

Parliamentary Openness in BiH and the Region

ZaštoNe 

 **ActionSEE**



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Authors: Aida Ajanović & Dalio Sijah

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RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS

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INTRODUCTION

In cooperation with partners from the regional network "ActionSEE", the CA "Zašto ne" has prepared a proposal of practical policies in which levels of transparency, openness and accountability of the legislative power in the West Balkans region were analyzed.

The proposal is a result of a comprehensive research, based on methodology, undertaken by the members of the network ActionSEE in previous months in all West Balkans countries. The aim of the research is to provide an in-depth overview of the situation in the said areas, to contribute to the quality of reforms in the state administration work, to influence the enhancement of good governance and to help the institutions to efficiently implement them in their work. We are of the opinion that these are the objectives that we share with the very institutions comprised in this research.

The proposal for practical policies, with concomitant analyses, is the second document of this type. Last year, too, following the research conducted, members of the network made recommendations for improving the openness of institutions.

On the basis of the results of the research conducted in 2016, policies were developed providing an overview of the situation in the institutions of Serbia and the region, including the identified shortcomings and good practices in this area. On the basis of these analyses, last year's recommendations were made as well as "roadmaps" for the improvement of specific areas covered by the research.

After that, drawing on their work on the findings and results of last year's research, ActionSEE members have started to improve and adapt research methodology and its indicators, hoping that the new information collected shall contribute to better quality results of the project. The aim of using new and improved indicators is to add new dimensions to the research and a more efficient contribution to improving the openness of the institutions of the region.

Backed up by our knowledge, concrete results and analyses of regional openness, believing that the institutions of the parliament led by simply presented and achievable steps aiming to improve the situation in these areas, guided by our work on its improvement, we decided to advocate a higher level of openness of parliaments in the region. Thus, this year's research has been enriched with indicators advocating a higher standard of proactive transparency.

The policy of openness must be the policy of all parliaments in the region, it must be defined as all other important policies and should not be the result of a current decision or current mood of the authorities. Each country in the region has its own specific, political conditions in which it develops its openness, but there can be noticeable room for joint regional action to improve the situation.

PARLIAMENTARY OPENNESS IN THE REGION

Having analyzed a large number of methodically rounded data, we noticed similarities and differences in the situation in this area in the countries of the region.

The results of the conducted research show that the openness of parliaments at the regional level is not satisfactory. As with executive authorities, it was noted that the overall result of parliamentary openness at the regional level was lower than in the previous observation and measurement cycle. Instead of the expected progress in the sphere of openness, parliaments in the region achieved a worse result comparing to the previous research period. On average 61% of indicators were fulfilled in 2017 in the area of openness. This score is 2% lower compared to the openness recorded in 2016, when it reached 63%.

We would like to point out that this year's research comprised and advocated a higher degree of openness of institutions in relation to last year, adding new indicators by which this openness is measured, and thus tightening the measurement criteria themselves. We believe that such a tightened approach to the research added up to the fact that the results show a decrease in openness of the legislative power. On the other hand, the results and analyzed data show that the legislative power has not made any effort to develop openness since the publishing of the previous results, so new indicators are not of the crucial importance for a general decline in the openness.

The highest legislative bodies of the region do not have a strategic approach to openness policy as it was discernible and indicated in the analysis of the parliament openness in 2016, and as well remained unchanged in the results of the monitoring conducted in 2017. Requests for openness can only be indirectly derived from the Constitution, Rules of Procedure and other acts, and as such are subject to different interpretations and moods of the parliamentary majority.

The decline in the level of openness of all parliaments at the regional level, with the exception of the Albanian Parliament that achieved a better result in 2017 (75%), compared to 2016 (60%), shows that for a year parliaments had not strived to maintain the achieved degree of openness, or invest in its development.

Information on the work of parliament belong to citizens, and it is necessary to constantly improve the existing level of culture of parliamentary openness. Openness policy should develop as the pace of the new technologies picks up. New technologies should be used fully, as it would, inter alia, support and facilitate the publishing of data in a machine-readable form. In support of this, there is a datum showing that parliaments in the region are not committed to publishing data in an open format, thereby refuting and minimizing the usable value of the published information.

The lack of desire to work on improving the openness and transparency of the parliaments is genuine, is confirmed by the fact that in 2017 half number of parliaments that were subjected to research have not submitted answers to the questionnaires, which are a key part of the entire research. The reluctance to answer the questionnaire is in itself an indicator of insufficient openness and of lack of interest in promoting openness.

Our monitoring has shown several "critical points", i.e., key obstacles to the development of parliamentary openness in the region.

TRANSPARENCY, ACCESSIBILITY AND COMMUNICATION WITH CITIZENS

The observed decline in the transparency and accessibility of parliaments in the region has to be stopped and significantly improved so that these institutions, selected by citizens and for citizens, could act fully as the pillars of democracy in these societies.

Although the existence of the Law on Free Access to Information of Public Importance in the region greatly contributes to larger transparency of parliaments, it is necessary to further strengthen its application, and it is imperative that parliaments make an effort to improve their own proactivity in publishing information on their work.

Although among the parliaments in the region there are champions and examples of good practice when it comes to publishing data on the work of parliament and of deputies, we conclude that the legislative framework and the declarative commitment to respecting the principles of openness and international standards is often kept only on paper.

This year's research also shows that information on the activities of deputies by committees, documents emanating from the work of the committee or submitted amendments have not yet been published by most of the parliaments in the region. Furthermore, publishing of information on the work of parliaments and of deputies is rarely accompanied by their accountability for the achieved results and the quality of work of this institution.

The average result achieved by parliaments in the region in the area of communication with citizens, which amounts to 35% of fulfilled indicators, is yet another reason for concern. Parliaments in the region continue to be inert and do not strive to invest in new channels of communication that can help bridge the gap between citizens and their representative body. Another regional problem is the respect for the principle that the data should be published in open data formats¹, which would increase accessibility and make it easier for citizens to collect information.

¹Open data are data structured in computer understandable format, which provides opportunity of free and repeated use.

What certainly raises concern is the fact that transparency and communication with citizens are at the lowest level when it comes to preparing, discussing, adopting and presenting (in open data format) the most important annual legislative act in every country – the state budget. The average result for every country in 2017, in the area of the state budget is 41%, whereas in all countries, with the exception of Albania (86%) and Montenegro (58%), these percentages range from 19% (Serbia) and 32% (Kosovo).

It is essential that parliaments in the region make an effort to fully appreciate the significance, role and opinion of civil society in democracy and to improve the mechanisms of cooperation with it. It has been noted that despite the existing mechanisms and declarative determination of the holders of legislative power, parliamentary cooperation with civil society in the region has been generally violated. The Republic of Serbia ceased the cooperation with the Open Parliament following the protest that this initiative lodged to the way that the Budget Law for 2018 had been debated and adopted.

PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT – GOOD BASIS AND POOR IMPLEMENTATION

What certainly raises concern is the fact that transparency and communication with citizens are at the lowest level when it comes to preparing, discussing, adopting and presenting (in open data format) the most important annual legislative act in every country – the state budget. The average result for every country in 2017, in the area of the state budget is 41%, whereas in all countries, with the exception of Albania (86%) and Montenegro (58%), these percentages range from 19% (Serbia) and 32% (Kosovo).

Parliaments in the Western Balkans region have established good bases for conducting parliamentary oversight - except in the case of Kosovo that meets only 19% of the indicators set. However, it is necessary that this function of the legislative power be significantly strengthened at the level of the entire region, with an emphasis on ensuring its full implementation in practice.

A good legislative basis for the exercise of parliamentary oversight does not imply that it shall actually be implemented in practice. Parliaments in the region continued to formally apply this function in 2017, which led to the fact that the results of the parliamentary oversight actually lack. The need to strengthen the control and oversight function of the parliament in terms of its effective implementation was emphasized by the European Commission in the individual reports for each country, published in April 2018.

This situation brings us back to the last year's conclusion. It is extremely important that parliaments be not a place of uncritical adoption of the executive power proposals but rather of their review and of an efficient control of everything that has been done. Legislative duties of deputies must not be a reason for neglecting the controlling function, which is one of the most important guarantees of democracy. All parliaments in the region must make efforts to fully implement the existing mechanisms, thereby contributing to raising the level of political accountability.

Weak evaluation and control of the work of parliaments and of deputies' behavior – effects, integrity and ethics

Even in 2017, the work of parliaments in the region was not based on the establishment of a uniform methodology and appropriate indicators for measuring the results and the quality of their work and the work of the deputies.

Strategic planning of parliaments at the level of the entire region meets only 25% of the set indicators, with parliaments of Serbia and Kosovo that scored zero points in this dimension. This situation, which keeps repeating from year to year, continues to have an impact on the quality of parliamentary work and on informing citizens about the effects and outcomes of the work of the legislative power.

In most of the parliaments in the region, the Law on Lobbying has not yet been adopted.

Additionally, the integrity of the parliaments remains low due to the fact that the Codes of Ethics of parliaments in some countries of the region have not yet been adopted, or their application is extremely weak. As in 2016, even in this measurement cycle, low ethics in the work of parliament and of deputies was recorded, and last year's recommendations in this area were not applied.

It is essential that parliaments that have not yet adopted the Code of Ethics set this as a priority for their agenda. Moreover, it is necessary that all the parliaments of the countries of the region establish clear mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of the Code of Ethics of the deputies and sanction each violation of the prescribed ethical standards. Practice from the region shows that violation of the Codes of Ethics does not generally result in the sanctioning of misconduct, and often represents the subject of political agreements. A consistent application of the Codes of Ethics is crucial for raising the level of political accountability and public confidence in the work of parliaments.

PARLIAMENTS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

(Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, Parliament of Federation of BiH, National Assembly of Republic of Srpska)

The legislative authority in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is covered by this research, meets less than 46% of the openness indicators and is in the last place when compared to the countries of the region. Leader in this legislative level is Montenegro with 80% of satisfied indicators.

Legislative power in BiH has more complex structure than the countries in the SEE region, and a comparison of its results with the results of other countries requires a specific methodological approach. Given that neither the state nor the entity parliaments could independently be compared to the parliaments of other countries, the subject of the conducted research was the legislative bodies at both levels.

Additionally, the existence of bicameral parliaments in the FBiH and BiH is also specific, which also required a different approach to be applied than in other countries.

Due to the fact that in both parliaments, the houses are organized separately by publishing data on their web pages, as well as by other communication practices, the indicators are monitored for each parliamentary house individually. The situation in BiH, in this research, was presented through the overall result of both Houses of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, both Houses of Parliament of the Federation of BiH, and the National Assembly of Republic of Srpska.

The principle of accessibility in the Parliaments in BiH was satisfied with 39% of the indicators fulfilled. In terms of access to information, the fulfillment of this segment is 47%. Interaction with citizens, which was rated the lowest last year - with 37% of satisfied indicators, has fallen to 14%. Public consultations are the best evaluated segment of the accessibility principle, and the percentage of fulfillment in this case is 49%.

Public involvement in activities of parliamentary bodies in BiH is very low. Communication mechanisms are usually one-way and they include only the existence of contact forms and the contact information on the official sites of the parliaments. Parliaments in BiH do not use the available channels of two-way communication with citizens, such as social networks and online petitions.

Considering that all legislative institutions, with the exception of NSRS, did not deliver their responses to the Questionnaire, the indicators regarding the possibility of professionals giving their opinion on the considered legal acts have been marked as negative when it comes to PSBiH and F BiH parliament, since the official web sites are lacking documents proving that it's the common practice.

Although the law is very clear that all of the institutions have to have the register of the information, in reality that is not the case.

It is necessary to invest a lot more efforts to open the communication channels of the parliaments with the citizens, and to involve the public in the work of the parliaments systemically and proactively. Parliaments should include professionals and civil society organizations in their work, and create, use and actively promote mechanisms for citizen participation in parliamentary work. Freedom of access to information must be further ensured by strengthening legislation, through the establishment of stronger mechanisms for overseeing the implementation of the Law on Free Access to Information, including an independent body whose decisions would be binding.

Legislative bodies in BiH meet 48% of the indicators according to the criteria of transparency. The best result by this criteria was concerning the transparency of public procurements - 60% of indicators satisfied. But in this segment there was a downward trend compared to last year when percentage of satisfied indicators was 63%.

On the other hand, budget transparency indicators of parliaments in BiH have a greater fall compared to last year's results - from 33% to 24%.

As in the previous survey, parliaments in BiH have very uneven practices in publishing the budget and reports on their execution.

On the official page of the National Assembly of the RS, budgets for the last three years can be found. On the websites of both houses of the PSBiH, there are published budgets for two years, while there are no budgets published on the websites of the two houses of the FBiH Parliament, although the research for 2016, the House of Peoples in FBiH had published budgets for two years.

The situation is similar with the publishing of the budget execution report. The National Assembly of the RS has published two budget execution documents for the past three years, both houses of the PS BiH two, while the House of Peoples of the Parliament of FBiH has published one document, and the House of Representatives not even one. As it was the case in the results for 2016, the "Budget for Citizens" is still not published by any Parliament in BiH.

Parliaments in BiH are not enough transparent in terms of reporting on their plans and their implementation, with extremely uneven practices in this field. The work programs for the previous three years were published on the pages of both houses of the PSBiH, while on the web page of The National Assembly of the RS there were only two. On the websites of the federal parliamentary houses only one program of work has been published in the last three years.

As in the results of the research for 2016, in the new survey, it is noticeable that information on the work of parliamentarians were published very unevenly. Audio or video recordings of the sessions are available only on the websites of the House of Representatives of the PSBiH and the House of Peoples of the Parliament of the FBiH, but there is no parliament in BiH that publishes transcripts and detailed information from the session of parliamentary commissions and other working bodies. On the other hand, all parliaments announce the results of voting from sessions except the House of Representatives of the FBiH Parliament. House of Peoples of the Parliament of FBiH announces the voting results as a part of the transcript from the sessions.

Budget transparency is at a very low level and no progress has been made in comparison to the last year's results. The adopted budget documents and budget execution reports must be made available to the public, through continuous and uniform practices that need to be established in all parliaments in BiH. It is also necessary to establish a consistent practice of publishing work plans and reports on the work of all parliamentary bodies, including regular reporting on the activities of parliamentarians.

Monitoring and documentation mechanisms, such as audio and video transmission and recording, and continuous archiving of all supporting materials, must be provided for parliamentary sessions, which must be searchable and publicly accessible. The same principle should apply to sessions of commissions and other parliamentary bodies.

Regarding the principle of awareness, legislative powers in BiH have 54% of covered indicators, and comparing to the previous year it is in a stagnation.

Parliaments in BiH in the field of parliamentary monitoring meet 60% of the indicators, while in the field of strategic planning, where the impact assessment of the regulations is examined, the indicator's coverage is close to 20%.

Parliaments in BiH should establish systemic mechanisms for assessing the impact of the regulations they adopt. These processes should be controlled by regulations that would guarantee their effectiveness, transparency, and ensure the participation and expertise of interested and professional public in evaluating the impact of laws and other acts in the parliamentary procedure before their adoption.

Regarding the integrity of the legislative power in BiH, it meets 46% of the indicators.

No Parliament in the country meets the set of indicators regarding the regulations related to lobbying, since the issue of lobbying is not regulated by law at any level of government. Adoption and publication of codes of ethics of parliaments is also unsatisfactory, and Parliaments in BiH fulfill 49% of indicators. The National Assembly of RS and both houses of the state parliaments have ethical codes for parliamentarians that are published on official web sites, while the ethical codes of the Parliament of the FBiH have not been published. However, none of the existing codes of ethics oblige parliaments to publish the results of investigations initiated based on violations of code of ethics.

All parliamentary bodies in BiH must adopt and publish codes of ethics. Existing ethical codes need to be revised, equated and consistently implemented. Code of Ethics must prescribe clear procedures for overseeing the implementation of codes, and the obligation to publish data on the implementation of codes of ethics and investigations initiated in the event of their violations.

Legislative Bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Results by Parliaments and Parliament houses

Results comparison of all the analyzed bodies of the legislative power shows a very uneven practice regarding openness. The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska (57%) has the best single score in fulfilling of all the monitored indicators, while the worst result was achieved by the PFBiH House of Representatives (33%). The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska also satisfied most indicators in individual areas, and this was also influenced by the fact that during this year's survey we received only answers from this legislative institution, so some indicators are better rated in comparison to last year.

In relation to individual areas, the principle of accessibility is best rated in the case of The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska with almost 53% of satisfied indicators, while the House of Peoples of the PSBiH is in the last place with only slightly less than 32% of the satisfied indicators.

A similar case is with the criterion of awareness, where the NSRS meets 70% of the indicators, while the federal parliamentary houses are the worst ranked with 44% of the fulfilled indicators.

The House of Representatives of Parliament of FBiH has the worst result in fulfilling the transparency indicators (27%), which decreased from 39% indicators fulfilled in the last year's results. The best result was achieved by the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska with 61%, which is in the ranking of the results from the previous research. Budget transparency is highest in the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska with 37%, and the lowest in case of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of FBiH - 0%. This parliament house has not published any budget documents or budget execution for the last three years on its website.

Most of the indicators for the principle of integrity are satisfied by the PS BiH, whose both houses satisfy 54% of the indicators.

PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The average result of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH is 49% of the indicators of openness, of which the House of Representatives of the PS BiH fulfills close to 50% of the indicators, and the House of Peoples PS BiH 47%.

The most indicators that are monitored, the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH meet in the area of awareness - 56%, which are followed by principle of transparency with 54% indicators satisfied. This area made growth for slightly more than 1% of fulfilled indicators (53%). Principle of integrity satisfied 54% indicators, and here growth was slightly higher from 5%.

On the other hand, the area of accessibility recorded a fall in indicator coverage from 48% to as much as 34%, which definitely influenced the overall results of this year. Unlike last year's survey, when the name of the person responsible for solving the request for free access to information was indicated on the website of the PSBiH, in this year's survey this indicator was rated negative, because the name of the person is no longer on the official website of the PSBiH, although it is a legal obligation that it's stated.

Indicators that were questioned by questionnaires submitted to the legislative bodies were rated by the lowest grades, since during this year's research both houses of PSBiH did not provide answers to the questionnaire. Such behavior by the highest legislative body in the country indicates the absence of good practices in communicating with the public.

The House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH has somewhat better results than the House of Peoples in two of the four areas. In the area of awareness and integrity, the results of both parliamentary houses are identical - almost 56% (awareness) and 54% (integrity) of the indicators fulfilled.

The House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH meets 56% of the indicators in the area of transparency (which is identical to the last year's result), while the result of House of Peoples of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH is on 53% of the indicators fulfilled which is growth compared to last results when it was 50%. Growth is reflected in the fact that during the last year's survey, the House of Peoples had only one budget document and budget execution published in the past three years, while in the last survey two documents were published.

The problem of the continuity of publishing information on the Internet, and the lack of consistent archiving of existing materials to provide a comprehensive and publicly available electronic archive of institutional information, has affected the result in meeting the indicators.

PARLIAMENT OF THE FEDERATION OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Parliament of Federation of BiH has the worst average score of three monitored parliament with only 37% of the indicators fulfilled. The House of Peoples of the Parliament of Federation of BiH meets 41%, and the House of Representatives only 33% of all set indicators.

None of the monitored areas on average meets half of the indicators in both houses of the Parliament of Federation of BiH. The worst average result is in the area of transparency (36%), where the result is far worse than last year (44%). The House of Peoples meets 45%, and the House of Representatives only slightly less than 27% of the indicators.

The budget transparency of both houses of the Parliament of Federation of BiH is very low. House of Peoples of the Parliament of FBiH has published only one document of the budget execution report, while the House of Representatives does not have one on its website. In addition, none of the Houses of Parliament of the FBiH has published semi-annual reports on the implementation of the budget, the Parliament's budget, but also the Budget for citizens over the past three years. The results of last year's research showed that the House of Representatives of the Parliament of FBiH had published documents and amendments to the budget submitted by the parliamentary commissions, while in this year's survey none of the parliamentary houses in Federation of BiH had this information published on its official website. Due to this, the result of 0% in terms of budget transparency in the House of Representatives PFBiH and 3% of the House of Peoples is very realistic.

Transparency of public procurement is somewhat better in relation to budget transparency and amounts to 52% of fulfilled indicators in the case of the House of Peoples, or 55% in the case of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the FBiH.

Although both houses of Parliament of FBiH publish public procurement plans, the House of Representatives only partially publish decisions on public procurement, while the House of Peoples does it in its entirety. However, none of the parliament houses publishes public procurement invitations, nor contracts or annexes to awarded contracts. The publication of an agreement and an annex to contracts is not a legal obligation in BiH, however international standards in the area of transparency of institutions envisage the publication of these documents in order to achieve full financial transparency.

The best results of the Houses of the Parliament of FBiH are in the field of awareness (44%), but a good result is mainly related to positively assessed legal solutions in this area. However, indicators relating to the availability of information on a website, such as those on the publication of material for public hearings or reports from public hearings, are not fulfilled.

The House of Peoples of Federation of BiH is somewhat more successful than the House of Representatives in achieving the principle of integrity, which satisfies almost 41% of the indicators, compared to 32% of the House of Peoples. The Code of Ethics has not been published on any of the websites of the houses of Parliament of Federation of BiH. On the other hand, property cards of deputies or delegates of both houses are not available on the web pages, but can be obtained from the Central Election Commission of BiH (CIK).

Both houses of the Parliament of Federation of BiH satisfies the principle of accessibility with approximately 36% of the indicators fulfilled. However, the House of Peoples meets slightly more indicators concerning the public consultations. The Rules of procedure of the House of Peoples regulated the possibility of public presence at the sessions, while the Rules of procedure of the House of Representatives were not published on the website.

Because of that, they achieved a negative result in the research. Both houses have a very poor interaction with citizens, and they satisfied only 11% of the indicators. The only possibility for citizens to contact parliament and parliamentarians is via e-mail addresses indicated on the website of the FBiH Parliament, which often do not work due to full inboxes. None of the Houses of the Parliament of Federation of BiH owns a Facebook or Twitter account, nor an online channel to allow citizens to submit their objections. Also, there is no mechanism for online petitions, nor simple information, such as how citizens can access Parliament's building.

Although according to the Law on Freedom of Access to Information, all institutions are obliged to publish a register of information in their possession, neither one of the houses of the Parliament of Federation of BiH publishes them, nor the name of the person in charge of handling requests.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA

Unlike last year, the National Assembly of the RS submitted answers to the questionnaire on the openness of the institutions that were sent to them, and it was the only legislative body in this research that did it. Their responses thus contributed to the fact that the National Assembly of the RS alone had a growth in almost all monitored areas. We remind that during the last year's research, the Public Relations Service of the National Assembly of the RS did not make any contact feedback after receiving the questionnaire. They replied that the questionnaire was received, but it was not forwarded to any parliamentary body or service for the purpose of delivering a reply.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska meets 57% of the set openness indicators.

According to the principle of awareness, the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska meets 70% of the indicators, and compared to last year, it recorded a growth of 20%, primarily due to the fact that, unlike last year, the indicators related to the answers from the submitted questionnaire were evaluated with positive scores. However, no progress has been made in terms of indicators related to the official web site, such as the publication of reports from the session of parliamentary bodies or the publication of all adopted documents in the past two years.

The principle of transparency of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska satisfied 61% of the indicators and that result is at the same level as last year's. On its website NSRS has published budgets for the previous three years, as well as two Budget Execution documents, which was not the case in the previous survey, when only one Budget Execution document in the past three years was published. However, the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska does not publish semi-annual reports on budget execution, nor a budget for citizens, so the total budgetary transparency score amounts 44% of satisfied indicators.

Regarding the transparency of public procurement, on the other hand, it is noticeable that the NSRS on its website publish public procurement plans, but does not publish annexes to public procurement contracts. Although the publication of contracts and annexes is not a legal obligation in BiH, international standards in transparency suggest that this should be the case. However, in this sense the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska satisfied 70% of the indicators related to the transparency of public procurement.

According to the principle of integrity NSRS satisfied 50% of indicators, while according to the principle of accessibility they fulfilled 53% of indicators.

The best individual result was achieved regarding the sub-optimal performance - strategic planning (99%) whose result a year ago amounted to 0%, and this jump is also direct consequence of the response to the sent questionnaire, since most of the indicators in this area were contained in the same.

It should be noted that most of the published documents and data on the work of the Assembly (agenda of sessions, voting records, materials for sessions, etc.) can be found only for the period of the current mandate, while the archive for the previous sessions of the NSRS was not offered within the same sections.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The openness is a key condition of democracy since it allows citizens to receive information and knowledge about an equal participation in a political life, effective decision-making and holding institutions responsible for policies they conduct.

A number of countries undertakes specific actions towards increasing their own transparency and accountability to citizens. The Regional index of parliamentary openness is developed in order to define to which extent citizens of the Western Balkans receive opportune and understandable information from their institutions.

The Regional index of openness measures to which extent parliaments are open for citizens and society based on the following four principles: 1. transparency, 2. accessibility 3. integrity and 4. effectiveness. The principle of transparency includes the fact that organizational information, budget and public procurement are publicly available and published. Accessibility is related to ensuring and respecting procedures for a free access to information and strengthening interaction with citizens as well. Integrity includes mechanisms for the prevention of corruption, conducting codes of conduct and regulation of lobbying. The last principle, effectiveness, is related to monitoring and evaluation of policies which are conducted.

Following the international standards, recommendations and examples of good practice, these principles are further developed through quantitative and qualitative indicators, which are estimated on the basis of information availability on official websites, legal framework's quality for specific questions, other sources of public informing and questionnaires delivered to institutions.

Through about 110 indicators per institution, we measured and analyzed the openness of 11 legislative authorities and collected over 1200 institution data. After the monitoring was carried out, a control phase followed that showed a standard measurement error of +/- 3%.

Measurement was carried out in the period from January to the end of April 2018. Based on the results of the research, a set of recommendations and guidelines that are directed to the institutions have been developed.

ACTION SEE is a network of civil society organizations that work together to promote and ensure the transparency and accountability of institutions in Southeast Europe, increase the potential for civic activism and participation, promotion and protection of human rights on the internet, and building capacity for the use of new technologies.