a) I will vote – 67.8%
- b) I will probably vote – 9.2%
- c) I may vote, I have not yet decided – 9.2%
- d) I will not vote – 8%
- e) I do not want to declare – 5.7%

## Questionnaire 2 – Access to information about elections

A total of 38 responses

1. Do you know when the upcoming local election in Kosovo is held?

- a) 8 October – 0%
- b) 15 October – 0%
- c) 22 October – 92.1%
- d) 29 October – 7.9%

2. Do you know when the runoff (if there is one) is held in the upcoming local elections in Kosovo?

- a) One week after the first round – 7.9%
- b) Two weeks after the first round – 39.5%
- c) Three weeks after the first round – 10.5%
- d) Four weeks after the first round – 7.9%

3. Do you know which electoral lists are participating in the elections in your municipality?

- a) I know all the electoral lists – 57.9%
- b) I only know some electoral lists – 39.5%
- c) I know only one election list – 2.6%
- d) I do not know any single electoral list – 0%

4. Do you know how to vote for councilors in the municipal assembly?

- a) You vote for lists and candidates that are best positioned on the list (chronologically) have the highest chances to become councilors – 5.3%
- b) You vote for lists and within the list for 1 individual candidate for a councilor – 68.4%
- c) You vote for lists and within the list for 3 individual candidates for councilors – 5.3%
- d) You vote for lists and within the list for 5 individual candidates for councilors – 13.2%
- e) I do not know how to vote for councilors – 7.9%

5. Do you know how the municipal council seats are determined for the municipal assembly after the election?

- a) Yes, I am completely familiar with the procedure – 26.3%
- b) I know the basics of the rules for the distribution of places, but not the whole procedure – 39.5%
- c) I assume how the process works, but I am not sure – 15.8%
- d) I do not know how council seats are determined – 18.4%

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## Questionnaire 3 – Election monitoring

Total Replies – 31

1. Do you follow the news of the upcoming local elections in Kosovo?

- a) I follow them regularly – 64.5%
- b) I follow them from time to time – 19.4%
- c) I seldom follow them – 12.9%
- d) I do not follow them at all in general – 3.2%

2. Are you informed about local elections in other municipalities or just about your own?

- a) I am informed of the elections in all municipalities in Kosovo – 19.4%
- b) I am informed of the elections in Serbian municipalities in Kosovo – 58.1%
- c) I am informed only in the elections in my municipality – 22.6%

3. How often do you keep up with the news of the upcoming local elections in Kosovo (mark everything that applies to you)?

- a) Through electronic media - television and radio – 38.7%
- b) Through online media – 48.8%
- c) Through social networks – 67.7%
- d) Participation in public stands/booths of political subjects – 12.9%
- e) Informal - talking with family, friends, acquaintances – 35.5%

4. Do you think that the media (both traditional and online) report enough about the upcoming local elections?

- a) The media regularly report on the elections – 38.7%
- b) The media report on the elections, but could also do it better – 45.2%
- c) The media insufficiently report on the elections – 16.1%
- d) Media do not report on the election at all – 0%

5. What news/information regarding the upcoming election is most often followed (mark everything that applies to you)?

- a) Daily news about current events – 51.6%
- b) News about candidates for mayors and their election programs – 54.8%
- c) News on voting procedures and electoral units (towns) – 16.1%
- d) Official press releases – 16.1%

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## Questionnaire 4 - About the media

### Total Replies - 33

1. Do you think that the media (television, radio and online media) report enough about the upcoming local elections?

- a) The media regularly report on elections – 60.1%
- b) The media report on the elections, but could also do it better – 27.3%
- c) The media report insufficiently about the elections – 12.1%
- d) Media do not report election at all – 0%

2. Which media do you follow most often when you want to get information about upcoming local elections? (Choose everything you follow)

RTK 2 – 18.2%

RTV Puls – 39.4%

RTV Mir – 18.2%

RTV Herc – 3%

RTV Most – 12.1%

KoSSev – 48.5%

Radio Mitrovica Sever – 3%

Radio Kontakt Plus – 27.3%

Radio KIM – 15.2%

Radio Gračanica – 0%

Radio Goraždevac – 0%

New Press production – 6.1%

3. What do you think the media could improve in their work for you to be better informed about the elections?

- a) They could devote more time by explaining the electoral procedure and rules– 36.4%
- b) They could inform citizens about the polling stations and potential changes in the polling stations – 3%
- c) They could report more about the candidates and programs they offer (candidate biographies, interviews with candidates, broadcasts with candidates) – 51.5%
- d) I do not think that the media should improve anything - their current work is excellent – 9.1%

4. Do you think the media have an objective approach to election reporting?

- a) The media are objective when reporting on the elections – 12.1%
- b) Most media are objective when reporting on elections – 33.3%
- c) Half of the media is objective, while half of the media is not objective when reporting on elections – 21.2%
- d) Most media are not objective when reporting on elections – 33.3%

5. If you think that the media are not objective in the election reporting, please indicate the media that

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you think are not objective and in what way?

(written answer):

TV Most x 4

All media that hold the Office for Kosovo and Metohija

Bias

## Questionnaire 5 - Election campaign attitudes

Total responses – 29

1. Do you follow the election campaign in your municipality?

- a) I follow it regularly – 58.6%
- b) I follow it from time to time – 27.6%
- c) I seldom follow it – 6.9%
- d) I do not follow it at all in general – 6.9%

2. Do you think that political entities in your municipality are trying to inform citizens about the elections?

- a) Political subjects are trying hard to inform citizens – 55.2%
- b) Political subjects are somewhat trying to inform citizens – 31%
- c) Political subjects are insufficiently trying to inform citizens – 3.4%
- d) Political subjects do not try to inform citizens at all – 10.3%

3. Do you think that the pre-election campaign is currently in line with the law (fair and just)?

- a) Yes, the election campaign is fair and just for now – 31%
- b) Yes, the election campaign is more fair and just, with smaller failures – 31%
- c) No, the election campaign is not completely fair and just because it has a lot of failures – 13.8%
- d) No, the election campaign is not at all fair and just – 24.1%

4. Do you think that all political candidates (for mayors and councilors) in your municipality enjoy equal attention and space in the public?

- a) Yes, I think that all candidates have equal enough space in the media and other forms of communication with citizens (stands, booths) to be presented to the citizens – 41.4%
- b) Yes, I think that candidates have equal enough space, but I think that the candidates themselves do not use these opportunities equally (candidates themselves do not invest equally even though they are given the same attention) – 27.6%
- c) No, I do not think that all candidates have the same amount of space - some candidates enjoy more attention than other candidates (they have more media space, more stands, more posters ...) – 6.9%
- d) No, I think that some candidates occupy all the time and space, while other candidates are not allowed to present themselves (they are not invited to the media, their posters are removed) – 24.1%

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## Questionnaire 6 - Turnout

Total responses - 25

1. What do you think will be the turnout in the upcoming local elections in your municipality?
  - a) Turnout will be lower than in the previous local elections – 4.2%
  - b) Turnout will be similar to the previous local elections – 50%
  - c) Turnout will be higher than in the previous local elections – 45.8%
  
2. Do you think that high turnout in elections is important?
  - a) High turnout in elections is the most important – 50%
  - b) Turnout is important, but other things such as candidates and programs are also important – 45.8%
  - c) Turnout is not important, more important are other things such as candidates and programs – 4.2%
  
3. Do you plan to vote in the upcoming elections?
  - a) I will vote – 83.3%
  - b) I will probably vote – 8.3%
  - c) I may vote, I have not yet decided – 8.3%
  - d) I will not vote – 0%
  - e) I do not want to declare – 0%
  
4. If you plan to vote in the upcoming elections, have you already decided who to vote for (if you do not plan to vote skip the question)?
  - a) Yes, I know who I will vote for – 87.5%
  - b) No, I still have not decided who I will vote for – 8.3%
  - c) I do not want to declare – 4.2%

## Questionnaire 7 - Post-election

Total replies – 55

1. Have you followed the past local elections?
  - a) Yes, I followed them – 96.2%
  - b) No, I did not follow them – 3.8%
  
2. Did you vote in past local elections?
  - a) Yes, I voted – 86.5%
  - b) No, I did not vote – 13.5%
  - c) I do not want to answer – 0%
  
3. Do you think the electoral process was accessible to all (were the campaigns affordable, taking into account the needs of marginalized groups - women, youth, persons with disabilities)?
  - a) Yes, the electoral process was fully accessible to all – 60.8%

- 
- b) The election process was accessible to certain groups, but not for all – 31.4%
  - c) The election process was not at all accessible – 7.8%
4. Are you satisfied with the election process (during the election campaign and on election day)?
- a) I am completely satisfied – 36.5%
  - b) I am satisfied to some extent – 53.8%
  - c) I'm not satisfied at all – 9.6%
5. Are you satisfied with the post-election atmosphere in your municipality (electoral results, the method of addressing political representatives to citizens, post-election coalitions)?
- a) I am completely satisfied – 46.2%
  - b) I am satisfied to some extent – 38.5%
  - c) I'm not satisfied at all – 15.4%
6. If you are satisfied, to some extent or not at all satisfied (questions 4 and 5), what, in your opinion, should be different or better done (mark everything you think)?
- a) Media coverage of the election could be better/more adequate – 50%
  - b) Candidates for the mayors could have more stands/booths/media presentations in order to make the citizens aware of them and their programs – 34.8%
  - c) The candidates for councilors could have more stands/booths/media appearances in order to make the citizens aware of them and their programs – 37%
  - d) Language/speech in the election campaign could be more decent – 17.4%
  - e) The election day could have been carried out more adequately (indicate if you have noticed problems with the implementation of procedures: accepting documents, keeping of lists, etc.) – 8.7%
  - f) Citizens could be more/more adequately involved in the election process (public hearings with citizens, formal and informal talks, volunteering opportunities in the campaign) – 26.1%
  - g) The election process could be more accessible for marginalized groups – 23.9%
7. Have you, as a citizen, directly participated in the election process?
- a) Yes, I participated – 45.1%
  - b) No, I did not participate – 54.9%
8. If you participated, how did you do it (mark everything related to your participation)?
- a) I assisted the candidate for the mayor to collect signatures for candidacy – 25%
  - b) I assisted a candidate for a councilor to collect signatures for candidacy – 33.3%
  - c) I volunteered at the local election staff – 37.5%
  - d) I helped in the distribution of promotional material – 16.7%
  - e) I promoted candidates and program at the booth – 4.2%
  - f) I participated in public debates, debates and similar activities – 8.3%
  - g) I have appeared in the media – 8.3%

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9. Do you consider it important that citizens be involved and active in the election process?

- a) Yes, I consider it important that citizens should participate as much as possible, exchange their views and support the candidates for whom they plan to vote – 68%
- b) Yes, I think that it is important for citizens to participate, but I think their participation must be impartial (to speak about the impact of turnout, processes, but not about candidates) – 24%
- c) I think that citizens should not be involved and active because the election process should be managed exclusively by political entities – 2%
- d) I do not think that citizens should take part because political attitudes and citizens' choices are a private matter – 6%

10. Would you like to have more election content in the upcoming local elections involving citizens in the process and putting them in contact with candidates?

- a) Yes, I would like to have more such content – 75.5%
- b) No, I think that there is enough of such content – 18.4%
- c) No, I think that such content is unnecessary – 6.1%

11. If you would like to see more election content that involves citizens in the process and put them in contact with candidates, what would that content be (mark everything that applies to you) (if you would not like it, skip this question)

- a) Public appearances of individual candidates with the possibility of citizens asking questions – 50%
- b) Public debate of two or more candidates with the possibility of citizens asking questions – 64.3%
- c) Live appearances on television with audience presence – 23.8%
- d) Live TV appearances with the possibility of telephone involvement of citizens – 21.4%
- e) Live appearances on the radio with the possibility of telephone involvement of citizens – 11.9%
- f) Internet communication with political candidates - questions and answers on sites, social networks and the like – 19%

12. Now that the elections have passed and when local governments have been formed, do you think it is important that political representatives remain in contact with citizens and include them in the work of the municipality?

- a) I think that it is very important for citizens to be involved in the work of their municipality – 90%
- b) I think that it is of some importance that citizens are involved in the work of their municipality – 6%
- c) I do not think that it is important at all for citizens to be involved in the work of their municipality – 4%

13. Would you like to participate in the work of your municipality in the next four years?

- a) Yes, I would like to participate and contribute to the work of the municipality – 55.1%
- b) No, I would not like to participate – 10.2%
- c) Depends on the method of participation – 34.7%

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14. If you would like to participate, what kind of participation would suit you most?

- a) Personal participation (going to meetings, observing municipal assembly sessions, attending tribunals and public debates) – 56.5%
- b) Online participation (municipal website, social network, forums, mobile applications) – 19.6%
- c) Both personal and Internet participation (combination of the above-mentioned methods) – 23.9%

15. What are your hopes for the next four years (mark everything that relates to your hopes)?

- a) I hope that the overall economic situation will be better – 52.1%
- b) I hope that the unemployment will be lower – 75%
- c) I hope that the infrastructure of the municipality will be improved (local roads repaired, sewage fixed, waterworks, etc.) – 33.3%
- d) I hope that municipal structures will adopt policies that improve the daily life of citizens – 29.2%
- e) I hope that municipalities will provide all services that should, for their citizens (issuing of documentation, registration, cadaster) – 29.2%
- f) I hope that political representatives will have better/more frequent communication with citizens – 33.3%

16. What are your fears over the next four years (mark everything that concerns your fears)?

- a) The political situation will be tense – 42.9%
- b) The economic situation will not improve – 44.9%
- c) The temporary councils in the system of the Republic of Serbia will be forced to withdraw – 46.9%
- d) There will be no formation of the Community of Serb Municipalities – 20.4%
- e) Other – 10.2%

17. If you have marked other, please explain briefly?

That the so-called independence of Kosovo will be recognized in these four years x 1

That the demographic structure of the population will change x 2

I am afraid that the youth will leave my municipality x 1

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## Annex 3 - Media annex

### Medium: Kossev (August 30th - September 12th)

[These are candidates in Serbian municipalities for the upcoming Kosovo local elections](#), source Kossev  
The Central Election Commission has announced candidate names for mayors and councilors for the upcoming Kosovo local elections, scheduled for October 22. 91 political subjects applied for the elections. Although candidates from the Serb List have not been known so far, the CEC has in the meantime published their names, as well as the candidates' names of the other parties, confirming that the candidates are also certified.

[Kosovo Local Elections: The first requests for the withdrawal of candidacies have arrived](#), source Kossev  
Just one day after the candidates for the upcoming Kosovo local elections, scheduled for October 22, were confirmed, the Election Complaints Commission confirmed that it had received the first requests for the withdrawal of candidatures. There were eight in total, of which two were for the municipalities in the North of Kosovo, as reported by the Kosovo media.

Candidates for municipal assemblies submitted 8 requests to PZAP for withdrawal from the list of candidates. The candidates are from various subjects and municipalities. PDK - Municipality of Junik, Samoopredeljenje - Lipjan municipality, AAK - Lipljan, Serb List - Municipality of Northern Mitrovica, CI SDP Oliver Ivanović - Leposavić, CI for Albanians of Klokot - Klokot municipality, Social Democratic Party SDO - Peja, AKR - Shtime," said the chairman of the secretariat of this commission, Mulj Desku, as conveyed by the media. Details of the reasons for the withdrawal of candidatures, as well as the names of candidates, however, have not been revealed.

[They withdrew their candidacies from Ivanović with an identical text, supported the Serb List](#), source Kossev

Dalibor Antić withdrew his candidacy from Ivanović's list

Candidate for councilors in the municipality of Mitrovica from CI "Freedom, Democracy, Justice Oliver Ivanović", Dalibor Antić, withdrew his candidacy with this list for Kosovo's local elections scheduled for October 22. Tatjana Ivaz also withdrew her candidacy, supported the Serb list with an identical text They point out that Ivanović's party "misled them". At the same time, support was given to the Serb List.

[Ivanović after the withdrawal of candidacies: Pressure from the Serb List, it is sad what they do to people](#), source Kossev

Ivanović: "Someone who signed the candidacy himself cannot be forced or manipulated"

To the question, does he think that these are pressures of the Serb List, Ivanović replied: "Absolutely."

Nothing is sacred to those who threaten.

"These are people who are dependent with their existence endangered by threats of being fired or dismissed from their jobs (...)" Ivanović said for our portal."

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[Božidar Dejanović is also a candidate for the mayor of Klokot](#), source Kossev

Although it was originally confirmed from the Central Election Commission that only one Serbian candidate from the Serb List was running for the position of the president of the Municipality of Klokot, this commission in the meantime announced the candidacy of Božidar Dejanovic from CI "Klokot Vrbovac". As confirmed by this party, the candidacy was approved on August 31, the day after the CIK published the first lists of confirmed candidates. Thus, now on the list of candidates for Mayor Klokot there are two Serbian and three Albanian candidates.

[Another candidate for councilor "was misled": Tomislav Dejanović from Milović's list supported the Serb List](#), source Kossev

With a somewhat altered content in the text, the director of the Central Election Commission Miradija Mavrići, compared to last week - another candidate for councilors, this time, on the list of CI "For our Zvečan" led by Dragiša Milović - Tomislav Dejanovic, requested the withdrawal of his candidacy. Like candidates for councilors, Tatjana Ivaz and Dalibor Antić, this candidate also felt that his political subject "has misled him." He also supported the Serb List - as "the only right, and the honest fighter for the survival and rest of the Serbs".

[The deadline for the accreditation of observers for local Kosovo election has begun](#), source Kossev

The deadline for the submission of requests for the accreditation of observers for the upcoming Kosovo local elections started. The request may be submitted by certified political subjects, non-governmental, governmental and intergovernmental organizations, international organizations dealing with elections and protection of human rights, representatives of "foreign countries" and the media, the Central Election Commission announced.

[Ivanović and Milović seek urgent reaction from Serbia's top and security authorities in Kosovo: Pressures, torture of employees, illegal lists...](#), source Kossev

"The candidates for councilors for the upcoming Kosovo local elections - who are not on the Serb list are pressured and tortured to withdraw their candidacies. They are employees in health care and education, and even in private companies. It is a criminal offense for which severe sentences are prescribed. So far, four candidates have withdrawn their candidature from the list of Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović. People have appeared, making illegal lists. This is the last moment for the "madness" to stop and the last moment that all relevant Kosovo security institutions to react - from KFOR, and to others," are the key messages of the two candidates for mayors and carriers of the list in North Mitrovica and Zvečan - Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović.

[Milović and Ivanović: The doctor had his specialization aborted, we ask the citizens to withstand the pressure](#), source Kossev

The biggest pressures, they say, are suffered by professionals in the fields of education and health care. Employees in education, who work under a contract - they are interrupted, and in their towns, they state that "party staff" are brought in. These political entities, as they previously announced, filed three criminal charges against NNs for allegedly pressing candidates who withdrew their applications.

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[Goran Rakić on Oliver Ivanović: He was silent while Serbian villages were burning, today he is a marginal personality](#), source Kossev

“Pathological self-love” of Oliver Ivanović. “He hectically strives to attract public attention.” He builds the program on “a paranoid belief that somebody is threatening him and that the Serbian newspaper has been plotting against him and his ambitions”. This was assessed by the first man of the city - the municipality of Mitrovica, Mayor Goran Rakic, who is also the first man of the most significant party of the Kosovo Serbs - Serb List.

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## Medium: RTV Kim (August 30 - September 12)

[Mitrovica: The candidature for councilor has been withdrawn by SDP member](#), source Kim

Dalibor Antić, CI SDP candidate for councilors in the municipality of Mitrovica, withdrew his candidacy from this list, which will take part in the local elections on October 22 and gave his support to the Serb List. In his explanation given to the Central Election Commission, as well as the one forwarded to the media, Antić said that he was “misled” and that he decided to support his previous rivals from the Serb List.

[Ivanović: Antić was forced to change his mind](#), source Kim

“If Dalibor Antić had stayed in his position, his existence would probably be jeopardized. This requires an urgent intervention by the prosecution and the sanctioning of those responsible,” said the CI SDP leader Oliver Ivanović in a statement for RTV Kim.

Ivanović believes that this is a classic pressure on candidates who are subject to this because of personal fears. He thinks that a procedure must be launched against “such methods of persuading people to change the political attitude” by saying that he will present allegations that are completely untrue. Oliver Ivanović underlined that all who joined the CI SDP came on their own initiative and offered to be candidates, and that a sudden change in the attitude suggests that they were under great pressure. “Someone has to answer for such things. I’m worried that there is no reaction from the prosecution because someone has to be arrested and sanctioned for this. Such things are not permitted under Serbian or Kosovo law,” said Oliver Ivanović.

[Zvečan: The candidature for councilor has been withdrawn](#), source Kim

Tomislav Dejanović from Zvečana decided to withdraw his candidature for the position as a councilor in this local self-government. Dejanovic wants to withdraw the candidacy because he has been misled by the civic initiative “For Our Zvečan”. „I demand that this request is instantly accepted because I do not want my name to be used for a campaign aimed at breaking the unity of the Serbian people in this region,” the statement said. Dejanović states that at the same time he expresses public support to the “Serb List”, which he claims to be a true fighter for the survival and remaining of Serbs.

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[Ivanović: If pressure continues on candidates, elections are pointless](#), source Kim

The most difficult cases of pressure on candidates for councilors in the upcoming local elections are in the municipalities of North Mitrovica and Zvečan, says Oliver Ivanović.

Ivanović says that the torture of all candidates from this civic initiative who reported the participation in the elections is being carried out. It particularly refers to those employed in the institutions of the Republic of Serbia. "What's weird and sad is that these people changed their minds under terrible and extraordinary pressure," says Ivanović.

[Ivanović and Milović: Electoral atmosphere, matter of life and death](#), source Kim

Candidates for the mayors of North Mitrovica and Zvečan, Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović, claim that their candidates are in danger and are existentially threatened and therefore seek the reaction of the authorities, due to their application for participation in local elections.

"First of all we talked about pressures related to work, loss of work, and I do not exclude any physical danger, that someone will turn against them. Throwing bombs as it was, burning cars, endangering their property, threatening their children".

Milović reminded that the incidents took place a month ago with the burning of his and Oliver Ivanović's car. He claims that the investigation of these cases has not progressed, and that they receive the same information from the police "that the investigation is ongoing".

[Rakić: Ivanović protected his position while Serbs were being expelled](#), source Kim

"Oliver Ivanović gave away parts of Kosovska Mitrovica to extreme Albanians by agreeing on the so-called zone of trust, and gained business premises for himself in the city center and apartments in Belgrade. In the period from 2000 to 2008, as a deputy in Pristina, he was silent protecting his position and interests while expelling the Serbs. He was also aware of the burning of Serb villages and Serbian monasteries throughout Kosovo and Metohija in the March 2004 pogrom. This is the balance of man and politician Oliver Ivanović, and therefore there is nothing worse than his attempts to convince Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija that some other Oliver Ivanović had done all these things or that they did not even happen at all," the statement said.

[PKS congratulates Vucic's coalition with Haradinaj](#), source Kim

"The Kosovo Serb Party repeatedly attacked by Aleksandar Vucic and official Belgrade for the non-existent cooperation with the "war coalition" in Kosovo, congratulates Vucic and the Serbian government on the Ramush Haradinaj coalition," the PKS said in a statement.

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## Medium: RTV MIR (August 30 - September 12)

[Press Release Mitrovica: Two candidatures for councilors from SDP withdrawn](#), source RTV MIR, RTV Kim Dalibor Antić and Tatjana Ivaz, CI SDP candidates for councilors in the municipality of Mitrovica, withdrew their candidacy from this list, which will participate in the local elections on October 22 and give support to the Serb List.

[Ivanović: Candidates for councilors are forced to change their mind](#), source Kossev

[Ivanović and Milović: Electoral atmosphere, matter of life and death](#), source Kim

[Rakić: Ivanović protected his position while Serbs were being expelled](#), source Kim

[The deadline for the accreditation of observers for local Kosovo election has begun](#), source Kim

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## Medium: Kontakt Plus (August 30 - September 12)

[Here is who you will vote for in the October election](#), source Kossev

The Central Election Commission has announced candidate names for mayors and councilors for the upcoming Kosovo local elections, scheduled for October 22. 91 political subjects applied for the elections. (...)

[Ivanović and Milović: Torture and pressure on candidates for councilors; We expect the immediate reaction of the top Serbian and security organs in Kosovo](#), source Kontakt Plus

Representatives of Civic Initiatives SDP and “Together for our Zvečan” candidates for mayors and list carriers in North Mitrovica and Zvečan Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović warned today against the tremendous pressure which candidates for councilors are submitted to, from their lists for the upcoming Kosovo local election, especially in the municipalities of North Mitrovica and Zvečan.

[The deadline for the accreditation of observers for local Kosovo election has begun](#), source Kossev

[Rakić: Ivanović protected his position while Serbs were being expelled](#), source Kim

President of the Serb List, Goran Rakić, said that in some subsequent elections the people would clearly say what they think about Oliver Ivanović, his political weight and his human qualities.

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[Ivanović and Milović: Complaints submitted due to pressure on candidates](#), source Kontakt Plus

Representatives of Civic Initiatives SDP and “Together for our Zvečan” candidates for mayors and list carriers in North Mitrovica and Zvečan Oliver Ivanović and Dragiša Milović announced today that they filed charges against NN executives due to pressure on candidates for councilors who withdrew their candidature from these two lists.

[The local election draw has been determined](#), 29. is the Serb List, source Kontakt Plus

On the basis of the draw, the Serb List will be under number 29, Vetvendosje 10, Alternativa 30, Nisma 31, AKR 34, LDK 47, AAK 50, PDK 94, etc.

The Central Election Commission confirmed a total of 91 political entities for local elections on October 22, of which 35 were political parties, 30 civic initiatives and 25 independent candidates.

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## Medium: TV Most (August 30 - September 12)

[The final list of candidates for councilors and mayor has been published](#), source Most

[Ivaz and Antić withdraw candidatures for councilors of CI SDP](#), source Most

In both requests submitted to the media, it is alleged that “this political subject misled them” and that their names “were used for campaigns, by which people from this political subject violate the unity of the Serbian people for personal interests”.

At the same time, Ivaz and Antić give public support to the Serb List, which - as it is claimed in the request - is “the only one fighting for the survival and remaining of Serbs in this region”.

[Tomislav Dejanović withdrew his nomination for councilor](#), source Most

“I demand that this request be instantly accepted, because I do not want my name to be used for a campaign aimed at breaking the unity of the Serbian people in this region,” Dejanovic said in the request. “At the same time, I publicly support the Serb List, which is the only true and honest fighter for the survival and remaining of Serbs,” he added.

[Goran Rakić: What is the credibility of those who lecture us](#), source Most

The Mayor of North Mitrovica, Goran Rakić, reacted to a statement made by Oliver Ivanović to the Belgrade media, referring to the Serb List.

[Djuric: Local election in Kosovo is of national importance](#), source Tanjug, Blic

SNS Vice President Marko Djuric said today that the upcoming local election in Kosovo and Metohija is of national importance and that the state of Serbia only supports the Serb List in this election.

- We are expecting victory in all ten municipalities with a Serb majority, which will once again confirm the strength of the Serbian state policy, which received 90% of the support of Serbs in Kosovo in the provincial elections in June - said Djuric.

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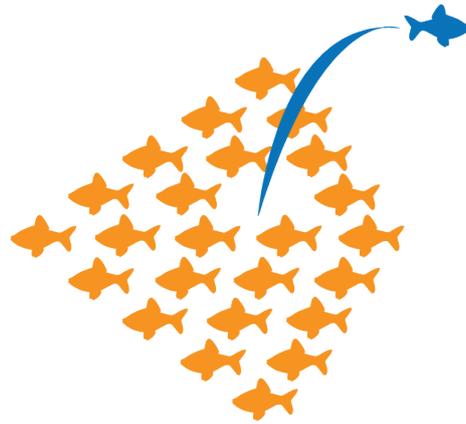
## Medium: RTV PULS (August 30 - September 12)

Djuric: [Local election in Kosovo is of national importance](#), source Tanjug, Blic

Ivanović and Milović: [Complaints submitted due to pressure on candidates](#), source Kontakt Plus

[The deadline for the accreditation of observers for local Kosovo election has begun](#), source Kontakt Plus





**NEW SOCIAL INITIATIVE**

# REPORT

| **ON LOCAL ELECTIONS 2017**

“This grant is financed by the project Democratic Society Promotion (DSP) – financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (DANIDA) and managed by the Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF)”