

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 17/11/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Referendum in Mostar	IMF/RS negotiations	Elections in Serbia	IMF/RS negotiations
DNA centre in Tuzla	Serbian elections	DNA centre in Tuzla	RS war inmates in Hague
	Helicopter's crashes in Iraq	Miners continue a strike	
	Circle 99 on constitution		

Oslobodjenje	JNA officers sold 5,000 apartments
Dnevni Avaz	BiH at the EU doors – only 48 hours until making a big decision
Dnevni List	“There is no progress as long as phonies are ruling”; “FBiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic will be removed”
Vecernji List	“Financial police is ‘collecting racquet’ from companies”; “Croats will leave if there was no University”
Slobodna Dalmacija	Features Croatia related headlines
Glas Srpske	Would IMF agree with pension and salary increase: Pulling the cord!; Croatia: Damage without compensation

Nezavisne Novine	Zlatko Lagumdžija: A shameful role of Paddy Ashdown and OHR in coup d'état affair; Banjaluka: "Brave men" beat up on policeman and broke windscreens at four cars; Powder which Abdulah Omerovic sent to HiRep analysed: He attacked OHR with the sodium bicarbonate, sugar and anti-cockroach poison
Blic	Elections for the President of Serbia: Failed; Attack on the Government: Police chase for the bomber

Political developments

**Referendum in
Mostar
Municipality
North**

With regard to the referendum in the Mostar Municipality North, Dnevni List (page 13, "96,5 % of voters voted for independent unit", by De.L) carries Head of this Municipality Salem Bubalo as saying that the referendum succeeded completely. He added that the in the next few days the results of the referendum will be forwarded to the Municipal Council for verification and then to the further legal procedure. DL says that Bubalo did not want to comment too much on the future moves and he said: "The unit of local self-government already exists and it functions in accordance with the Interim Statute, just like all other Municipalities. Citizens just reiterated once again that they do not want to lose what they have." DL reminds that the OHR characterized the referendum as a step back when the work of the Mostar Commission is in question, but also that the OHR underlined that the results of the referendum will not considerably influence the work of the Mostar Commission. Vecernji List (page 2, "98, 24 % of votes for secession of Municipality North", by Fena) also covered this issue.

Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 3 'Croat boycott diminishing significance of the referendum' By Nermin Bise – "One should not neglect a fact that out of 4,500 citizens of the municipality, 77 percent primarily of Bosniak and very few of Serb nationality voted in the referendum as those of Croat nationality boycotted the event," wrote Bise. "Referendum that is not supported by each constituent people has a diminished effect," said OHR Spokesman Mario Brkic.

Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'Bubalo: All must respect citizens' will' By F. Vele – Salem Bubalo, the Headf of the Mostar Municipality North, said that the referendum as a form of expression of opinion was defined by the Law on Local self-rule and European conventions and as such it should be respected.

<p>Breaking of alliance between SDA and HDZ at all levels possible!?</p>	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 3, "Breaking of alliance between SDA and HDZ at all levels!?", by <u>De. L.</u>) – DL learns from sources close to members of Party for BiH (SBiH) that participate in the work of the Mostar Commission that there is a possibility that the SBiH breaks off the alliance with the SDA and HDZ at all levels. Reasons behind this are reports in some media which equaled the work of SBiH members in the Mostar Commission to work of the HDZ members in the said Commission. As DL reported yesterday, during the last session of the Mostar Commission, Mayor of Mostar, Hamdija Jahic, was disappointed with Safet Omerovic (SBiH) who on the other hand stressed that Mostar should be a single city, with single budget with several constituencies, but also a city in which municipalities will be abolished. Jahic's comment to Omerovic's remarks was that the HDZ wanted the same, which the SBiH resolutely rejected.</p>
<p>Tihic responds to Halilovic: SCG officials requested exchange of territories</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 2 'SCG officials requested exchange of territories' – The top Serbia and Montenegro officials were requesting the exchange of territories at the recent meeting of BiH/SCG Inter-state Council and that was the reason why already prepared agreements on border crossings and border traffic regime were not signed, said BiH Presidency member Sulejman Tihic responding to a question raised by BiH Civil Affairs Minister Safet Halilovic.</p>

<p>HDZ and SDA to talk about their relations</p>	<p>Vecernji List (front “Financial Police ‘collecting racket’ from companies” and page 3 “Colak supported Vrankic about Financial Police”, by <u>Zoran Kresic</u>) – announces that senior officials of the HDZ and SDA will be meeting today and tomorrow following the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Government’s decision not to support the request by the FBiH Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, “to restore order in the Financial Police”, in other words to remove the Chief Inspector and Deputy Chief Inspector of the FBiH Financial Police, Zufer Dervisevic and Miroslav Vidovic respectively. In that context, VL reports that the FBiH President, Niko Lozancic, will be meeting the FBiH PM, Ahmet Hadzipasic, together with two FBiH Deputy PMs, Dragan Vrankic and Gavriilo Grahovac today, whilst the Presidents of SDA and HDZ, Sulejman Tihic and Barisa Colak will be meeting tomorrow. VL also learns that the FBiH Deputy PM Vrankic paid a visit to the OHR on Friday and according to unconfirmed reports, the OHR did not ban the removal of Dervisevic and Vidovic if the removals were to be carried out pursuant to the law. In that context VL also reports that “representatives of the OHR, which in 2000 prevented the removal of Chief Inspector Zufer Dervisevic and his Deputy Miroslav Vidovic, did not rule out a possibility that the new Government appoints new people”.</p> <p>The same paper (page 3, “Bosniaks controlling work of Financial Police”, by <u>Zdenko Jurilj</u>) – notes that the FBiH Financial Police is dominated by the Bosniak staff. Apparently, the latest analysis of the structure of employees shows that out of 110 inspectors, 82 are Bosniaks whilst the rest are Croats and Serbs. VL also notes that all 19 inspectors of the Sarajevo branch and 15 inspectors of the Tuzla are Bosniaks, whilst in Zenica, 17 are Bosniaks and one is a Croat.</p>
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<p>SDA's Palavric on Hadzipasic, FBiH Government</p>	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 3, "Prime Minister Hadzipasic will be removed", by <u>Fena</u>), Oslobođenje pg. 5 'Hadzipasic doe not cooperate with the Parliament', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'Premier and parliamentarians must better cooperate' – carries a Vice President of SDA, Seada Palavric, as responding to a question whether there will be removals in the Government of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying that the party (SDA) had not spoken about it. She however added that during the last session of the SDA Main Board that one could feel that conclusions regarding finding ways out of crisis are not being implemented in the timely manner. According to Palavric, that was the reason to establish a commission the aim which is to monitor the work of executive bodies. "If there are some (objective reasons) and if the people cannot improve in sense of not repeating the same mistakes or failing to make extra efforts, then removals are a possibility if the people do not show gratitude for the confidence trusted to them personally". Palavric seems to mind FBiH PM Ahmet Hadzipasic's bad liaison with the MPs in the FBiH Parliament.</p>
<p>BiH at the EU doors – only 48 hours until making a big decision</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 2 'BiH at the EU doors – only 48 hours until making a big decision' – The European commissioners headed by President of the European Commission Romano Prodi are to meet in order to the most important decision for BiH since the declaration of its independence. As the newspaper learns, the top European officials are expected at their meeting in Brussels on November 18 (Tuesday) to define a response to the feasibility study on BiH chances to accede EU. "The meeting has a historic significance for us," said BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Adnan Terzic in a statement for Dnevni Avaz.</p>

<p>Circle 99 members say existing constitutions hamper political progress</p>	<p>BHTV, FTV, Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'There is no either freedom or justice in BiH', Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3, 'BiH Constitution obstructs development of the state'; Glas Srpske, cover and pg. 2, 'Constitution as a baggage', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'The existing constitution represents an obstacle to development' – The existing constitution of BiH is evidently hampering the administrative, political and economic development of our country. This, inter alia, was said at the session of Circle 99 Independent Intellectuals Association, which discussed changes to the entity and state constitutions. The authorities at all levels in BiH had to adopt various constitutional changes. More of them have been announced, and the changes concerning the norms about the constitutionality of peoples on the territory of BiH are of particular importance. Constitutional provisions about defence and certain elements of the economic system are currently on the agenda. Objections to the changes equally concern the state and the entity constitutions. "The threats from all constitutions in BiH are becoming evident each day. Provisions are being changed every day, which enable us to make steps towards BiH's rapprochement with Europe. Everything which is heading towards the establishment of a democratic, modern state should be changed in a democratic way," said Academic Ljubomir Berberovic in his introductory remarks.</p>
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<p>BiH Diaspora calls for law on dual citizenship adoption</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'Urgently adopt law on dual citizenship', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4, Dnevni List page 9, "Diaspora demands law on dual citizenship", FENA – The BiH Global Diaspora Association sent an open letter to BiH institutions and OHR calling for the adoption of a law on dual citizenship and the implementation of the Decision on the issue imposed by the High Representative last year. "The adoption of this extremely important law would leave those responsible for ethnic cleansing "empty handed" and refugees of war would not be described as BiH citizens who went abroad and took citizenships of other countries, but as BiH citizens with current residence abroad", the Association stated in the letter signed by President Namik Alimajstorovic.</p>
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**Lagumdzija
critical of
HR**

Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 5, 'A shameful role of Paddy Ashdown and OHR in coup d'état affair' – In an interview to NN, Zlatko Lagumdzija, SDP President, speaks about the alleged coup d'état. He expressed dissatisfaction over the fact that although it proved no coup d'état was prepared, Parliament Investigative Commission should have act more properly and file charges against people, proved to have behaved wrongly. He claims there is a political mafia on reign, exemplifying with the fact that any person, who opposes to the current authority, could be dragged in the mud and end up disrupted. He further claims that he gave his lawyers some documents, who are expected to press charges against some of main responsible for this affair. And on this, public will be promptly informed. On the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, Lagumdzija says that what raises great concern on this affair is actually a shameful role of OHR and international community. He expressed hope that Parliament Commission would have enough strength to open this issue as well. He further says on this that: "It is well-known to you that almost every other day, HiRep makes statements on minor issues, actually issues incomparable with human rights violations. HiRep has a tendency to say it is not his problem on some issues, in which he is not interested or involves him as well. The fact is that's OHR has not reacted at all on this affair, nor have they taken any part in cleaning up the mess. And the failure to undertake necessary measures makes them accomplices in the entire affair.

There is another option as well, which is that OHR had played an active role on this by allowing some individuals to do that or even ordered them to do this."

<p>Tihic: Our strategic interests is that US military stay in BiH as long as possible</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 'Tihic: Our strategic interests is that US military stay in BiH as long as possible' – Bosniak member of the Presidency and SDA leader Sulejman Tihic sent a letter to the municipal, cantonal and regional SDA boards in order to explain latest Presidency decisions related to the request for stay of US troops in BiH, offer for construction of US military bases in BiH and decision to possibly send BiH soldiers to Iraq. Tihic said that it was of the strategic BiH interest that the US armed forces stay in the country as long as it is possible.</p>
<p>SNSD holds public forum in Bileca</p>	<p>Dnevni List (page 10, "SDS, PDP and SDA not interested in people's problems", by <u>Nebojsa Kolak</u>) – carries a report from a public forum of the SNSD organized at Bileca. One of the participants of the forum, the President of SNSD, Milorad Dodik, criticized the current authorities in the Republika Srpska accusing them of plunders in the Elektroprivreda of RS, Telekom Srpske, RS Customs and other state companies. "This is the moment of the complete collapse of the Serb national policy which has been led by the SDS, which reflects in the fact that all the important values, which were identified with the RS and by which the people stood by, have been completely demolished. At this moment, the reform to the military is topical and it is evident that the RS is losing competence in that sector, then the indirect taxation in which the RS transfers authority onto BiH, the issue of intelligence service that will be at BiH is also topical and one asks whether it was worth staying on the SDS' concept of national policy when the SDS has given it all up easily", said Dodik.</p>

Economic/social issues

**Talks on
increase of
salaries,
pensions in RS
continued**

BHTV, FTV, RTRS – RS Government continued negotiations with international institutions over increase of minimal salaries and pensions. No progress has been made so far. RS Prime Minister's spokesman Goran Radivojac said the RS Government would not give up on its intention to increase salaries, pensions but also arrangement with IMF should not be challenged/brought into question. He said there were some mechanisms to overcome current disputes, but it will require some more time for negotiations next week.

Glas Srpske, cover page story, 'Pulling the cord!' – GS speculates into possible outcome of the ongoing talks between the Republika Srpska Government and IMF on pension and salary increase. First and least possible is that IMF accepted the Government decision. Second option is that IMF and WB would request from OHR to abolish decision passed by Government, in which manner Dragan Mikerevic, would have to file resignation. Third option is also possible which is that agreement is reached on reversal of pensions and salaries to the level of such in 1999, and paying out of internal debt of BAM 6.1 million that Republika Srpska has. Nezavisne Novine, pg. 6, 'IMF delivered its proposals to the Republika Srpska Government' – Goran Radivojac, Spokesperson of Republika Srpska Prime Minister, confirmed that IMF has delivered its proposals to the Republika Srpska Government negotiating team aimed at overcoming the situation arisen upon salary and pension increase. Radivojac also denied some media speculations saying that Dragan Mikerevic is not attending negotiations with IMF, owing to his alleged visit to Chicago. Radivojac briefly said that: "Prime Minister is to leave for USA at the end of this month."

Nezavisne Novine, pg. 6, 'Pensioners and workers together in the fight against poverty' – Rade Rakulj, President of the Republika Srpska Association of Pensioners, yesterday confirmed that the Republika Srpska Association of Pensioners, Republika Srpska Syndicate Union and Republika Srpska Soldiers' Association will sign the agreement one of these days, which should increase activities aimed at resolving their currently severe material status. Rakulj expressed his view that representatives of pensioners and syndicate had been invited to attend negotiations between Government and IMF. On this, he expressed hope that Government would not accept IMF blackmails; otherwise, pensioners and trade union members would undertake radical measures.

Blic, p 12 'Negotiations still underway' also covered the issue.

Interview with General Manager of Aluminij Mijo Brajkovic	<p>Dnevni List (front and pages 4 and 5, "There is no progress as long as phonies are ruling", by <u>M. Relota</u>) carries an interview with General Manager of Aluminij Mijo Brajkovic. Among the other things, Brajkovic says: "We are just talking about negative things, murders, corruption, arrests, war crimes etc. Let's start to talk about the things that we live on and let's see who are the people who offer perspective!...A party and nation must not be on the first place but quality."</p> <p>Brajkovic also says that expanding of the Aluminij's production will open new places of work not only in Mostar but in some other places as well, and in this way people will get connected and he added: "Aluminij does not offer an economic solution only but a political solution as well." Asked whether he had a meeting with the OHR representatives, Brajkovic says that he met with Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays and he added: "On one side financial funds from the world are being demanded, while on the other side we are closing down our biggest exporters. As far as this situation is concerned Hays is very correct and he has always been there to save the bad situation that would hang over some company."</p>
Oslobodjenje: JNA officers sold 5,000 apartments	<p>Oslobodjenje front page, pgs. 4-5 'JNA officers sold 5,000 apartments' By <u>Asaf Becirevic</u> – In the Federation of BiH, pre-war occupancy right holders purchased 5,000 former JNA (Yugoslav People's Army) apartments by privatisation vouchers and then sold them for cash. There are yet approximately 11,000 former JNA's apartments in the Federation, 8,000 of them in Sarajevo. No one of pre-war occupants has returned to live in these apartments, said the newspaper in a story on the issue made with regard to the recently adopted amendments to the law on privatisation of apartments that refer to so-called military apartments in the FBiH HoR.</p>
Allocation of GSM licence	<p>Nezavisne Novine, pg. 4, 'Huseinovic: Deadline for allocation of third GSM licence expires' – Keman Huseinovic, CRA Director, last week addressed a letter to the BiH Council of Ministers, in which he reminded Ministers of deadlines stipulated by the law, regarding allocation of third GSM licence.</p>

<p>Update to Srpske Poste affair</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3, 'Post Office chose a constructor with more expensive price' – The Serb Post Office has assigned the work on construction of apartment stores in Banjaluka to the firm "Rakom Inzenjering" from Bijeljina. The price this firm offered was for 700,000 BAM higher than price offered by other three (out of seven) firms that applied to tender.</p> <p>Milutin Pejic, Director of Srpske Poste, yesterday did not take calls on cell phone.</p> <p>According to NN inset, Milorad Zrnic, President of the Steering Board of Srpske Poste, yesterday said that he was not informed of tender results, noting that he learnt from unofficial sources the same information NN got hold of.</p>
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War crimes

Former RS camp inmates representatives visiting the Hague

RTRS, SRNA – The deputy chairman of the RS Association of Former Camp Inmates, Slavko Jovicic, has expressed his satisfaction with the Association's delegation's visit to the Hague tribunal and talks conducted with Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte.

During the talks in the Hague, the RS Association of Former Camp Inmates delegation handed over new documents to Hague investigators relating to war crimes committed against Serbs in BiH, and said that this process had to start right from the beginning. In a telephone statement to SRNA, Jovicic said that the RS camp inmates had received assurances from the chief prosecutor that following the death of the Bosniak wartime leader Alija Izetbegovic, his closest collaborators would now be in a position to answer to the Hague tribunal for crimes committed against Serbs during the last war in BiH. He did not wish to disclose the names of the persons involved, pointing out that this was exclusively in the competence of the Hague tribunal prosecution.

<p>Amnesty International on transferring of authorities from The Hague to domestic courts</p>	<p>Vecernji List (page 2, “Amnesty for war crimes”, by D. Jazvic) carries that Amnesty International warned in its report yesterday that the initiative for the establishment of the Special War Crimes Chamber with the BiH Court would not give good results. The report says that the establishment and efficient work of the War Crimes Chamber might be the first step towards sanctioning of all persons responsible for war crimes, however, only if it is a part of a wider strategy that strengthens the BiH system of criminal judiciary to deal with cases of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Amnesty International believes that that the current proposals are grounded on short-term planning whose goal is to achieve the cheapest possible withdrawal of the International Community and to speed up the exit strategy for The Hague.</p> <p>VL says that the OHR rejects the objections of Amnesty International and the OHR claims that the whole plan is well devised and elaborated.</p>
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Incidents/investigations

<p>Incident in Banjaluka</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 2, ‘‘Brave men’’ beat up on policeman and broke windscreens at four cars’ – ‘‘Delije’’ (Brave Men, supporters of Red Starr team from Belgrade) yesterday confronted Republika Srpska police, that was securing the sports hall in Banjaluka, where basketball teams of Red Starr from Belgrade and Banjaluka Brevery had a match. The sports fans did not have cards to get in the hall, and some of them did not allow being checked before the game. One police officer was injured and transferred to hospital. He was sent home afterwards for home treatment.</p>
<p>Update to Omerovic affair</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 2, ‘He attacked OHR with the sodium bicarbonate, sugar and anti-cockroach poison ‘ – The mail delivery with powder, which Abdulah Omerovic (39) from Zvornik addressed to the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, was consisted of sodium bicarbonate, sugar and anti-cockroach poison. According to Jasmina Gafic, BiH State Prosecutor, explained that an immediate analysis of powder was carried out, owing to suspicion that it could have been anthrax virus. She also added that psychiatric treatment needs to be provided to Omerovic. OHR did not want to make any comment on this development.</p>

Other issues

<p>VL: Special department for religious issues to be formed</p>	<p>Vecernji List (page 4, “Special department for issues of religions”, by <u>Zdenko Jurilj</u>) – reports that instead of a separate Ministry for Religions and Inter-religious relations, whose establishment many cleric dignitaries had advocated, BiH will be getting a Department for religious issues and religious relations with the BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. This rules out the idea of turning the current Inter-religious Council into the Ministry for Religions. Representative of the Jewish Community in BiH, Jakob Finci, says it is about a rational move: “The department will employ less people than it would be a case if the Ministry were to be formed”, says Finci. It is yet unclear when the new Department will start functioning and who is going to lead it.</p>
<p>Croatia on reconstruction of damaged houses for Serbs</p>	<p>Glas Srpske, cover page story, ‘Damage without compensation’ – Croatia refused to pass special regulations, which would settle the issue related to houses owned by Serbs, which were damaged while outside front lines. Accordingly, it remains unknown whether the owners of these houses would be able to file request for compensation.</p>