

BOSNA I HERCEGOVINA
CENTRALNA IZBORNA KOMISIJA
SREDIŠNJE IZBORNO POVJERENTVO



БОСНА И ХЕРЦЕГОВИНА
ЦЕНТРАЛНА ИЗБОРНА КОМИСИЈА

**Parliamentary Electoral Dialogue:
Challenges and needs for holding out-of-country voting for Ukraine's post-war elections
30 and 31 May, 2023, the European Parliament, Brussels**

CASE STUDY
out of country voting
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Content

- Country context
- Post – war elections and Legal framework
- Post – war elections and transition to domestic institution
- Lessons Learned

The war in BiH (1992-1995)

- Massive displacement – over 50% of total population
- Estimated 1.3 million refugees
- Estimated 1.2 million Internally displaced
- Lot of infrastructure completely destroyed

Towards the 1996 elections

Mandate - Organization For Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)

Tasks

Election of civil authorities

Reconciliation, peacebuilding and state building

Annulling effects of ethnic cleansing (promoting return and property repossession)

Challenges

No freedom of movement

No accurate civil registers

Post – war elections in BiH

First post-war election in BiH - 1996 General Elections

Registration options for IDPs:

1. To vote in person or in absentee for municipality of his/her residence from 1991 (where they lived before the war).
2. To vote for municipality of displacement
3. To vote for municipality where they intend to live.

Registration options for refugees (out of country voters):

1. To vote by postal vote for municipality of his/her residence from 1991.
2. To vote for municipality where they intend to live (only in person).

Out-of-country voting 1996

- Rules and Regulations on OCV published in August 1996
- Establishment of Refugee Elections Steering Group
- OCV main office in Vienna
- MoU signed with host countries regarding financial support for the Vienna office operations
- OCV operation closed on September 30, 1996

Second post-war election in BiH – 1997 Municipal Elections

- Established first post-war voter registration process - active registration.
- Voters were assigned to polling stations.
- Counting process conducted at polling stations.

Challenges:

- Complex registration procedure due to lack of valid documents.
- Mistakes in voter register due to the wrong entry in Voter registration center in municipalities.
- Introduction of tender ballot for those voters whose names were not found on VR.
- Lack of transparency at the polling station level.

OCV Statistics 1996-1997

Displaced Bosnians By Host State

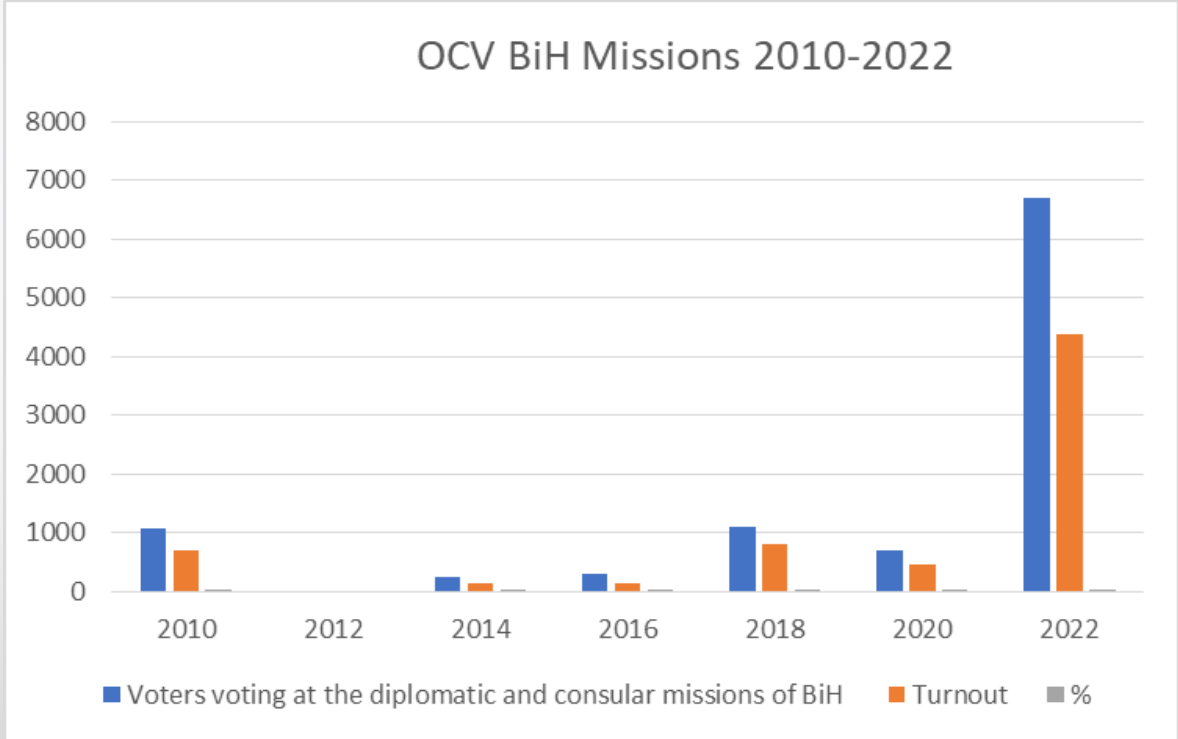
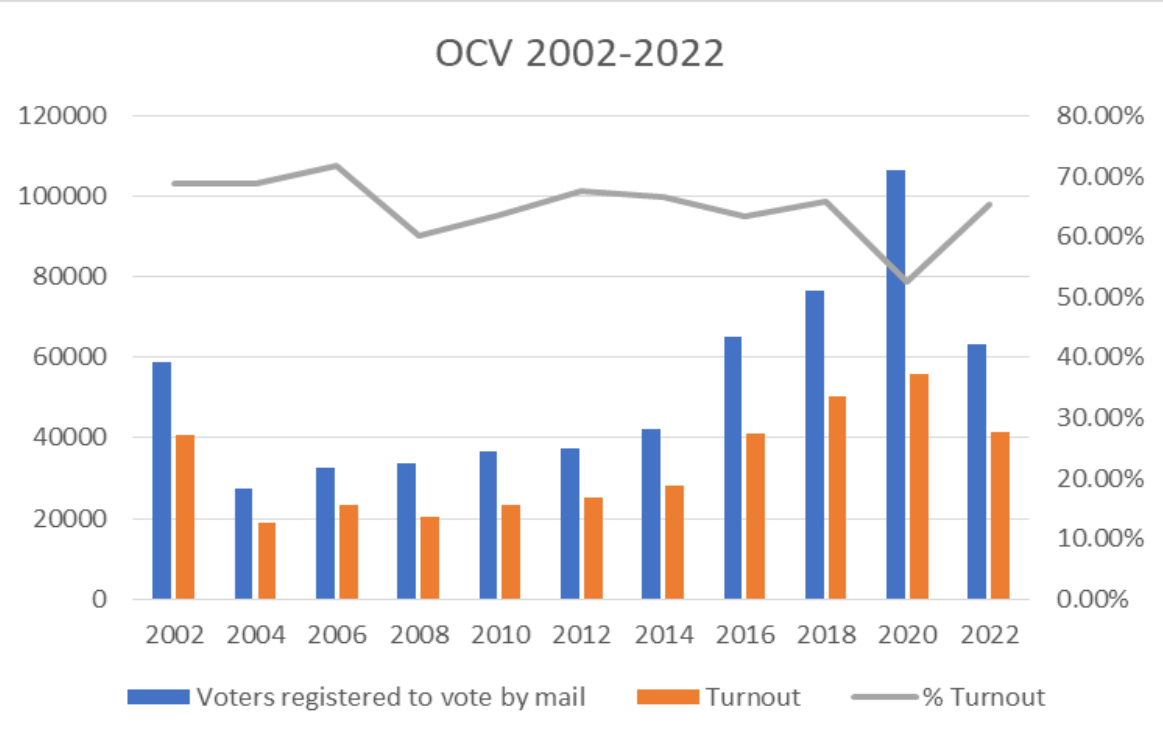
Country	1996	1997
Germany	335,000	335,000
Croatia	160,300	47,000 ⁸
F.R. Yugoslavia	250,000	241,000
Austria	73,000	8,300
Sweden	55,000	59,000 ⁹
Switzerland	25,000	13,000
Netherlands	25,000	6,200
Slovenia	10,300	5,300
Denmark	19,000	1,400
United Kingdom	13,000	unclear
France	12,000	7,400
Norway	11,000	12,500
Italy	10,000	9,285
IDPs in Fed. BiH ¹⁰	450,000	450,000
IDPs in RS	300,000	366,000
Totals	1,748,600	1,506,385

OCV Balloting for 1997 BiH Municipal Elections¹⁰⁵

Location	Registered	Voters Eligible	Voted	Turnout (%)
Vienna (Diaspora)	273,734	267,396	219,661	82.14
Croatia	61,720	56,857	46,500	81.78
F.R. Yugoslavia	73,153	68,000	35,000	51.47
Total	408,607	392,253	301,161	76.77

IOM OCV Final Report, p. 14-15. The Vienna HQ processed all registration forms and ballots for the Bosnian Diaspora.

OCV 2002 - 2022



Problem – Solutions

- Inaccurate voter register – ongoing registration effort until 2002.
- Lack of trust in electoral processes – deployment of international supervisors.
- Initially no freedom of movement across entity boundary lines – international adjudicators verify document in places of origin.
- Refugee (OCV) voting – international effort – IOM/OSCE
- Sustainability – constant investment in training of local experts; once the process was strengthened – handed over to domestic authorities.

Lessons Learned in BiH and Recommendations for Ukraine

Bosnia and Herzegovina Lessons Learned

- All eligible voters were given the right to vote.
- Organization of elections for IDPs and refugees is demanding and complex process (in legislative and practical sense).
- Continuous update of the relevant registry of IDPs is essential.

Recommendations for Ukraine

- The Peace Agreement should contain Annex on elections in Ukraine having in mind a very large number of refugees and displaced persons from Ukraine;
- Following signing of the agreement it is necessary to plan a large-scale international conference: How to conduct elections in Ukraine after peace is established;
- OCV and IDP registration and verification to be done simultaneously with the passive/active registration through the diplomatic and consular missions of Ukraine for the OCV and through local registration centers in the country for IDPs.



Thank you for your attention !

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