

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 7/10/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: SDA not counting on coalition with HDZ and SDS

Dnevni Avaz: Dramatic race for the Bosniak member of the Presidency, SDP will ask Lagumdzija to resign?

Glas Srpski: Unofficial electoral results in RS: SDS, Sarovic and Covic; BiH Federation: Comeback of SDA and HDZ

Nezavisne Novine: BiH returns to 1990!

Blic: The SDS is leading, Sarovic and Covic the first ones; Mujahedins still a threat to Serbs in Maglaj; Milutin Pejic: We will sue the PIO Fund and its director

Vecernje Novosti: Dragan Covic on the verge of victory

Nacional: Covic and the SDS are leading in RS

Vecernji List: Triumph of national parties

Dnevni List: Paddy Ashdown – local courts will have final word in removals of officials

Slobodna Dalmacija: National parties celebrate victory

Elections 2002

At a press conference held at 22:00 hrs last night, the president of the **BiH Election Commission**, Lidija Korac, presented an incomplete and unconfirmed preliminary results of Saturday's elections in BiH. The results were based on 60-80% of the vote counted so far – the percentage varied greatly from municipality to municipality – and it did not include data from 26 municipal election commissions, which had not, until 22:00, sent their votes to the counting center.

BiH Presidency

Bosniak member: Sulejman Tihic 27,8%, Haris Silajdzic 25,7%, Alija Behmen 12,2%

Serb member: Mirko Sarovic 38,8%, Nebojsa Radmanovic 24,9%, Branko Dokic 8,7%

Croat member: Dragan Covic 64,5%, Mladen Ivankovic 16%, Mijo Anic 8%

BiH Parliament

Federation votes: SDA 32,5%, HDZ 18,7%, SBIH 16%, SDP 14%

RS votes: SDS 36%, SNSD 28,9%, PDP 11,1%

RS President

Dragan Covic 39,5%, Milan Jelic 27,8%, Dragan Mikerevic 8,1%

RS National Assembly

SDS 33,5%, SNSD 27,4%, PDP 11,8%

Federation Parliament

SDA 32,5%, HDZ-HD 18%, S BiH 16,6%, SDP 14%

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that national(ist) political parties are celebrating victory without any concern for the *“alarmingly low voter turn-out”*, which barely passed the threshold to be considered valid. The daily carries a large front page splash cartoon by Bozo Stefanovic showing a clock and an announcer telling viewers to “turn back the time.”

Oslobodjenje (p.2) also reports (in a title!) that the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, congratulated the SDA on the elections result, after the party president, Sulejman Tihic, announced full victory of SDA at all levels of authority in BiH. He also said that any coalition-making with SDS and/or HDZ is *“out of the question.”* *“We will be open for coalition with all parties which accept reform program designed by the OHR and which are in line with SDA’s program of crisis management. We are confident that the OHR will accept us as a partner.”*

Dnevni Avaz (front page) reports that at an urgent meeting on Sunday, senior officials in the **SDP** discussed the elections results and the waning support of voters for this party. The daily claims that the majority of officials agreed that **Zlatko Lagumdžija** *“broke the party and mishandled the election campaign by putting too much focus on himself.”* Avaz’s Sead Numanovic also writes that SDP was suspicious about Lagumdžija’s ties with *“obscure companies, such as Strom Telecom and nepotism in diplomatic service.”* Vice president of the SDP **Sead Avdic** confirmed some of the speculations in Avaz, saying that some of the SDP leaders must take responsibility for the poor elections result. *“Everyone has to think about his role in this dramatic loss of votes. If Lagumdžija does not resign, he will be removed by the party congress. He bears most responsibility for this,”* Avdic said.

Glas Srpski reports on the elections results presented mostly by individual political parties on Sunday: SDS leading in the RS, followed by SNSD and PDP, In the Federation SDA and HDZ-HDC coalition triumph. Glas also reported on the comments of a number of politicians in the RS:

Milorad Dodik, SNSD stated that his party is not satisfied with the election results. *“The SDS did not deserve to win, but people once again voted for the past.”*

Dragan Kalinic, SDS expressed *“his sincere condolences to Milorad Dodik, Nikola Spiric, Milan Jelic, Dragan Kostic and Mirko Banjac”*. *“The opposition led by SNSD and its 11 satellite parties failed to break down the SDS. People made no mistake in voting for SDS, Bosniaks and Croats voted according to the same stereotype for SDA and HDZ.”*

FTV reports that **Dragan Kalinic**, the leader of SDS, seems to be encouraged by the success of the nationalist parties in the Federation. *“BiH voters have recognized that the SDP, S BiH, and the NHI are a civic-nationalist hybrid. After they recognized this they decided to vote for genuine nationalist parties such as the HDZ and the SDA. We also believe that this is the beginning of a new reality in BiH, that it is promising and that it could secure new stability in BiH over the next four years.”* Kalinic is confident, as he put it, that respected representatives of the international community would also recognize this and that the SDS would continue with reforms together with its future coalition partners.

Vecernje Novosti (p. 4) speculates that, although the SDS appears to have most significant support in the RS, it is certain that it will not be able to form a majority government.

Vecernji List (page 3, conducted by Zoran Kresic) carries an interview with **Dragan Covic**, the most likely Croat member of the BiH Presidency titled *“The International Community will be our partner in implementation of reforms”*. Covic: *“The messages that we have been receiving in the past 10 days, not only from representatives of International Community that act in BiH, but also European Union and American administration, we recognized as messages of encouragement (...) Therefore, we state openly to our domestic and international public, that we are ready and determinate to take responsibility for constitutional arrangement of BiH, but also for bringing negative socio-economic trends to an end. What we want to emphasise, is that we are ready to do our job and not to shift responsibility to international administration. We believe that in those relations the International Community will be a good friend and partner”,* Covic said.

In a statement for **Slobodna Dalmacija**, the acting president of the HDZ, Barisa Colak, said that he expects the HDZ-HD-HNZ coalition to participate in the executive authority and that he hopes that there will be no election engineering. In an article titled *“New marriage between HDZ and SDA”*, the daily argues that the coalition of these two parties is almost inevitable.

In an article in **Jutarnji list**, Snjezana Pavic argues that it is not the results of elections that are important for

creating government in BiH, but the will of the International Community.

Reform will be the theme of the next BiH government despite the failure of pro-West moderates in the face of strong support for traditional nationalist parties, High Representative **Paddy Ashdown**, said on Sunday. He said it was a mistake to think the country was heading back to its nationalist past after voters on Saturday rejected the ruling reformist coalition parties. *"Whatever the results, BiH has to turn a new page... For the first time since the war these elections were dominated by the issues of reform and of the future, not the past,"* he told reporters. *"There will be those who say that nationalism is strengthening in this country. I can tell you that it is not,"* he said. Ashdown also said he would be *"taking action and making proposals over the next few days and weeks"* to ensure more *"effective governments"*. (**BHTV 1, FTV, BH Radio 1, FENA, Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, Slobodna Dalmacija, Glas Srpski, Nezavisne Novine, Vecernji List, Vjesnik, Blic**)

Guardian and **BBC** report this morning that despite stark warnings by International Community officials, BiH citizens most likely voted to re-install nationalist parties at all levels and in both entities. *"Paddy Ashdown, said before the elections that the thought of the nationalists returning to power kept him awake at night. If so, he can expect many more sleepless nights to come...There is no real risk of another war – but there is a danger of a failed state. And that could have repercussions, both for Bosnia's neighbors and for the rest of Europe...Unstable, ethnically fractured and impoverished, Bosnia risks becoming a black hole in the region, and a byword for the failure of the international intervention to rebuild a shattered country,"* BBC concludes.

OHR/IC activities

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, issued on Sunday a package of Decisions tightening the regulations governing the provision of immunity granted to public officials and limiting the number of public office-holders who may invoke this privilege. *"The underlying object of this has been to bring immunity provisions into line with those of the BiH Constitution and clean up politics in BiH,"* said OHR in a press release. (one of the leading items in **BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS** prime time news, **Oslobodjenje** p.4, **Dnevni List** front page, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 8, **Glas Srpski** p. 4, **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 2, **Vecernji List** front page, **Slobodna Dalmacija** p. 11, **Blic** p. 7, **Vecernje Novosti** p. 4)

In an Op-Ed in **Dnevni Avaz**, Eldar Dizdarevic said that latest Ashdown's decision on limiting immunity of officials will have tremendous effect not only on political, but also on economic life of BiH. *"When responsible officials can be prosecuted without hiding behind their immunity, the so-called grey economic will also start dying out,"* Dizdarevic writes.

In connection with HR decision on immunity, **Dnevni List** on page 3 speculates that **Dragan Covic**, who is almost certain to become the Croat member of BiH Presidency, might be replaced by someone else, *"if the BiH Election Commission decides to remove him because of violations of the law."* In that context, the daily notes that Covic has several criminal reports filed against him during 2000 and 2001. DL learns from sources close to Federation MoI that criminal charges have been prepared against "Lijanovici" Company too because of the case of money laundry (32 million KM) and that Covic's name is connected to "HPT-Eronet" case.

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, issued on Sunday two decisions appointing, respectively, the Director and Deputy Directors of the Agency for Information and Protection (SIPA) and the seven member Board which will manage the selection of senior FBiH Ministry of the Interior officials. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 5, **Oslobodjenje** p. 2, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 2, **BH Radio 1** morning news, **Slobodna Dalmacija** last page)

Dnevni Avaz (p. 5) reports that the **Paddy Ashdown** also addressed a letter late last night to the Federation Prime Minister, **Alija Behmen**, the chairmen of the two chambers in the Federation Parliament, **Ismet Briga** and **Ivo Komsic**, as well as to all leading cantonal officials in this entity, in which he is informing them about his decisions which will finalize the process of constitutional reform. According to **Dnevni Avaz**, the decision will implement the April 2002 Constitutional Amendments in the Cantons, provide for a Vital Interest Mechanism in each Canton, eliminate Special Regime Cantons, and Require Proportional Representation of Constituent Peoples and Others in Cantonal Government Ministries. *"The aim of these changes is to ensure that more funds are spent on the citizens, instead on the expensive bureaucratic machine, but also to secure full protection of rights of all citizens,"* OHR chief spokesman **Julian Bratishwaite** told the daily.

Miscellaneous

In an interview with Italian newspaper Avvenire, the Catholic Cardinal Vinko Puljic said that rights of Catholics living in BiH are endangered. "In the Bosnian republic which is dominated by Muslims, it is nearly impossible to obtain a construction permit for building of new churches. This is one very refined but sly discrimination, so many Catholics are considering emigrating to other countries....Iran, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are financing strong propaganda here," Puljic told the paper.

(**Oslobodjenje** p. 7)

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Uncompleted preliminary election results indicate election victory of national parties.
- A High Representative decided on limitation of immunity for politicians.
- Speculations on terrorists' attack on French tanker in Yemen.
- Does the FRY Army support Saddam?

FTV

- SDA, HDZ and SDS: major satisfaction with election results
- High Representative Paddy Ashdown decided on more strict treatment of immunity regulations.
- Bob Stewart and Noel Malcolm speaks for *Dnevnik*.

RTRS

- 53,94 percent of voters voted at the general elections
- According to the political parties, majority of votes went to national parties.
- Election Commission will release preliminary results tonight at 21 00
- High Representative restricted number of officials who can use privilege of immunity