OHR BiH Media Round-up, 17/10/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Silajdzic, Orucevic and a major part of t Party for BiH create new post-election alliance; The High Representative's decision: BiH Court in Ramiz Salcin military barracks

Dnevni Avaz: Lidija Korac rejects accusations – Not a single political party will be damaged; Ashdown breaks politicization – Court

Dnevni List: The High Representative: There is no constitutional obstacle for establishment of more efficient Council of Ministers; The Election Commission: There is no election engineering

Vecernji List: New election engineering: Losers remain in government!; Ashdown and Covic met

Slobodna Dalmacija: Compensation mandates: 'Little parties' ate votes of SDA and HDZ?; Leutar case, Fahrija Karkin, attorney: "They are on trial only because they are Croats!"

Glas Srpski: Sufferings of workers who stay out of work; Ashdown's editorial in IHT – A danger for the Balkans; Mockery of camp inmates' sufferings

Nezavisne Novine:"Milkos" Factory workers threaten with hunger strike; Interview with SDHR, Gerhard Schroembgens – There is political will for CoM reforms; Ashdown rejects veto of Bosniaks and Croats; BiH Court remains in disputed army barracks

Blic: Bosniaks' and Croats' veto on the law on ministries; Cavic: Change of name of RS not possible; Sonja Pastuovic: Municipalities to find accommodation for refugees

Post-election developments

According to **Oslobodjenje**'s front-page story (continued on p

7), the **Party for BiH** would accept to re-establish a coalition with the **SDP** at the state level and in several cantons but it is conditioning the move by either resignation or removal of SDP leader **Zlatko Lagumdzija**. If Lagumdzija remains on the top position in the party, the Party for BiH is likely to join a coalition with the SDA.
The SDP BiH Main Board is expected to meet on Saturday and among other things discuss whether Nijaz Durakovic, a member of the Party Presidency, should be excluded from SDP or not. Ivo Komsic, the SDP BiH Vice-president, told a press conference in Sarajevo on Wednesday, that by accepting to be on the list of Party for Bi9H in the recent elections, Durakovic had abused the SDP Statute, and the Main Board would therefore say a final word on his further status in the party. Speaking about the possible post-election coalitions, Komsic emphasized that the SDP had determined basis of the political platform for forming the majority in the legislative and executive bodies in BiH through the establishment of an alliance for reforms. (Oslobodjenje, p 8, Dnevni Avaz, p 2, Dnevni List, front and p 4, Vecernji List, p 2))

In a statement with Dnevni Avaz (p 2), Durakovic fiercely reacted on Komsic's claims saying that actually Komsic was the one who had been changing the parties always bringing himself closer to the party which was in power at the particular time.

Dnevni Avaz reports (p 2) that the SDA Vice-president, **Adnan Terzic**, was appointed chairman of a working group that will on behalf of the party negotiate with the possible coalition partners on the formation of the parliamentary majority and taking over the power at all levels in BiH. Together with Terzic, the working group comprises Hasan Muratovic, Elmir Jahic, Sefik Dzaferovic and Adil Osmanovic.

The BiH Election Commission President, Lidija Korac, told Oslobodjenje, p 3, that the final BiH 2002 general elections results would be announced on Saturday, October 19. Together with a number of votes and a percentage of votes gained by

each political party, the Commission will also announce the allocation of mandates and the names of the candidates who entered the legislative bodies in BiH under the system of open lists.

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz (front page, p 4), Korac rejected all the allegations that the Commission was preparing a post-election fraud through the allocation of the compensatory mandates.

Dnevni List (front and page 3, ONASA'a report) carries a member of the BiH Election Commission, **Hilmo Pasic,** as saying that according to the BiH Election Law, all the political parties who participated in the October 5 elections at the State and Entity levels are entitled to compensation mandates. Pasic added that it was possible that smaller parties that have not made it past the threshold could make it to the Federation or RS Parliaments saying that it was not a case of election rigging. Pasic explained that there was a formula in the Election Law that is being used for calculation of the compensation mandates so no party would either win or lose eventually.

A separate article on page 3 carries a press release by the Presidency of SDA in which the party condemns pressures exerted against the BiH Election Commission, the pressures that are being exerted in connection to the compensation mandates by *"parties losers and some circles within the IC".* SDA warns that the party would use all means to fight against the election rigging.

According to **Blic,** p 3, the calculation for distributing compensation mandates is done based on specific formulas so that even certain parties that have not passed the three-percent election limit can enter state and entity parliament based on compensation mandates. As defined by the BiH election system the BiH House of Representatives will be consisted of 28 representatives from the Federation, 21 of them elected

directly from multi-member election units and 7 through the compensation system and another 14 representatives from the RS, 9 elected directly from multi-member election units and 5 through the compensation system. The BiH House of Peoples (indirect elections) will be consisted of 10 representatives from the Federation (5 Bosniaks and 5 Croats from the FBiH House of Peoples) and 5 representatives from the RS (appointed by the RS Assembly). The FBiH House of Representatives will have 98 representatives, 73 elected directly from multi-member election units and 25 through the compensation system. The FBiH House of Peoples will have 58 representatives. The RS Assembly will have 83 representatives, 62 elected directly from multi-member election units and 21 through the compensation system, while the RS Council of Peoples will have 28 representatives (Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs with 8 representatives each and 4 representatives of the "Others" category appointed by representatives in the RS Assembly).

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Dejan Jazvic) carries another article about the allocation of compensation mandates. Under a title *"Scandalous: Election losers stay in power through election rigging",* the author says that the allocation of the compensation mandates to political parties that have not made it past the threshold has complicated what seemed to be a clear situation thus making the SDA-HDZ victory a relative one. The author says that the BiH Election Commission yesterday tried to explain the journalists the complicated method of awarding of the mandates yesterday and goes on to say that the unclear election regulations were pre-arranged in case of defeat of the Alliance for changes. According to VL, the situation could result in 18 parties having seats in the Federation Parliament with SDA and HDZ having a narrow majority, the majority the parties can expect to have if they get votes from HKDU, HSP and Croat Rightists Block (out of 98 seats in Federation HoR, SDA has 32, HDZ 16 and the other three parties have one seat respectively). Finally, VL says that SDP can form a government at the State level, owing it to

the compensation mandates to its allies and if SDP is joined by social-democrat affiliated parties from the RS.

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 15, by Blanka Magas) carries an editorial in which the author says that the dubious election regulations that deal with the allocation of the compensation mandates were perhaps just a trick or a probe of the current political situation saying that the 3% threshold was never going to be consistently implemented. The author says that it was illogical in the first place that such election law went through the parliamentary procedure with so many loopholes that can be interpreted to soothe the needs of the politics. Magas sums it up by saying that the dubious article 9.7 of the BiH Election Law, which regulates the allocation of the compensation mandates, will create displeasure and confusion in the BiH political life, the situation which will be eventually, according to Magas, resolved by the High Representative and other representatives of the IC.

The RS Vice President, **Dragan Cavic**, who won the majority in the presidential elections expects an agreement on the parliamentary majority to be made by parties and excludes the possibility of changing the name of Republika Srpska**, Glas Srpski** (p 4) **and Nezavisne Novine** (p 4) report. According to Cavic, such thing can not be done without a prior change of the Constitution. Cavic said that he would try to ensure that major political parties make an agreement on the stable parliamentary majority before he announces the name of RS Prime Minister designate. *"If such an agreement is made, I will propose RS Prime Minister designate in line with the agreement reached between political parties. I, of course, would like to attend negotiations in order to give my opinion on the functioning of institutions and priorities in the future."* He said that one of his priorities was the organization of the RS President's Cabinet in compliance with the new constitutional order with the deputies from the other

two constituent peoples.

Commenting on whether the name of the RS would be changed if a member of the SDA or certain Croat parties, which have indicated they would make such a request, assumed the posts of the RS vice-presidents, Cavic pointed out that this would remain a futile request. "*The name of the RS will not be changed regardless of who advocates it. It is not plausible to do it due to two simple reasons. The first one regards the BiH and the RS Constitutions, which clearly define the name of the Serb Republic, and there is not the necessary parliamentary majority to change these two constitutions. The second reason is that one entire constituent nation, and of course I mean the Serbs, and the political parties who have the support of the Serbs do not accept this change. Nevertheless, I do not believe that this will damage cooperation with the newly elected vice-presidents because like me, they cannot decide on this issue. Of course, no-one can forbid them to want the impossible*," Cavic said. (**Blic** p 3, **Nacional** p 11)

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, will in coming days meet with leaders of major political parties in order to hear their positions with regard to the post-election period in BiH, learns **Dnevni Avaz** (p 2). Ashdown has already met with (SDA Honorary President) Alija Izetbegovic and (Party for BiH founder) Haris Silajdzic and he now intends to meet with the top representatives of SDS, SNSD, SDP, PDP, HDZ BiH…

An article in **Vecernji List** on front and page 3 by J.P. reads that the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown,** met with **Dragan Covic** of HDZ BiH at OHR Sarajevo on Wednesday. VL could not confirm what the meeting was about speculating that the two talked about post-election issues and the future co-operation between HDZ and IC. VL notes that this is a first meeting between a High Representative and a senior HDZ official in year and a half and that the meeting represents a change in the IC-HDZ relations.

"Not waiting for the establishment of the new legislative and executive bodies, this in Britain forgotten politician, former leader of the liberal democrats, is issuing in Sarajevo one decree after another, completely in compliance with his protector's mission. Not a single out of the three leading national parties has objected to such practice so far," Gojko Beric wrote in an Oslobodjenje editorial wondering didn't this mean that these parties were prepared for an absolute obedience in order to stay on power.

The High Representative's activities; related news/commentaries

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, on Wednesday issued a Decision confirming the Council of Ministers' original decision of 10 October this year allocating the former "Victor Bubanj" JNA barracks, as the seat of the **BiH Court**. The High Representative's Decision means that the BiH Court will be located in these barracks. Issuing this Decision, the High Representative said: *"I believe if crimes were indeed committed in the Viktor Bubanj/Ramiz Salcin barracks during the war, this strengthens the case for giving this building to an institution whose function will be to protect individual human rights and punish these most heinous crimes."* (**Osloboodjenje**, front page, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 8, mentioned on the front page, Glas Srpski, p 5, Nezavisne Novine, p 3: "Court of BiH remains in disputed army barracks")
Almasa Bajric wrote in the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day that Ashdown's decision to locate BiH Court in the Ramiz Salcin barracks was nothing else but a decision to prevent politicization, this time, of a facility.

Glas Srpski quotes (p 5) **Branislav Dukic**, the man who spend almost two yearsin various detention camps in Sarajevo and more than 6 months in the **Viktor Bubanj** army barracks in 1994. "*We, who survived, will witness before everybody including those who now claim that things that happened did not actually happened and who knew that the Viktor Bubanj army barracks was a detention camp for Sarajevo Serbs*", said Dukic. He said that

the proposal on the BiH Court locations is disgraceful and humiliating and called it hypocrisy. "*I am speechless. They are mocking at our sufferings. Along with the BiH lawsuit against the FRY, it is another swindle by the Bosniaks who deny that they committed crimes against Serbs. I am asking them: Can they deny my memories on those days?*", said Dukic. He said it is no wonder that Bosniaks do this, but he cannot believe that the BiH Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications, Svetozar Mihajlovic, keeps saying that he does not have any official information about this case. Dukic also described the things that he went through in the Viktor Bubanj barrack and gave the names of people who tortured him and other inmates.

"It has been suggested that reforming the ***Council of Ministers*** *to make it more effective, for example by ending the principle of rotation, would require changes to the Dayton Peace Agreement and the BiH constitution. This is not the case. Speaking to international investors and economic administrators at the Joint Institutions Building in Sarajevo on 9 October, the High Representative,* ***Paddy Ashdown****, suggested ways of making the BiH Council of Ministers work more efficiently, so that it can serve citizens' needs and act as a credible interlocutor with international partners. The High Representative proposed that the merry-go-round in the CoM be stopped, so that stable and effective government can begin. He suggested that the Chair of the Council of Ministers, the Foreign Minister and the Treasury Minister form the powerful engine room of an effective government,"* said an OHR press release. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 8, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 9, **Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Dnevni List**, front page, p 3)

Nezavisne Novine carries (front page, p 2) a brief interview with the Senior Deputy High Representative, **Gerhard Enver Schroembgens**, in which he talks about **the High Representative's initiative** to make the CoM more efficient and consultative meetings that he had on Wednesday in Banja Luka

with the representatives of the leading RS parties (SDS, SNSD, SPRS and DNS). Ambassador Schroembgens said that the reform of the CoM has to be implemented in line with the Constitution of this country and that his job is to see, together with domestic politicians, how the reform should be conducted. He said that all political parties as well as the OHR agree that reforms are necessary and think that there is a room for improvement of the CoM's work.

"Suggesting, as Pfaff does, that Bosnia-Herzegovina might usefully be carved up is unacceptable to the international community, and dangerous for the Balkans. First, such a division would deliver a dishonorable victory to individuals indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia for "crimes against humanity." Second, it would lead to conflict. Third, it would immediately block the whole region's path to Europe. And fourth, it runs so counter to the facts in this country that I can only presume that Pfaff hasn't been here for some time," wrote the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, in a letter published in the International Herald Tribune on Wednesday as an answer to **William Pfaff**, who suggested to divide up BiH. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 8, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 8, **Vecernji List**, p 2, **Glas Srpski**, front page, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 6)

RS Law on Ministries; rebalance of the Budget

In a letter sent to the Republika Srpska Constitutional Commission President, Miroslav Mikes, on Wednesday, the High representative, Paddy Ashdown, wrote he did not consider a vital national interest was abused by a new RS draft law on ministries. However, at a session of the commission in the course of the day in Banja Luka, a compromise was not reached on the draft law. (Dnevni Avaz, p 10, Nezavisne Novine, p 5)
Glas Srpski quotes (p 3) the RS NA Constitutional Commission Chairman, **Miroslav Mikes**, as saying that the Bosniak and Croat members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission again vetoed the Rebalance of RS Budget for 2002 and the revised and

harmonised version of the Proposed RS Law on Ministries. "*Given that we have not reached an agreement, I requested that the High Representative decides whether the Law on Ministries and the Rebalance of RS 2002 Budget violates the vital national interests of Bosniak and Croat people. If the High Representative responds by11:00 AM Thursday, then the RS NA special session will take place. If he does not respond by that time, then the adoption of the Law will be postponed until further notice*", said **Mikes**. He also said he was sorry that the vital national interest (VNI) clause is being used and misused very frequently, which can block the whole system. (**Blic**, p 3)

"*The SNSD delegates will not attend discussion on the re-balance of the budget in the RS National Assembly, as they are of the opinion that there is no point to discuss this issue before the current composition of the Assembly*, " the head of the SNSD caucus, **Branko Neskovic,** said. According to Neskovic, this issue could have been discussed in July and it is inappropriate for the former composition of the Assembly to discuss it, if one knows that a new Assembly can convoke in one month. "The SNSD delegates will attend the discussion on the draft law on ministries," Neskovic said. (**Nacional** p 11)

Affairs in the Federation

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 14, by Zlatko Tulic) carries statement of **Fahrija Karkin,** legal defender of one of the accused in 'Leutar case': "*In this case, key evidences were removed and defence was not informed about them. The principles of Criminal law have been denied*". Karkin added that the accused ones are on trial only because they are Croats. He also added that there are other evidences hidden and not available for defence, while the closing word is taking place.

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by M. Markovic) carries statement of **Tahir Pervan**, former journalist from Sarajevo, and currently asylum seeker in USA, who's letter was presented

in case against **Dominik Ilijasevic Como** by defence. Pervan wrote: "*I am ready to witness in 'Leutar case'. I want direct contact with protected witness **Merim Galijatovic**. I was personally recruited for that case, so that Merim's story looks genuine. (…) They offered me 100,000 US$ to make an 'exclusive' story with Galijatovic. I know in details who trained protected witness. Arguments for my testimony are with one foreign Embassy in Sarajevo. My testimony will discredit the whole work of Police and AID*".

Dnevni List (front and page 3) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 16) report that the Governor of Canton Herceg-Bosna (Canton 10) **Dragan Bagaric** resigned, because of blockage of work of the Cantonal executive authorities, due to resignation of Cantonal Prime Minister **Ante Omazic** and other three ministers, that happened on September 11. "*Following the resignation of the Prime Minister and ministers in the Cantonal Government I faced a complete blockage in the functioning of Cantonal authorities and was forced to offer my resignation. Following a number of resignations I requested relevant authorities to find a solution to this situation, but there was no understanding for my demands and I concluded that there was neither interest nor willingness to find a way out from the situation this canton has found itself in*", Bagaric stated in his letter of resignation.

Dnevni List (page 15) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (front and page 16) carry reports from Press Conference of International Organisations seated in Mostar, where OHR (S) Spokesperson, **Avis Benes**, stated that Deputy High Representative, Ambassador **Jean-Pierre Berçot**, sent a letter to the Heads of Mostar City-municipalities, Mayor and Deputy Mayor of City of Mostar and Public companies "Komos" and "Parkovi" in relation to the issue of unacceptable random waste disposal in Mostar. Benes stated that Ambassador Berçot expressed his concern over this long-lasting problem and pointed out the urgent need to halt this practice in order to prevent the further deterioration of

this already serious environmental disaster, which also presents a threat to health and well-being of all citizens. Benes also added that DHR Berçot suggested that until a permanent solution is defined within the project carried out with the World Bank, this issue should be solved on commercial basis in the form of the arrangement between the company managing the waste dump and companies collecting and transporting the garbage.

BiH-related news

The director of the Economic Institute in Banjaluka, **Dusko Jaksic**, said that the implementation of a value added tax (VAT) in BiH is currently impossible since this requires a well-organised and functional economy, which does not exist in BiH. According to him, the six-month deadline for introduction of this system is absolutely unrealistic and can not be implemented since Croatia, for example, needed two years for this and hasn't solved yet all the problems. Jaksic feels that the introduction of this tax at the BiH level would de-stimulate the payment of taxes, since people would try to evade paying taxes to BiH more than they evade paying them to RS. (**Blic** p 6)

"*The BiH Council of Ministers has deliberately blocked the final settlement of the border line of BiH by cutting the financial resources necessary for the work of the Commission for BiH Borders*," stated the Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives, **Sead Avdic.** He claims that there are certain information, according to which Yugoslavia has requested the dislocation of the border to the left bank of Drina River, by which the FRY would have got Zvornik and Bajina Basta lakes, as well as the area in the region of Priboj. (**Blic** p 7, Sarajevo dailies also report on the issue)

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Wednesday, 1900)

- Compensatory mandates still provoking reaction of the parties

- Will SDP, due to fractions, be left without coalition partners?
- Due to veto of Bosniak and Croat members of RS Constitutional Commission on the draft laws, Thursday's session of the National Assembly questionable
- On 10.000 locations in BiH there are around 670.000 mines; 450 killed so far by the mines

FTV 1 (1930)

- Federal Parliament to consist of representatives of up to 18 parties
- SDP excluded co-operation with national parties: SDA, HDZ and SDS
- President of Livno Canton resigned
- Strike of education employees in Herzegovina – Neretva Canton finished

RTRS (1930)

- RS Parliament Session is under question mark due to veto of Bosniak and Croat members of the Constitutional Commission
- BiH Court will be located in the former Viktor Bubanj barracks, confirmed Ashdown
- BiH Election Commission on regular and compensatory mandates allocation