



STATEMENT *

The well-functioning of the new CEC - a necessity both for the success of the preparation of the future election process, and the achievement of the political agreement aspiration of 5 June

Today, on 13.10.2020, representatives of the Coalition for Reforms, Integration and Consolidated Institutions (KRIIK) held a meeting with the newly appointed State Election Commissioner Mr. Ilirjan Celibashi.

This meeting held to congratulate the State Commissioner for his important position, also presented an opportunity for KRIIK to share the considerations and views on the experience thus far and the factual situation of the CEC institution, as well as on some of the most prominent issues regarding the preparations for the future election process. These considerations and views were fully welcomed by the Commissioner, and thus a commitment to **further improve the institutional practice and consolidation of the CEC as an independent and transparent institution** was undertaken.

The latest amendments to the Electoral Code remodeled the composition of the Central Election Commission body into a trilateral structure. This body has now assumed the serious responsibility of establishing a new spirit in the institution, which is expected to cope with circumstances that will further complicate the achievement of this objective. The new dimension of the CEC institution marks **the first step in light of spirit and letter of the political agreement of 5th June 2020**. Namely, the prevailing of independent institutions, with integrity and law-enforcers, as opposed to the failed model of their organization based on political balance, due to the political patronage system perpetuated by political parties throughout this unduly long transitional period.

KRIIK brought this perspective to the attention of the Commissioner, expressing the full belief that his accomplished figure and high professional integrity, as well as the previous experiences in the capacity of head of this institution and other public commitments **constitute an additional guarantee that this perspective will be implemented by the Central Election Commission institution**.

The CEC institution **must hastily restore its missing integrity and reflect the best model of independent institutions**, as a law-enforcing institution that has earned the trust of the citizens and of the general public.

In this regard, KRIIK expressed the full support as a domestic actor with expertise in electoral matters, as well as with a considerable experience in engaging at the national and international level, working towards strengthening the role, integrity and better functioning of the CEC, in line with the duties provided for in the legal framework.

The significant amendments to the legal framework comprise a considerable implementation challenge, while the electoral period has already commenced, and election day is only six months away.

In addition to the large number of arrangements, preparations and supervisions of the future election process components, the CEC has to face a novel challenge, that of

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undertaking and carrying out the voting process for citizens who live abroad, as well as the biometric verification of voters. All of these processes are to be carried out in the social context of a critical public health situation that may be affected by a further aggravation of the situation.

In order to address this context, in view of previous public stances, the KRIIK **brought this issue to the attention of the Commissioner and obtained his commitment regarding the necessity of proactive transparency** in the decision-making process of the institution, beyond the strict provisions of the legal requirements.

Moreover in this regard, **KRIIK representatives elaborated on the need to establish an ongoing consultation process**, to the extent possible, in the decision making of the institution regarding the regulatory aspects of the process. In addition to the above, due to the failure to come to a complete political agreement on these legislative changes, the adoption of bylaws will require the balancing of the agreement unison that the political establishment could not achieve.

In this respect, **it is necessary for all political and non-political actors, including the institutional actors involved, to continue providing their contributions and opinions**, in view of supporting the drafting process of regulatory acts for the election process in accordance with the designed plan and the needs indicated by the CEC.

Lastly, as regards the immediate needs of the future election process, KRIIK **shared with the Commissioner its concern on the need to promptly adopt anti-Covid protocols** at all levels of the electoral administration, as well as the priority to monitor the voters' list drafting progress.

In relation to the latter, KRIIK shared with the commissioner its, already made public, concern regarding lack of transparency in the drafting process of the voter list and **prompted the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner to immediately appoint the audit experts** to monitor and ensure the transparency of this very important process, which directly affects the trust of the citizens in the upcoming election process.

Tirana, on 13 October 2020!

****This Statement is published in Albanian and in English.
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