



**Recommendation on implementation of recommendations of the  
Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and  
Herzegovina given in its Special Report titled:**

**"ACCESSIBILITY OF PREMISES OF THE LEGISLATIVE  
BODIES IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA TO THE  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES"**

*Banja Luka, December, 2016*

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# I INTRODUCTION

Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pursuant to the provisions of Article 2 paragraph 3 of the Law on Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina („Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, no. 32/00, 19/02, 34/05 and 32/06)<sup>1</sup> aiming at improvement of the status of persons with disabilities as enshrined by the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities<sup>2</sup> have decided to conduct an investigation on (non)existence of the architectural barriers on the premises used by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the assemblies of the cantons.

Human Rights Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter referred to as: Ombudspersons) acting on complaints of citizens filed to the Institution by persons with disabilities have recognized systemic problems in physical accessibility of premises, in particular premises of the bodies carrying out the public authorities. Faced with a multitude of the institutions carrying out the public authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina Ombudspersons decided in the initial stage to focus only to the legislative bodies, which are supposed, through the legislative process, to integrate international human rights standards and impose obligation of their implementation on the executive bodies.

Based on principles of accountability and transparency which are obligatory for all the authorities and which include, among other things, the obligation of public reporting, Ombudspersons established a correspondence with the relevant bodies in order to gather information on accessibility of their premises to persons with disabilities. In drafting their Special report titled „Accessibility of premises of the legislative bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina to persons with disabilities“, no. P-12/16 (*hereinafter referred to as: the Special report*), Ombudspersons exclusively used replies of the relevant bodies, not questioning the veracity of the claims presented since those are the public bodies obligated to provide the public with accurate and complete information.

Special report established the following:

*„Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pursuant to their powers and mandate established in the Law on Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>3</sup> will keep taking the measures to monitor the implementation of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities, in particular in respect of the progress made by the authorities as it comes to the accessibility issue.*

*Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina call upon the legislative bodies which have so far failed to adapt their premises so as to enable persons with disabilities to have unrestricted access, primarily by removing the architectural barriers as soon as possible.*

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<sup>1</sup> Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, no. 32/00, 19/02, 34/05 and 32/06

<sup>2</sup> On 30 July 2009 in New York Minister of human rights and refugees of BiH signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol, while the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, at its 65th session held on 7 December 2009 endorsed the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol

<sup>3</sup> Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina”, no. 32/00, 19/02, 34/05 and 32/06

*Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina call upon all legislative bodies to inform the Ombudsman on the progress made in removal of architectural barriers and securing the accessibility of their premises to persons with disabilities“.*

After publishing the Special report no. P-12/16 in January 2016, in order to establish facts on measures taken for implementation of recommendations given in the report according to the Conclusion of the Joint Commission on Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ombudspersons took additional activities which include visits to premises of the relevant legislative bodies.

In order to follow-up the implementation of the recommendations given in the Special report the Ombudsman invited representatives of the Association of Paraplegic Persons to a meeting to get their insight into the existence of architectural barriers and to hear their suggestions and comments based on their needs. Having their needs in mind, the fact finding mission taken by the Ombudsman included the following:

- access to buildings where legislative bodies have their offices,
- access to meeting rooms where meetings are held,
- access to podium or platforms for speakers,
- availability of parking lots to persons with disabilities (parking lots designated to the legislative bodies) and
- accessibility and adjustment of toilets to persons with disabilities.

Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina express their appreciation to the associations of persons with disabilities and their representatives who gave their contribution to the fact finding mission on the ground. These associations are:

- Informative Center „Lotos“ Tuzla;
- Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors of the Federation of BiH;
- Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors and persons with other bodily disabilities of the Republic of Srpska;
- Association of parents of children with special needs Orašje;
- Association of persons with disabilities „Utjeha“, Široki Brijeg;
- Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors Zenica;
- Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors and persons with other visible bodily disabilities of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- Association of Paraplegics of Una-Sana Canton;
- Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors of the Canton 10, Livno
- Association of Paraplegics Mostar.

## **II RELEVANT LEGISLATION**

Provisions of Article 5 paragraphs 1 and 2 *of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities* reads as follows: "States Parties recognize that all persons are equal before and under the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law.

States Parties shall prohibit all discrimination on the basis of disability and guarantee to persons with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds". Further, provisions of Article 9 of the Convention provides the following: " To enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas. These measures, which shall include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility, shall apply to, inter alia: a) buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including schools, housing, medical facilities and workplaces; b) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services".

Item 34 General Comment to Article 9 of the Convention adopted on 11 April 2014 by the UN Committee of the Rights of persons with disabilities reads as follows: " The duty of States parties to ensure access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and services open to the public for persons with disabilities should be seen from the perspective of equality and non-discrimination. Denial of access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communication, and services open to the public constitutes an act of disability-based discrimination that is prohibited by article 5 of the Convention".

Revised European Social Charter in its Article 15 provides the following: "With a view to ensuring to persons with disabilities, irrespective of age and the nature and origin of their disabilities, the effective exercise of the right to independence, social integration and participation in the life of the community, the Parties undertake in particular.... to promote their full social integration and participation in the life of the community in particular through measures, including technical aids, aiming to overcome barriers to communication and mobility and enabling access to transport, housing, cultural activities and leisure".

### ***The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>4</sup>***

Article II of the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina entitled: Human rights and fundamental freedoms provides that Bosnia and Herzegovina and both Entities ensure the highest level of internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms ...

The enjoyment of these rights is secured to all persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina without discrimination on any ground such as sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status.

### ***Law on Prohibition of Discrimination<sup>5</sup>***

The Law provides protection, promotion of human rights and freedoms, create conditions for implementation of equal rights and opportunities and govern the system of protection from discrimination based on race....disability... The Law is implemented to all public bodies at the level of the state, entity, canton and Brcko District of BiH, municipal institutions and bodies, and

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<sup>4</sup> The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina has not been published in the Official Gazette of BiH, save for the Amendment I (Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no. 25/2009).

<sup>5</sup> Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina, no. 59/2009

legal persons with public authorities, as well as to the action of all legal and natural persons in all spheres of life, including social protection, protection of families with children and protection of persons with disabilities.

### **III SITUATION FOUND DURING THE FIELD VISITS TO PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

#### **The Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>6</sup>**

Field visits resulted in an agreement with the Secretary of the Joint Service of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Vehabović Kenan whereby the Parliamentary Assembly took to carry out construction works in order to remove the existing architectural barriers. In order to assess the architectural adjustment to persons with disabilities in their repeated visit to the legislative bodies premises, representatives of the Ombudsman found out the following:

Entrance into the building of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina is flat, with no barriers.

There is a vertical communication between the floors inside the building (by the elevator).

Entrance into the meeting rooms is flat, with no barriers. As agreed with the Parliamentary Assembly Secretary, access to the podium in the Large, White and Blue Room is enabled via the mobile ramp, that is, a „mobile carrier“. Other meeting rooms are adjusted to persons with disabilities, with flat entrance and non-fixed chairs.

Toilet is in the ground floor, and, as agreed with the Secretary, marked as male and female toilet, both being adjusted to persons with disabilities. Objection of Ms Bešlija Elvira, a representative of the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Survivors of the Federation of BiH related to accessibility standards was accepted and handrails for the staircase installed.

Parking space owned by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina (to the left side from the entrance into the Assembly building) has marked (with panels) three (3) lots for vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities. Planned is also refurbishment of the underground garage where are also foreseen lots vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities. Accessibility of the Parliament building from the parking direction was also a subject to the reconstruction works since the filled sidewalks are rather steep. According to Ms Bešlija Elvira, a representative of the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Survivors of the Federation of BiH, this access path is very useful as it enables connection and gives possibility of independent movement to persons with disabilities from the parking space (to the left side from the entrance) to the Parliament building.

The representative of the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Survivors of the Federation of BiH, Ms Bešlija Elvira pointed out that it would be useful to remove the barriers existing on the path to the buffet at the first floor, while the Secretary of the Joint Service Mr. Vehabović emphasized that the competition process for the procurement of stainless steel slabs was opened. Procurement process is in its final stage, as well as the installation of an elevator to enable access to persons with disabilities, which is supposed to be finished by the end of the year.

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<sup>6</sup> Visit conducted on 16 September 2016 and 18 November 2016

### **The Parliamentary Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>7</sup>**

There is an access ramp to enable the entrance into the building.

Parliamentary meeting room is located in lower floor that could be reached by the elevator. Access to the room, however, is disabled due to the presence of the semi-round stairs.

Meeting room for parliamentary bodies is adjusted to persons with disabilities and has access, which is confirmed by Ms Bešlija Elvira, a representative of the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Survivors of the Federation of BiH since the access to the meeting rooms is flat and there is a vertical communication (elevator).

Toilet is at the same floor and is marked and adjusted to persons with disabilities.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not owe the parking space and they use the public parking in the vicinity of the parliamentary building.

According to the daily paper „Oslobodenje“, issue of 21 October 2016, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at its session of 20 October 2016 adopted a decision to use funds of the Service of the Joint Affairs of the Federation Authorities in the amount of 6,000 BAM for the building of access to the building of the Parliament of the Federation of BH to persons with disabilities.

### **The National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska<sup>8</sup>**

The building has a ramp enabling the access of persons with disabilities

The large meeting room is located in the ground floor and the entrance is flat. There is a staircase, however, leading to the podium and microphone.

Other, so-called, Small Room is on the second floor and can be reached via staircase. Entrance to the room is flat, but staircase is preventing the access to the podium. Access to the Small room will be enabled to persons with disabilities after the installation of so-called “panoramic elevator”, which is, according to Mr. Šukalo Nenad, the Assembly representative, planned for 2017. As it was emphasized, the problem emerged in respect of building of this elevator is high humidity in the elevator that is expected due to the fact that its construction is foreseen on the outside surface of the building. Ms Obradović Milena, a representatives of the Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors and persons with other bodily disabilities of the Republic of Srpska said that the ideal solution in this situation is a mobile platform.

Rooms for working meetings are located on the third floor and these would be accessible to persons with disabilities only after the construction of an elevator.

Toilet is on the ground floor, entrance is flat. Toilet interior is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

Parking lots on the parking owned by the Assembly are not marked or earmarked for vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities.

According to the Assembly representative, Mr. Šukalo, purchase of a mobile ramp is possible to enable access to both, the Large and the Small room. Planned is also the adjustment of the toilet to persons with disabilities in 2017.

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<sup>7</sup> Visit conducted on 16 September 2016

<sup>8</sup> Visit conducted on 14 October 2016

Mr. Šukalo pointed out that a number of parking lots will be marked by the end of 2016 designated to vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities, according to the relevant standards<sup>9</sup>.

### **The Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>10</sup>**

Building in which the Assembly of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina is located is equipped with an access ramp to enable the access to persons with disabilities. However, although existent, this ramp is totally negligent. For lack of maintenance access is steep, damaged and useless as such<sup>11</sup>.

The meeting room for plenary meetings is located in the ground floor and is accessible to persons with disabilities. Podium in that room, however, is not accessible due to the presence of few steps.

Toilet is on the ground floor, access path is flat, but its entrance is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

The Assembly is the owner of the parking area, but no lot is marked or earmarked for vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities.

Head of the Professional Service of the Assembly, Mr. Jovo Galić, said that reconstruction and repair of the building in order to make it adjusted to persons with disabilities was never requested, nor is planned it is situated on the premises of the House of Culture and shared with the Economy Development, Sports and Culture Sector of the Government of Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **The Assembly of Sarajevo Canton<sup>12</sup>**

Building in which the Assembly of Sarajevo Canton is located is protected by the Institute for the Protection and Preservation of National Monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main entrance into the building is not adjusted to persons with disabilities (steps leading to the door). Entrance to the Assembly services is enabled to persons with disabilities (access to the reception desk and the Registry Office of Sarajevo Canton) by means of the mobile platform and the elevator. However, the access to the elevator leading to the Assembly services is not built according to the standards<sup>13</sup>. The access is rather steep, and so steep slope did not allow Ms Bešlija Elvira, a representative of the Association of Paraplegics and Polio Survivors of the Federation of BiH to go independently up or down (the access is only possible with the help of another person).

The elevator leading to the Assembly services leads at the same time to the meeting room located on the first floor used also by the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Centar Sarajevo. Access to the podium and microphone is architecturally inaccessible for the presence of two steps.

Toilet is not adjusted to persons with disabilities, the entrance is narrow and inaccessible.

The Assembly does not have any parking space in its ownership.

<sup>9</sup> Rulebook on conditions for planning and designing the buildings enabling the unimpeded movement of children and persons with reduced bodily abilities, April 2011

<sup>10</sup> Visit conducted on 07 September 2016

<sup>11</sup> A representative of the Paraplegics Association could not enter the building

<sup>12</sup> Visits conducted on 16 September 2016 and 03 November 2016

<sup>13</sup> Order on spatial standards, urbanistic-technical conditions and norms preventing the architectural and urbanistic barriers for persons with diminished bodily abilities



### **The Assembly of Posavina Canton<sup>14</sup>**

Entrance into the building is not possible due to the existence of a step which makes the building inaccessible.

The Assembly is the owner of the parking area, but no lot is marked or earmarked for vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities.

The meeting rooms are located on the first floor, accessible only by the narrow steps, which means inaccessible for persons with disabilities.

The Assembly Chairman Mr. Joso Marković, said that the issue of entrance to the building will be solved by the end of the year, as well as the marking of parking lots for persons with disabilities.

### **The Assembly of Tuzla Canton<sup>15</sup>**

Access path leading to the building in which the Assembly of Tuzla Canton is located is not accessible for the presence of the stairs. Plenary meetings are held in a building owned by the Public Institution Bosnian Culture Center, which is not accessible to persons with disabilities.

Toilet is on the ground floor, access path is flat, but its entrance is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

Parking lots are in the ownership of the Assembly, and in accordance with previously reached agreement with the representatives of the Ombudsman, parking lots earmarked to persons with disabilities are marked appropriately.

According to the Secretary of the Assembly of Tuzla Canton, Ms Hasanagić Enisa, funds for this purpose are foreseen and planned in the Assembly budget for 2017 and it should be implemented by the summer.

### **The Assembly of Una-Sana Canton<sup>16</sup>**

Building in which the Assembly of Sarajevo Canton is located is accessible, there is a ramp in place. The offices are located in another adjacent building owned by the Government of Una-Sana Canton. Access to the offices in this building is not adjusted to persons with disabilities (there are stairs). According to the Secretary, Ms Abdulahović Sanela, all the meetings are held in the building in which the Assembly room is located due to the fact that the offices are small and not adjusted to the meeting.

Access to the podium in the meeting room is not possible due to the existence of the stairs.

In the ground floor of the building, there is a coffee shop and toilet. Entrance into the toilet is flat, with no barriers, but the interior is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

The Assembly does not have parking place of its own.

In respect to the observed flaws and the fact that the building in which the Assembly room is located is owned by the Employment Bureau, the Assembly officials expressed their readiness to address the owner of the building and negotiate the adjustment of all the Assembly rooms to persons with disabilities.

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<sup>14</sup> Visit conducted on 07 September 2016

<sup>15</sup> Visit conducted on 08 September 2016

<sup>16</sup> Visit conducted on 14 September 2016

### **The Assembly of Central Bosnia Canton<sup>17</sup>**

Entrance into the building is architecturally accessible.

All the Assembly rooms are located in the ground floor (access to the meeting rooms and other offices do not have any architectural barriers). Access to the podium and microphone is architecturally inaccessible for the presence of two steps.

Toilet is on the ground floor, but not adjusted to persons with disabilities since its door is too narrow.

The Assembly does not have parking place of its own.

### **The Assembly of Bosna-Drina Canton<sup>18</sup>**

Entrance into the Assembly building rooms is flat, with no steps. The Expert service offices, however, are on the second and third floor and can be reached through a narrow staircase.

The Assembly meetings are held in another building, in the 1. Slavne Višegradske brigade Street, at number 2a in Goražde where a ramp is installed on its lateral entrance. However, the Assembly room is on the first floor and could be reached by the staircase. According to the Assembly Secretary, Mr. Bašić Midhat, at the moment there is no technical possibilities to make any architectural adjustments to the benefit of persons with disabilities.

### **The Assembly of Zenica-Doboj Canton<sup>19</sup>**

Business premises in which the bodies of the Zenica-Doboj Assembly are located have two parts: the main building and the annex.

Entrance into the building is flat without impediments allowing for an easy access of persons with disabilities.

The Assembly bodies are located on the first floor and could be reached through the stairs and the four elevators. Access to elevators and to the protocol in the ground floor is enabled owing to the presence of the special ramps.

The Assembly meetings are held in the annex building. Moving throughout the annex building is done by means of the staircases, while the main building is linked to the annex building with a passageway located on the first floor. Therefore the access to the meeting room is not possible for persons with disabilities for architectural barriers.

Toilet is not adjusted to persons with disabilities because of the narrow entrance.

Parking lots are not marked or earmarked for vehicles driven by or carrying persons with disabilities.

According to the Assistant Technical Director in the Common Affairs Service, Ms Renata Nakić-Miošić marking of lots for persons with disabilities will be done by the end of the year.

### **The Assembly of Canton 10, Tomislavgrad<sup>20</sup>**

At time of the Ombudsman's representatives visit reconstruction of the Canton 10 Assembly building was under way. Access was not in conformity with accessibility standards<sup>21</sup>, but during

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<sup>17</sup> Visit conducted on 15 September 2016

<sup>18</sup> Visit conducted on 15.09.2016

<sup>19</sup> Visit conducted on 15.09.2016

<sup>20</sup> Visit conducted on 29 September 2016 and 03 November 2016

the visit the Ombudsman received assurances that all the work will be done according to the standards. It was agreed that a representative of the Association of Paraplegics and polio survivors of the Canton 10, Ms Šemsija Dželadin visits the place subsequently to check the veracity of these claims, so she did it and confirmed to the Ombudsman that she was able to enter the Assembly premises independently. The podium in the meeting room, however, is not accessible due to the presence of the steps.

Toilet is not accessible since the door is opening inwards, and the handrails are missing.

Parking lots are wide enough and will be marked as designated to persons with disabilities after the finishing of the reconstruction works.

Readiness to removing barriers to the podium as soon as possible, along with changing direction of the door movement during its opening to make it go outwards and installing the handrails in the framework of reconstruction works was expressed.

### **The Assembly of Western Herzegovina Canton<sup>22</sup>**

The Assembly premises were located in the building owned by the Government of Western Herzegovina Canton. Main official entrance is not adjusted to persons with disabilities. However, there are two entrances into the premises of the Canton's Assembly in the ground floor. One is flat, with no architectural barriers, but negligent, creating the impression that this entrance is out of use since the door is closed. The other entrance has one step which prevents unimpeded movement.

Meeting room does not have architectural barriers, as well as access to podium and microphones.

Entrance of the toilet is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

The Assembly has its own parking space, but the sign marking the lots for persons with disabilities is demolished.

According the Assembly speaker, Mr. Mišetić Ante, the building and the parking place are owned by the Government of Western Herzegovina Canton.

The Assembly Secretary, Ms Julijana Šimović, in a telephone conversation dated 25 October 2016 emphasized that she will, after the budget projection, furnish the Assembly with a plan to resolve the identified shortcomings, and that plan will include the following: regular maintenance of all the access paths, adjustment of all the entrances to persons with disabilities, adjustment of toilet and arrangement of parking space with designating the lots for persons with disabilities.

### **The Assembly of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton<sup>23</sup>**

Entrance into the building is not possible due to the existence of the steps. According to Ms Željka Čule, the Assembly Secretary, there was a ramp in place, but the inclination was too big, it was too steep and for that reason removed.

Meeting room does not have architectural barriers, but the access to the podium is not possible.

Toilet is not adjusted to persons with disabilities.

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<sup>21</sup> After the adoption of the Law on Spatial Arrangement and Construction and the appropriate by-laws adopted were the specific rules including standards related to access to the public buildings and public transportation means to persons with disabilities.

<sup>22</sup> Visit conducted on 29.09.2016

<sup>23</sup> Visit conducted on 30.09.2016

The Assembly does not have designated parking lots for persons with disabilities.

According to Ms Željka Čule, the Assembly Secretary, construction of a new building next to the one that currently serves as the Assembly building, to include meeting room and toilet adjusted to persons with disabilities is planned. Particular attention will be paid to the accessibility. Funds earmarked for that purpose are available (relevant administrative bodies have yet to issue necessary licenses and approvals) and she thinks that construction is about to start by the end of 2016. It was also emphasized that the existing building was not refurbished because of the works on the extension of the Assembly's capacities.

It was also said that parking lots earmarked for persons with disabilities will be appropriately marked.

In a telephone conversation of 25 October 2016 with the Assembly Secretary, Ms Čule, the Ombudsman learned that the purchase of the mobile ramp is ongoing, according to the public procurement procedures and that its installation was expected by the end of 2016.

## **IV OPINION OF THE OMBUDSMAN OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina gave their opinion on this topic in their Special report from January 2016, which was prepared on the basis of the compiled answers of the legislative authorities to the Ombudsman's relevant questionnaire. Replies of the legislative bodies revealed, above all, that these authorities are aware of the necessity to remove architectural barriers in order to enable all the citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina equal access to the legislative bodies. The main objective of the Special Report was to raise the awareness of the competent authorities on the rights of persons with disabilities. To this end, the recommendations given special report related to the adjustment of office premises in architectural terms. Article 29 of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities provides for participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life. Therefore the state-party has the obligation to ensure implementation of this right through the different mechanisms to all the citizens so they can enjoy the rights guaranteed with no discrimination on an equal basis with others.

During their visits to the business premises of the legislative bodies Ombudspersons identified the issue of absence of permanent premises and working in rented premises. Most assemblies are not the owners of the premises they occupy (for example the assemblies of Zenica-Doboj Canton, Una-Sana Canton, Bosnia-Drina Canton, Western Herzegovina Canton), which limits their possibilities to make interventions in architectural and construction sense. Regardless to the above, legislative bodies should insist on taking measures and implementation of legal solutions adopted by them.

Issue of entrance to the buildings where the assemblies are located is equally important as the issue of free movement inside these buildings. In discussions with the authorized representatives of the visited assemblies, they expressed their willingness to find solutions to enable free access to the platforms and microphones by installation of mobile ramps (for example the assemblies of Una-Sana Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Canton 10, the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska).

The Ombudsman's visits also revealed that number of rooms in some assemblies was extended "at the expense" of toilets, so the entrance in some toilets is rather narrow (the assemblies

of Una-Sana Canton, Skupština Zenica-Doboj Canton, Herzegovina-Neretva Canton), which requires more extensive adjustment works.

Representatives of the assemblies expressed their readiness to mark parking lots earmarked to the persons with disabilities by the end of the current year (the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, the Assembly of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the Assembly of Zenica-Doboj Canton, the Assembly of Posavina Canton).

Ombudspersons wish to emphasize a specific issue in Sarajevo Canton, which is the access to the Cantonal Assembly building, which is not constructed according to the standards.

It is particularly highlighted that the assemblies, as well as all other public authorities while removing architectural the architectural barriers so that persons with disabilities can exercise their fundamental human rights, such as the right to independent and free movement, should adhere to the standards set forth in regulations in this area. Ombudspersons are of the opinion that the authorities should pay attention to the putting in place the appropriate signs and markings providing the adequate information about facilities and premises accessible to people with disabilities.

Comparing the actual situation of the premises in which legislative bodies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are located found during the visits of the Ombudsman's representatives and the situation described in the Ombudsman's earlier Special Report, it can be concluded that there are clear indications of the activities taken by the legislative bodies aimed at the integration of persons with disabilities, and facilitation of their movement without barriers. Through monitoring of the implementation of recommendations given in the mentioned special report, Ombudspersons find it necessary to draw attention to the implementation of the standards set forth in the applicable laws, for the accessibility issue to be solved so to serve the purpose sought to be achieved.

Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of achieving the full equality of persons with disabilities, and the elimination of identified irregularities in the existing architectural solutions, think that legislative bodies should continue with the removal of architectural barriers.

***Having the above in mind, pursuant to Article 32 of the Law on Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>24</sup>, Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina recommend to the legislative bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina to keep taking measures aimed at removal of architectural barriers found during the field visits and to inform the Ombudsman on their actions to this end within six months from the date of this Report.***

Ombudspersons of Bosnia and Herzegovina:



Jasminka Džumhur, PhD



Nives Jukić



Ljubinko Mitrović, PhD

<sup>24</sup> Službeni list Bosne i Hercegovine, br. 32/2000, 19/2002, 35/2004 i 32/2006.