[BA] Media Coverage of The April 2000 Municipal Elections

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The Independent Media Commission (IMC) monitored 58 radio and television stations since the beginning of the election period. The municipal elections took place on 8 April 2000. Thirty-three of the broadcasters monitored were located in the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (F BiH), and the remainder in the Republika Srpska (RS). In general, only news programming and news-related information were subjected to the monitoring. Additionally, so-called spot monitors monitored 16 broadcasters for both news and non-news programming in areas of general concern. Furthermore, IMC mobile monitoring crews (field monitoring) monitored 26 broadcasters in order to get a picture of how small broadcasters, i.e., with limited coverage area, comply with the IMC Code on Media Rules for Elections and Guidelines for Elections.

The IMC received 43 enquiries or complaints from broadcasters and 67 enquiries or complaints from political units related to IMC Code and Guidelines for Elections. The IMC has requested 40 broadcasters to provide program recordings and nine broadcasters to provide written records of political programming.

In its Interim Report the IMC makes two key findings: (1) political units mostly failed to fully capitalize on their rights to fair coverage and equitable access by broadcasters, and (2), many political units apparently chose to obtain media coverage by broadcasters, which they perceive to be from their own ethnicity. "Political unit(s)" includes political parties and independent candidates.

Even though the IMC Enforcement Panel found five broadcasters (HTV Mostar and HRTV Herceg-Bosna, both from West Mostar, and ATV Banjaluka and TV Bel Banjaluka both from RS and RTVBiH Sarajevo) in violation of the IMC Election Rules, and ordered them to pay a fine in the amount ranging from KM 400 to KM 2,000 (one Konvertibilna Marka - KM equals one DEM), the IMC is, for the most part, satisfied with the efforts of broadcasters to abide by the Code and Guidelines for Elections.

Independent Media Commission, News Release of 27 April 2000.

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