

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Activists of KRIIK observe tomorrow's Parliamentary Elections in Montenegro, as part of the International Election Observation Mission of ENEMO**

Tomorrow, on 30 August 2020, Montenegro will hold parliamentary elections, as well as elections for the municipal assembly in five municipalities.

The stakes of these elections are particularly high, especially regarding aspirations of Montenegro to joining the European Union, an aspiration shared by many countries of the region, as well as for the legitimacy of the Parliament, considering the contestation of the fairness of the previous 2016 elections by the opposition and subsequent boycott of the parliamentary works.

The elections are taking place against the backdrop of overall public distrust in state institutions and growing division within the society over national identity issues.

The ruling Democratic Party of Socialists has been in power uninterrupted since 1991. Holding elections under the situation of the global COVID-19 pandemic poses further challenges.

Of the twelve candidate lists that applied to contest the elections, seven submitted by political parties and five by coalitions, the State Election Commission registered eleven, five of which representing national minorities, two Albanians, one Bosniaks, and two Croats. Elections will be held to elect 81 members of the Parliament, for the next four years.

A number of domestic and international observers are observing the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Montenegro, including the European Network of Election Monitoring Organizations (ENEMO).

ENEMO's International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) has been deployed in the country since 15 July and is composed of seven Core Team members and eight long-term observers. In its 17 August Interim Report, the IEOM has assessed, among others, that overall, the domestic electoral legislation provides grounds for holding democratic elections in Montenegro, but that however, certain legal provisions, including voters' and candidates' rights, remain at odds with international standards.

Besides the Core Team and the long-term observers, 38 short-term observers will be deployed tomorrow throughout the country to observe and assess the voting, counting, and tabulation of results. The IEOM will present its preliminary findings and conclusions after Election Day, on Monday, 31 August 2020.

The Coalition for Reforms, Integration, and Consolidated Institutions (KRIIK Albania), as a member of ENEMO and of its Secretariat for the second consecutive term, continues to contribute with dedication to encouraging and implementing as many international election observation missions as possible, among other by engaging its activists and collaborators in various capacities, from STO to Head of Mission.

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This voluntary contribution of KRIIK, its activists and collaborators, is performed with the profound conviction that these missions are not only an important contribution and civic engagement towards strengthening democracy in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, but also as an additional means to increase the monitoring and advocacy expertise of the engaged activists and the organizations of the Network, in protecting fair elections and full integrity of electoral processes.

Six activists and collaborators of KRIIK are participating even in the IEOM to Montenegro as short-term observers. This fall, KRIIK will also engage groups of activists into two more election observation missions, always in the frame of ENEMO, for the upcoming local elections in Ukraine and presidential elections in Moldova.

This International Election Observation Mission and election observation missions in general, especially by domestic observers, on KRIIK's view, have an added value and become **indispensable under the risks of the global pandemic and increased risk for violations of democratic values and freedoms, and human rights**, which is being dangerously noticed by authoritarian approaches of governments and majorities in power, especially in democracies in consolidation or transition.

**Tirana, on 29 August 2020!**

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***\*This Press Release is published in Albanian and in English.  
The Albanian version is the only official document.***

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