

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 18/10/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: SDA and HDZ to start negotiations on the new authorities establishment today

Dnevni Avaz: Whether the FOSS Director was legally appointed – Alibabic hid he had been convicted

Dnevni List: Abduladhim Maktouf returned to Travnik: He bought half of Travnik with drug smuggling money; The Election Commission has support from OHR

Vecernji List: Election Engineering: SDA and HDZ are preparing complaints; PDV brings rise in prices

Slobodna Dalmacija: National parties are taking full control: HDZ is gathering broad Croat coalition; Indictment for Bobetko is 'heavier' because of war operations in BiH?

Glas Srpski: UNMIK exerts pressure on Kosovo Serbs to vote – They even target the Patriarch; Srebrenica-Owners do not want their keys

Nezavisne Novine: BiH House of Representatives-Who is going to form coalition with whom? Milan Simic sentenced to five years in prison; Interview with Dodik – Ivanic decides on parliamentary majority

Blic: Policemen who visited night bars dismissed; The RS Government with 16 ministries; Municipal building in Prijedor closed after information about a planted bomb; Mikerevic: Avdic hallucinates problems at the border

BH DANI: Between Ideology and Reality – Alija is one and only

Slobodna Bosna: Has the owner of Avaz F. Radoncic worked for counter-intelligence service?

Post-election news/statements/commentaries

The BiH Election Commission does not want to enter any polemics with the political parties regarding their accusations according to which an election fraud is at the scene through the allocation of the compensatory mandates at all levels of authority in BiH. The Commission President, Lidija Korac, told Oslobodjenje (p 8) that the Commission would defend itself from all attacks by the strict implementation of the Election Law.

The Office of the High Representatives on Thursday called on all political parties in BiH to respect the independence of the BiH Election Commission thereby allowing it to finalize the process of the ballots counting and mandates distribution in accordance to the election results. The OHR Spokesman, Oleg Milisic, told journalists in Sarajevo that the allocation of the compensatory mandates was the exclusive authority of the Election Commission, which was fully supported by the international community. (Oslobodjenje, p 6, Dnevni Avaz, p 2, Dnevni List, front and p 2, Vecernji List, p 15, Slobodna Dalmacija, p 18)

"It is absolutely unacceptable that the Election Commission interprets the Election Law that this is exactly what has been happening in the past days," the SDA Vice-president, Suada Palavric, told Dnevni Avaz (p 3) referring to the interpretations related to the distribution of the compensatory mandates.

"The argumentation presented by the Election Commission is legally unacceptable because a compensatory mandate is still the mandate and , according to the Election Law, only the party that gained certain percentage of votes can get the seat in the legislative body," acting HDZ President, Barisa Colak, told Dnevni Avaz (p 3).

Vecernji List (front and page 15, by D.Jazvic and Z.Kresic) under a title *"HDZ and SDA ready to appeal"* carries that HDZ, being unhappy with the distribution of compensatory mandates, announces that it would appeal against the BiH Election Commission's decision on the distribution of the compensatory

mandates and that HDZ plans to inform the Peace Implementation Council about its stance on the issue. The daily also carries a Vice President of SDA, **Elmir Jahic**, as saying that the party suspects that this could be a case of pressures that have been exerted on the BiH Election Commission by defeated parties and some circles within the IC in order to trick the will of the electorate. Jahic says that the election rules and regulations have been taken from Scandinavian countries noting that those countries do not have this type of distribution of the compensatory mandates. VL notes that it is only the representatives of the IC, foremost the High Representative, who could prevent this sort of election engineering.

Delegations comprising top officials of the BiH Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) and the BiH Democratic Action Party (SDA) are expected to meet in Sarajevo on Friday to analyze the election results and explore possibilities of their cooperation in the establishment of the new authorities at all levels. A source close to the SDA leadership told *Oslobodjenje* (front page, Azhar Kalamujic) that this meeting should not be brought in the connection to possible coalition that might be created by the two parties. The source however added that the SDA admitted a reality of the election results contrary to the parties belonging to the Alliance to Change, which were misinforming the public by claiming that the establishment of the authority without the HDZ was possible. *"It will not be possible to establish the authorities in the BiH Federation without the HDZ, regardless of who will be on the other side – SDA, Partu for BiH or SDP,"* the source said.

Asked whether the SDA would offer a post-election cooperation to SDP, the SDA Vice-president and the head of the party's team for negotiations on the coalitions with other political parties, Adnan Terzic, said in an interview with *Dnevni Avaz* (p 5) that SDA was not excluding in advance anyone. *"However, what SDP officials are saying (that they will not make coalitions with SDA, HDZ and SDS) means that we will not talk*

about these issues, but this is the SDP's and our choice," Terzic emphasized.

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 15, by Blanka Magas) under title *"HDZ gathering a widespread Croat coalition"* carries its prognosis/view of the post election combinations. Regarding the issue of the compensatory mandates, Magas says that it is now clear that all the parties that participated at the State and Entity levels will be given the compensatory mandates regardless of the fact if they made it past the threshold. Magas says that latest information that come from circles close to SDA, the party Presidency has soften its attitude on co-operation with SDS which leads Magas to say that such co-operation cannot be ruled out. Talking about possible combinations at the State level, the author says that Party for BiH holds the key with 5 seats in the State Parliament's House of Representatives and that the party could swing either way. Regarding the authority at the Federation level, Magas says that SDA and HDZ should not have problem with securing majority because it is almost certain that parties with Croat prefix will back the possible SDA-HDZ coalition up which will in turn strengthen the Croat position in the Federation Parliament.

Nezavisne Novine carries (p 4)an interview with the SNSD Chairman, **Milorad Dodik** in which he said that the parliamentary majority depends on Mladen Ivanic. He said that there is a chance of forming a coalition, but Ivanic has to make up his mind. He said that other parties such as DNS, SPRS, SNS and SRS and some other minor parties are interested in joining the coalition. Dodik said that if SDS can get 42 deputies on board then let it (SDS) form the government. *"In that case we will not be in that government. We are waiting for PDP and Ivanic to decide"*, said Dodik.

In an interview with **Slobodna Bosna** ("People who impoverished the people cannot guarantee better future"), the former High Representative, **Wolfgang Petritsch**, said that the victory of

the nationalist parties at the elections in BiH was an "expected disappointment, because the Alliance did not have enough time to clearly demonstrate that it is indeed a better alternative for BiH." "I have followed very closely international media writing's about Bosnia and I must say that I was shocked. However, that is the perception in the modern world and the results of the elections were just more detrimental to the image of BIH in the world. The new government will have to double its efforts to show that it will not return the country to the past and that it is capable of taking it to the future."

RS Law on Ministries adopted; Budget rebalance not discussed

At a special session in Banja Luka on Thursday, the Republika Srpska National Assembly passed the RS Law on Ministries that was crucial for the establishment of the new Entity's authorities in accordance to the elections results. A total of 47 deputies voted for the draft as the representatives of SDA, Party for BiH, SDP and NHI did not support the document, which foresees that the Entity will have 16 Ministers instead of the current 20, out of whom 8 will be of the Serb, 5 of the Bosniak and 3 of the Croat nationality. However, since the law abolishes the position of deputy ministers and leaves only the position of assistant ministers, the Bosniak and Croat members of the RS Constitutional Commission had earlier vetoed the draft saying it was jeopardizing their vital national interests. They explained the move with a fact the assistant ministers will not be appointed as the officials through negotiations of the political parties but as the civil servants under a special procedure, which neglects a need for fair representation of all nationalities on these positions. (Oslobodjenje, p 7, Dnevni Avaz, p 8, Glas Srpski, p 3, Nezavisne Novine, p 5, Blic p 2, FRY Nacional p 11, Vecernje Novosti p 13)

However, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, sent a letter to the RS Constitutional Commission President Miroslav Mikes, informing him on his assessment that the RS Law on the

Ministries and the Law on Civil (Administrative) Service were not jeopardizing vital national interests of any of the peoples. Ashdown thereby in practical terms dismissed the Bosniak and Croat veto on the RS Law on Ministries making its adoption possible. (Oslobodjenje, p 5, Dnevni List, p 4)

The RS National Assembly Vice-president and a Bosniak member of the RS Constitutional Commission, Sulejman Tihic, told journalists in Banja Luka on Thursday he was dissatisfied with the High Representative Paddy Ashdown's decision to allow the passage of the RS Law on Ministries saying *"he (Ashdown) once again made a compromise at the cost of the Bosniaks and the Croats."* (Oslobodjenje, p 4, FENA, Dnevni List, p 10, Slobodna Dalmacija, last page)

Glas Srpski (p 3) and **Nezavisne Novine** (p 5), report that the RS NA did not discuss Rebalance of RS Budget for 2002 because the Croat and Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission invoked vital national interest clause, which is why the item was taken off the agenda.

Glas Srpski quotes (p 3), the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, as saying that the decision of Bosniak and Croat members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission to invoke vital national interest clause is nothing but their attempt to prove who is better "protector" of the Bosniak people. Ivanic said that thanks to this veto, some institutions in the RS will not get their salaries, which in this case means that the RS Health Fund will not be allocated some funds; there will not be 7 million KM for salaries of judges and prosecutors; there will not be 6 to 7 million KM for the RS Army employees; Ivanic commended the adoption of the RS Law on Ministries and added that due to frequent invocation of VNI it will be very difficult to form new government. *"Some rules will have to be defined by the High Representative, who will not be able to avoid responsibility for decision making simply because there will not be the other mechanism"*, said Ivanic.

Nezavisne Novine carries (p 2, by Jasna Stojanovic) an article dedicated to the **RS budget rebalance** for 2002. The article suggests that by insisting on the adoption of the rebalance of RS budget for 2002, the RS Government basically wanted to cover up all the expenditures that were not foreseen by the budget.

Ashdown addresses economic conference on transition in Sarajevo

Speaking at an international economic conference in Sarajevo on Thursday, which was organised by the Sarajevo University School of Economics, the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, called on the people of BiH and their leaders to focus their efforts on urgent economic reform. *"We need a bonfire of bureaucracy," the High Representatives said. "A revolution of reform. We need to drive a bulldozer through our systems to sweep away the barriers that destroy business,"* Ashdown emphasized. The High Representatives was highlighting his intention to shift Economic Reform up a gear. He said that BiH bureaucrats and politicians routinely make it difficult for companies to create jobs and raise living standards. This explains why unemployment is so high, why almost half the population lives close to the poverty line: one in five citizens live on less than 5KM a day – one in four in the Republika Srpska. He noted that BiH's national wealth stands at less than half its pre-war level and foreign direct investment is lower than anywhere in Central and Eastern Europe except Albania. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 10, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 8, **Vecernji List**, p 2)

Human rights

The BiH Council of Ministers will obey the BiH Human Rights Chamber ruling in case of the so-called Algerian Group, as it was doing before, although it considers that the decision is more of political than of legal nature, according to the BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Kresimir Zubak. He also told journalists following the Thursday's session of the Council that the Human Rights Chamber had partly abused its own procedure in this case. The Council will also request some

additional explanations from the Chamber such as a question whether in case of the Algerian Group rights of the BiH citizens or foreigners were abused. (Oslobodjenje, p 3, Dnevni Avaz, p 9, Vecernji List, p 5, by Edina Medunjanin, Slobodna Dalmacija, p 15, by Emir Felic, Dnevni List, p 5)

The annual US State Department's report on the state of religious rights in the world gives, with admission of certain progress, rather negative assessments to BiH, Croatia and FRY, particularly due to the treatment of minority religions in these countries. (SENSE, Oslobodjenje, p 6)

Affairs in the Federation

Dnevni List (front and page 3, by S. Gredic) carries article about **Abduladhim Maktouf**, who suddenly appeared in Travnik, only few days after the elections in BiH. The daily says that Maktouf returned from Canada, where he went after escaped Travnik in June this year. According to the daily, Maktouf was informal wartime leader of Travnik-based unit of 'El Mujaheed' military formation, at the time when distinguished Croats were taken away, and after that he opened electronic device and furniture store, which was only a screen for illegal import of drugs and further distribution in Western Europe. The daily learned that Maktouf returned thanks to some influential members of SDA, like **Halid Genjac**, former member of BiH Presidency, **Asim Fazlic**, one of Interpol heads in BiH, **Husein Delic**, former Police Commissioner in Central Bosnia Cantonal Ministry of Interior and Mufti of Travnik, **Nusret Avdibegovic**. According to the daily, influential men in Travnik, encouraged with victory of SDA, sent a message to Maktouf that the "field is clean" and that he could return to BiH without any consequences. Although Maktouf was arrested in Austria, when escaped from BiH, after Federation Police confiscated documentation in Maktouf's company, Austrian police had to release him, because Asim Fazlic from Sarajevo informed Austrians that "Maktouf is clean".

Vecernji List (page 2) carries statements of Herceg Bosna (Canton 10) Cantonal officials and representatives of IC on crisis in this canton, after Prime Minister, four ministers of cantonal Government and Governor resigned. "Because I, as

*Governor, can not resolve the crisis in the Canton, I am giving my mandate at disposal to you and to Cantonal Assembly", wrote resigning Governor **Dragan Bagaric** in his address to President of Cantonal Assembly. "**Ivan Cosic** was not Minister of Interior, he was only acting Minister, and as such he was on temporary duty. During his mandate, Cosic did not show himself as a person ready to cooperate. On the contrary, he was very obstructive person", stated **Kirsten Haupt**, UN Mission Spokesperson in BiH. ""It is legally disputable whether the term of office of this Assembly ended on the election day or whether it can go on functioning until the new Assembly has been constituted. We are in a constant touch with the Election Commission, the international community representatives, and the current party HDZ", stated **Dragan Stanic**, President of Cantonal Assembly. "Canton 10 has had very inconsistent Government in which majority of ministers are involved in conflict within the party, between Livno Board of HDZ and Tomislavgrad Board of HDZ. (...) The Assembly and Governor should work on establishment of new Government, according to the decision of the Constitutional Court, what the High Representative announced on October 6", stated **Sonja Pastuovic**, OHR Spokesperson from Banja Luka.*

Reactions to High Representative's proposal/decisions

Glas Srpski carries(p 5) reactions of various politicians to the High Representative's initiative to have the Council of Ministers transformed into BiH government.

PDP top official and RS Deputy Prime Minister, Petar Kunic, says that neither the DPA nor the BiH Constitution say anything about BiH government. "We can discuss the improvement in work of the CoM, but we cannot discuss the BiH government", said Kunic.

SDS Spokesman Dusan Stojicic says that SDS will not be an obstacle to find the solutions (within the DPA framework), which will improve the work of the Council of Ministers. "The

most important thing is that principles of rotation, equality and consensus are complied with", said Stojicic.

SNSD Secretary General, Branko Neskovic, says that the initiative that CoM Chair becomes BiH Prime Minister is a good solution. *"The efficiency of BiH cannot be questioned and it must not have a negative impact on the stability of the RS"*, said Neskovic.

(**FRY Nacional**, p 11, also carries the reactions)

Both Banja Luka papers, **Glas Srpski** (p 5) and **Nezavisne Novine** (p 6), carried stories of two men, **Strahinja Zivak and Jovo Savic**, who spent 6 months in the Viktor Bubanj army barracks. Both men told the papers about the horrible things that happened to them and the other people who were in the Viktor Bubanj detention camp during the war. One of them, Jovan Savic, even wrote a book about the Viktor Bubanj army barrack titled "Echoes of the Sarajevo drum" (published in 1997), in which he gave the names of 259 Serbs who were murdered there.

Nezavisne Novine also reports that the BiH Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications, **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, requested the RS Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY to take a stand on this issue and come up with information about the crimes that were committed in the barracks. *"If it turns out that the crimes were committed, it will give us the right to take some measures while implementing the High Representative's decision, for example that Serb judges in the Court of BiH are not present in the army barracks"*, said Mihajlovic.

SDS Spokesman **Dusan Stojicic** says that domestic institutions should take responsibility for decision making. Stojicic said that a better location for the Court HQ could have been found and that, regardless of the High Representative's powers and position, decisions should not be made in this way.

DNS Vice-president **Jovan Mitrovic** condemned the High

Representative's decision on the location of the Court HQ and added that the decision was made with the "blessing" from Mikerevic and Mihajlovic.

SPRS Vice-president **Tihomir Gligoric** said that the seed of justice couldn't grow from the same place where crimes were committed. *"However, the High Representative distanced himself and left the possibility that crimes were committed in the Viktor Bubanj army barracks",* said Gligoric.

RS Prime Minister **Mladen Ivanic** said that controversial locations such as the Viktor Bubanj army barracks should not be used as locations for BiH joint institution.

Vecernji List (front and page 2, by Frano Vukoja) carries that due to the introduction of a value added tax (VAT) producers, importers and a service sector will need much more money depending on the VAT rate. Most of economists claim that *'money in BiH is still very expensive and VAT will make difficult financial operating of most of economic facilities and it will also increase prices of domestic products.'* VL also carries that some analysts claim that *'VAT will cause a great wave of rise in prices.'* Also, *'VAT will endanger a large number of smaller companies and the space for the grey economy, economic crime and smuggling is being narrowed.'*

In a two page article in **BH Dani**, Snjezana Mulic-Busatilija argues that the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT) at the state-level will have manifold positive consequences for the collection of revenues by the state and will virtually prevent any further tax evasion. In a statement for the weekly, **Zlatan Hurtic**, the coordinator of the state Bureau for developmental strategy, said that the VAT will make the tax collection more efficient, stimulate domestic production and eliminate disloyal competition and encourage banks to offer loans in more favorable terms. *"In short, this will be a great chance to secure a state budget and to enable state to distribute funds to the entities, and not the other way*

around.” BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations **Azra Hadziahmetovic** seconded this view and explained that there are two different views about the VAT: political and economic. *“We hope that the second one will win,”* she said. Busatlija explained at the end that the introduction of VAT, however, may not go so smoothly and may be potentially risky for BiH market in terms of price increases. *“However, let us not forget that the High Representative asked the future authorities to simultaneously reform the customs system in the country, which is a clear indication that this diplomat has a serious intention to turn BiH into a serious state,”* argues the author at the end.

BH DANI labels as revolutionary the move of the **High Representative** to freeze all appointments to major post in the state institutions, agencies and organizations until the Civil Service Agency become fully operational. *“It could be argued that Ashdown’s decision to end the patronage in state agencies and companies struck down the basic principles of the former SDAHDZSDS and which the Alliance couldn’t shrug off either.”*

BH DANI (unattributed report) argues that **Paddy Ashdown** will have a difficult task of explaining what type of government he wants. *“Believe it or not, the High Representative is clear: he wants a stabile and responsible government with at least 60% support; he will not accept any blackmails, he does not want any self-important leaders of the government of experts, but a representative authority and a prime minister who will be responsible to him, if not to his voters. In other words, the High Representative is not ready to waste time with lose alliances, nor will he be so naïve as to accept the math presented to him by ...Zlatko Lagumdzija.”*

In a lengthy piece in **BH DANI**, Ivan Lovrenovic recaps on the vigorous discussion between **William Pfaf** and **Paddy Ashdown** in The International Herald Tribune about the future of BiH and the possibility of ethnic division of the country. Lovrenovic argues that albeit “immoral and alarming”, Pfaf’s calls for

partition are clearly justified by one important problem – the fundamental problem of functioning of the International Community in BiH and its ‘fuzzy’ position on the future of BiH. “Even Erhard Busek claims that the EU does not have a clear views as to what should the future of the region be like, which only gives an extra impetus to the nationalists,” writes Lovrenovic, concluding that domestic forces will determine the future political character of BiH and its citizens in the coming period.

Arizona Market: The Supervisor is pushing the Government into misrule

*“After all already known events at the **Arizona Market**, we have expected the entire process to enter more peaceful situation and that a solution to the problem would be found in a joint agreement. Unfortunately, according to Brcko Supervisor **Henry Clarke’s** point of view regarding this problem, nothing would come out of these expectations”, the press release, issued by the Association of Private Landowners and Shopkeepers at the Arizona Market, reads. “He named us, again, ‘the opponents of the Contract on redevelopment of the Arizona Market’ (the statement at the regular press conference held on October 16 in Brcko) and repeats that the **Italprojekt** has fulfilled all its obligations towards the Government while expressing regret because of the Government’s delay in fulfilling the obligations. The reason for this delay, according to the Supervisor, is ‘the obstruction of the opponents of the Contract’. It is clear that the Supervisor is pushing the Government into misrule through such statements and his positions, as well as that he wishes to solve the entire problem exclusively by using the positions and authorities, which he has as the Supervisor,” the release reads. (**Oslobodjenje**, page 9, October 18, 2002)*

Judging according to the statement of the lawyer, **Jozo Andjic**, who represents owners of the private land and shops at the inter-entity market “Arizona”, a problem will not be resolved soon. “Almost a month is going to pass, but the District Government has not responded to our requests regarding reasons

for exercising exaggerated force by the District police and the work of the inspection services,” he says. (Dnevni Avaz, page 11, October 18, 2002)

Headlines in electronic media

BHTV 1 (Thursday, 1900)

- Milan Simić sentenced to 5 years of imprisonment
- Council of Ministers will respect decision of the Human Rights Chamber
- RS National Assembly adopted Law on Ministries at extraordinary session

FTV 1 (1930)

- Milan Simić sentenced to 5 years in prison
- Members of the RS National Assembly adopted Law on Ministries
- IPTF Commissioner revoked working licences for 11 police officers