



NGOs Respond to the Statement of the CEC

On April 14, the CEC released a statement about the opinion of NGOs on appointment of PEC secretaries. The statement says that “competent opinions about similar issues must be based on the principle of rule of law as opposed to political expediency”. For discussion of these topics, the CEC invites NGOs for public discussions on “The Role of Civil Society in Electoral Process”.

We would like to highlight that we stand ready for discussions of election-related issues with all interested parties, including the CEC. However, we believe that discussions should focus on issues that triggered a variety of opinion as opposed to our role in election processes, which we - organizations that have been working on elections-related issues throughout years - are clearly well-aware of.

We believe that the key role of civil society is to act as a watchdog and promote correct legal reasoning. Therefore, we have criticized or supported decisions of state agencies, including the CEC, on a number of occasions. Regrettably, the CEC believes that the criticism of NGOs is founded on “political expediency”. Despite the criticism, NGOs have never been reluctant to support the CEC whenever they shared its positions (including amendment of the rule for staffing the Supreme Election Commission or legal drafts on municipal by-elections). The election administration questions objectivity of our opinions.

The purpose of our [statement](#) was to highlight that the interpretation of law as offered by the CEC was in conflict with the agreement reached by political parties in 2009, the aim of the Election Code and recommendations of international organizations, suggesting the necessity to amend regulations that apply to staffing of PECs prior to the 2013 parliamentary elections. Otherwise, the election administration will be

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dominated by a single political force.