



Inter-Party *Dialogues*

European Parliament – Narodna Skupština

CONCLUSIONS

2nd phase of the INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE

9-10 July 2021, Belgrade

(1st round)

The first round of the second phase of the European Parliament facilitated Inter-Party Dialogue was held on 9-10 July 2021 in Belgrade. The Dialogue took place against the backdrop of the European Commission 2020 report on Serbia and the 2019-20 European Parliament Report on Serbia underlining the key role of the European Parliament and the National Assembly of Serbia in providing an inclusive platform to foster cross-party consensus on improving the level-playing field for electoral competition ahead of the next elections.

Under the auspices of the Serbian National Assembly and the European Parliament, the Dialogue brought together leaders and representatives of parliamentary groups as well as opposition parties, platforms and movements around the same table. The Dialogue took stock of the comprehensive bilateral consultations with the leaders of the parliamentary groups and the representatives of opposition parties, platforms and movements from 19 April to 30 June 2021.

The European Parliament and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia, in their capacities as facilitators of the Inter-Party Dialogue, welcomed the willingness of a very broad spectrum of political forces in the country to commit to the process. They noted with satisfaction the constructive attitude demonstrated by the representatives of all parties, platforms and movements gathered around the same table during the Dialogue. In that context they underlined the responsibility of all political stakeholders in Serbia to actively contribute to a less divisive and more inclusive political environment.

The Inter-Party Dialogue recognised the ongoing challenges related to the integrity of the electoral process in Serbia. In this context, it underlined the need for further improvements in line with the recommendations included in the OSCE-ODIHR election observation reports. Furthermore, it emphasised the need for a full, effective and sustainable implementation of the commitments made during the first phase of the Inter-Party Dialogue as a crucial contribution to ensure free and fair elections in full accordance with OSCE principles and commitments.



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The Dialogue paid specific attention to the evolution of the media situation in the country. It stressed the importance of **equitable access to media, media pluralism as well as media ethics and standards**, particularly in the context of pre-electoral and electoral campaigns.

In this regard, the Inter-Party Dialogue underscored the important role of national public broadcasting as one of the key factors in providing a level playing field for all political actors including national minority parties in the country. The national public broadcaster should effectively implement the legislation and fulfil its legal obligation to present impartial, complete and objective information to citizens.

In order to address thoroughly the challenges, which exist in this field and to contribute to effective remedies, representatives of RTS-RTV and REM shall be consulted in preparation of the next round of the Inter-Party Dialogue.

The facilitators of the Inter-Party Dialogue renewed their commitment to support the **integrity of the electoral process**. The discussions held at the Inter-Party Dialogue reflected a broad will among all participants to secure fair conditions for all, including party and campaign finances, role of public officials in the electoral campaign and the strengthening of the capacities of the electoral management bodies.

Equally, the Inter-Party Dialogue underlined that ensuring effective media **oversight mechanisms**, with particular attention to electronic media, are also vital to instil confidence and trust from all sides in the electoral process. The strengthening of the existing mechanisms, including REM, has been a matter of some discussion.

The Inter-Party Dialogue took note of the desire to achieve tangible results that can be implemented effectively ahead of the next electoral campaign. In order to use the momentum generated by the Dialogue, the facilitators will submit a proposal for a **working document on electoral conditions**.

The working document will explore possible improvements in the areas of equitable access to media, integrity of the electoral process and ensuring effective oversight mechanisms. The working document will *inter alia* take note of all relevant contributions submitted so far, the results of the bilateral consultations as well as the discussions held during the Inter-Party Dialogue on 9 and 10 July. Equally, the participants of the Inter-Party Dialogue are invited to submit any further contributions to the facilitators by 1 August 2021. The contributions shall contain achievable proposals to improve, in the short term, the conditions ahead of the next elections. The facilitators will consult civil society organisations on these matters.

The facilitators will share a draft working document with all participants by 1 September 2021 with a view to reaching an agreement on the working document during the next Inter-Party Dialogue or at least six months before the next elections.

Inter-Party Dialogue will reconvene for a further round on 17 and 18 September 2021 in Belgrade.