

Mostar, 18 January 2021

Honourable,

I address you again as partners in building a stable, democratic, and prosperous European Bosnia and Herzegovina, and due to concerns regarding the events surrounding local elections in the City of Mostar. Local elections in the City of Mostar were held on December 20th and were welcomed as a long-awaited and much-needed step forward. I believe we share a mutual concern about the fact that the results are still unknown, even a month after the closing of the polls! Instead of the results we should have had immediately after the elections, they are still being manipulated in various ways, which is unacceptable! A chain of irregularities which I warned about in previous correspondences, of which you yourself are also aware, has brought the fate of the entire election process into great uncertainty. This is why I warned international partners about the necessity of strict control over the election process, all of which was done to protect and restore the integrity of local elections and to regain the democratic splendour that belongs to this city. Holding that the most responsible factor in conserving the integrity of the election process is the Central Election Commission (CEC) and then the City Election Commission of the City of Mostar, I called for the irrevocable resignation of all of its compromised members, as it is only through the renewed dignity and authority of this institution that the deeply disturbed citizens' trust in the institution of democratic elections can be regained. Obviously, bearing in the mind the gravity of the situation, resignations themselves cannot suffice. Prosecutors' offices in charge have also been brought into the matter, alongside an abundance of evidence for the purpose of prosecution and precise determination of responsibilities within this institution as well as participants outside of it. Today, it is crystal clear that the manner in which the Central Election Commission was elected, contrary to laws and prescribed procedures, was already in itself an introduction to the devastation of the election process which we, unfortunately, witness today. To be precise, these are acts of aggravated theft and deprivation of the democratic rights of our citizens. This is why I firmly believe that the forthcoming court processes in this part must be exposed to the court of public, so as to encourage public awareness of the harmfulness and inadmissibility of such actions and the abuse of state institutions such as CEC for the implementation of unlawful actions. CEC is the institution that bears legal obligation and responsibility for the organization and realization of elections and, should we all easily get over this, and I do not see a way in which that would be possible, the question remains – what chance and perspective do the next 2020 General

elections stand?! As you know, the Croatian National Assembly BiH has filed criminal charges with the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, now further supplemented by the knowledge that the fictitious voters began returning to their real addresses following the end of elections. It is due to this that the Croatian representatives requested the annulling or the repeating of the election process in the city areas in which the fictitious registrations appeared. It is estimated that the political party that I am the President of as well as its can candidate for the position of the mayor were undoubtedly stolen of close to 2000 votes by the committed election frauds. This is confirmed by analyses as well as our pre-election studies, which precisely predicted 14 or 15 mandates for HDZ BiH in the City Council. With regards to the newest developments and the deep compromising of the election process, I need not specifically explain why these elections are a complete miss. As a citizen of Mostar myself I deeply regret that the new beginning for our city has been gravely brought into question, in a moment of great responsibilities and challenges in our internal and foreign-political plan. In that sense, it is my duty to remind and warn that the deadline for the realization of the entire Mostar agreement expired one month ago – an agreement in which you yourselves were witnesses! Bearing in mind the foregoing as well as the full gravity of the situation we have been brought in by the organized criminal acts, those that do not only represent a challenge for the democratic perspective of Mostar but also of the country as a whole in light of the upcoming 2020 General Elections, I once again call on you to, as recognized friends of BiH, aid in regaining the integrity of Local elections in the City of Mostar and stand up for the unblocking of a part of the Mostar agreement which pertains to the changes of the Election Law in aims of implementing the U 23/14 Decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the democratic representation of constituent peoples. You can do this by taking a more assertive stance and stronger engagement in these questions of vital importance for the salvation of the rule of law, the election will, and the democratic freedom of our citizens. I am convinced that you will, in the joint goal of bringing about a functional and European BiH, swiftly and without hesitation demonstrate your indisputable commitment to the protection of principles you also advocate in your own doing.

With expressions of the highest considerations,

**HNS BiH President
Dragan Čović, PhD**