

Sarajevo, May 7, 2008

Press Release

The Representatives of the „Accountability“ Coalition of nongovernmental organisations, including:

Alumni Association of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Post-Graduate Studies – ACIPS; Agency for Local Development Initiatives – ALDI; Centre for Policy Studies – CEPOS; Women and Society Centre; Centre for Promotion of Civil Society; Civil Initiatives Centres; Open Society Fund BiH; CURE Foundation; OneWorld Foundation – owpsee; Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in BiH; Global Rights; Initiative and Civil Action ICVA; Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues IBHI; Transparency International BiH; and the „Why Not“ association,

expressed, in the meeting they held with High Representative Miroslav Lajčak on May 7, their determination to set the principle of accountability of elected officials as one of the fundamental principles on which democracy and democratic relations are built.

The civil society actors advocate the creation of legal framework that would allow the citizens and their associations to participate in the work of parliaments, assemblies and their working bodies in all levels of government. The openness of decision-making institutions is a prerequisite for their efficiency and *condition sine qua non* for the reforms that await the BiH society.

Due to the specific situation in the country and the role of the High Representative, the Coalition proposed that the Higher Representative should consult with civil society representatives on regular basis. The responsibility for the development of democracy can't be left solely to the political elites, which was the case in BiH for too long.

The representatives of the „Accountability“ Coalition also emphasized their full support for Bosnia and Herzegovina accession to the European Union and their determination to give full support to the coming reforms. Within that framework, they emphasized the fact that nongovernmental organizations and civil society experts prepared a Draft-Law on the Agency for Prevention of Corruption and a Draft-Law on Prevention of Discrimination, which are considered required for the progress in negotiations on accession to the EU. The meeting concluded, however, that the bodies of the executive branch have little understanding for the initiatives proposed by civil society actors, which is proven by the examples of the Draft-Laws mentioned above, which failed to meet the necessary support.

The civil society in Bosnia and Herzegovina can't be excluded from public affairs and allow that government and politics are the only arbiter. Civil society can and should have the key role in the process of accession to the European Union.

