OHR BiH Media Round-up, 22/9/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	**BH TV 1** (19,00 hrs)	**FED TV** (19,30 hrs)	**RT RS** (19,30)
Conflict on Defence reform	SDA on defence	Peace Day in Sarajevo	Potocari protest
Milosevic's trial	Islamic fund for returnees	Zenica Steel Mill	Strike in Autoprevoz Co.
Cro. Ambassador in Citluk	Middle East	VAT in BiH	World news
	Vehicle-free day in Sa		Sports

Oslobodjenje	Clinton's speech poorly and wrongly interpreted?!
Dnevni Avaz	Different views of Tihic and Ashdown on defence reform: May a compromise be reached
Dnevni List	SDA: Serb-Croat agreement with international community is on; SDS assembly on September 26: Sarovic places trap for Kalinic; Gavrilo Grahovac: Sarajevo must not be only cultural centre; Damir Hadzic: equality of peoples in Mostar is priority of restructuring, number of city municipalities is less important issue
Vecernji List	Emigration of Croats from FBiH is not stopped: 300 thousand less Croats; Mladen Ivankovic: Mixing of languages is impermissible; Citrus had 375.000 KMs worth of customs written off
Slobodna Dalmacija	Features Croatia related headlines

Glas Srpske	Trebinje: A kick against ‘Ferherc’ Company; Outrageous action of Bocinja Mujahedeens: Islam offered to Serbs
Nezavisne Novine	Reacting to the misuse of invalid’s special right to import vehicles: BiH Federation Customs Administration prepares 316 criminal charges; Another 107 victims of Srebrenica massacre buried: Clinton opens Srebrenica – Potocari Memorial Centre; Ivan Tomljenovic, Vice President of RS: I do not want to take power from Cavic but he could at least listen to me
Blic	Serb refugees from Croatia do not believe in promises on returning occupancy rights: there will be 20,000 homeless people; Gradiska municipality awarded Petritsch

Defence reform

SDA reacts to OHR's criticism	Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, BHTV, FTV, Oslobodjenje pg. 7 'Braithwaite's claims are not objective', Dnevni Avaz 'SDA did not halted the process of defence reform', Dnevni List front and page 3, SDA: "Serb-Croat agreement with international community is on", by H,FENA – The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) rejected Sunday as unfair and inappropriate statements by OHR Communications Director Julian Braithwaite that SDA stopped the process of defence reform. "If this process has been halted than this is a result of an agreement between Serb and Croat representatives with the international community. Reform proposals have been agreed only with them while Bosniak members of the Defence Reform Commission have not given their support for the proposed solutions", SDA stated. Bosniak members of the Commission did not accept three national armies instead of a common army and have also not accepted that the state defence minister and commander of the operational staff have two deputies, which would again represent the "holly trinity", SDA added. The Venice Commission also described this concept as unacceptable when it discussed the Constitutional Court's decision on the equal status of all peoples in BiH. "This therefore represents a Serb-Croat agreement with the international community", SDA stressed. It is also not true that existing entity armed forces are being put under state control, in same uniforms and on the path towards NATO membership. The truth is that the agreement allows entity insignia to be used with the state insignia while the path to NATO is not even mentioned, let alone guaranteed, SDA stated. SDA stressed that it adopted unanimously the position on unacceptability of such solutions at a special SDA Presidency session and that SDA honorary president Alija Izetbegovic supported this position as well.

Bosniak League: Three state armies negate BiH's sovereignty	Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Three state armies negate BiH's sovereignty' – With regard to ultimate imposition of the unacceptable OHR's legal solutions within the draft BiH Defence Law, the President of the Bosniak League – The Movement for Equality, Irfan Ajanovic, sent a letter to Julian Braithwaite, the Chief OHR Spokesman and Director of Communications, expressing his doubt in rightness of their behaviour. Ajanovic claims that the existence of three armies in one state negates the sovereignty of that state.
Different views of Tihic and Ashdown on defence reform	Dnevni Avaz front page 'Can compromise be reached' – Sulejman Tihic, the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, and Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative of the international community in BiH, still assess differently the proposed reforms in the sector of defence. In the interviews for the newspaper, Ashdown presents argumentation why the solutions drafted by the Defence Reform Commission should be accepted, as Tihic explains why he and SDA are against the proposed solutions. Pg. 4 'Clinton told me he would support me in whatever I decide' – "Now the OHR representatives are holding SDA responsible for reforms. And as a member of the Presidency I have always rejected to accept three national armies, and three-partite organisation of the ministry and joint command at the state level," said Tihic. Pg. 5 'By proposed reforms the state will get control over the military' – "I was forced to announce that the further activities on the defence reforms are temporarily stopped. What will be happening next depends on SDA and I believe that some of their concerns are a product of misunderstanding," said Ashdown.

Tihic for Nezavisne Novine on defence	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5 – 'Reform of armies is an agreement of Serbs, Croats and OHR'- the president of SDA and Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Sulejman Tihic, said for Nezavisne Novine that he is not afraid of sanctions as he did not violate the law. 'I did not accept division of the country and you cannot dismiss someone for having different opinion', said Tihic. Tihic recalled that the agreement on reform of the defence system that he and his party refused to accept, was an agreement of the Serbs and Croats with the international community. Tihic believes that people who advocate proposed solutions are wrong: such solutions do not take BiH forwards but backwards. According to Tihic, no solution is possible without the acceptance and participation of the Bosniak side and the solutions offered at the moment, are not suitable for Bosniaks.
Defence Reform Commission meeting cancelled	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5 – 'Today's meeting of the Defence Reform Commission cancelled'- the Secretary General of the Standing Military Committee, Enes Becirbasic, confirmed that today's meeting of the Defence Reform Commission was cancelled due to the refusal of Bosniak side to sign the document on defence reform. The OHR Spokesman, Kevin Sullivan, said yesterday he hopes that this is only a misunderstanding that will be resolved quickly and that the offered Draft law on BiH armed forces does not create three ethnic armies.

Economic/social issues

High Representative to meet Italian Foreign Trade Minister Urso, discuss economic issues	Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Italy engaged in extensive projects in BiH' – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, will meet Italian Foreign Trade Minister Adolfo Urso on Monday, according to an OHR press release. Italy, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, is engaged in extensive commercial and aid projects in BiH and has provided substantial support for sustainable economic development. The Minister and the High Representative will discuss, among other things, the urgency of enacting the ITA Law and progress being made in the second phase of the Bulldozer Initiative.

VL says Head of FBiH Customs Administration Rebac damaged FBiH budget	Vecernji List (front "Citrus had 375.000 KMs worth of customs written off" and page 3 "Director of Customs frees Citrus from paying 375.000 KMs of customs", by Zoran Kresic) – the daily claims to be in possession of documents which allegedly show that the Director of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Customs Administration, Zelimir Rebac, freed the "controversial" "Citrus d.o.o." Company of Bihac from paying 375.000 KMs of customs obligations when he allowed the company to import 15 buses without paying the customs. According to VL, originally it was the acting Director of Bihac Customs office, Adnan Kulenovic, who, on February 14, 2003, rejected the "Citrus'" motion to be exempt from paying taxes, which was confirmed in the second instance by the FBiH Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, on April 1, 2003. Despite the two decisions, according to VL, Rebac exempted the company although the FBIH Supreme Court was the only one that could overrule the previous two decisions. Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3- 'Million KM spent for illegal compensation'- the daily reports that the auditing of the F BiH Customs Administration disclosed numerous illegalities in its actions: during 2002, salaries of the employees were illegally raised for 20%, and as various types of compensation, employees of the Customs Administration, received more than a million KM. Auditors have also discovered that vehicles confiscated in Bihac Customs Office were later used as private ones, based on the decision of the Deputy Director, etc. The F BiH Customs Administration believes that the auditor's report is created in order to cause damage to the current Director of the Customs Administration, Zeljko Rebac.

VAT introduction	FTV – Introduction of VAT and single custom authorities in BiH are part of European norms that BiH need to adopt. High Representative set end of July as deadline for preparation of draft Law on Indirect Taxation, but it could not be respected due to late establishment of Indirect Taxation Authority and appointment of director. Professor Grabovac said: "Increase of tax revenues is likely outcome of VAT, but consumers will not pay higher prices since it is already incorporated in price of goods…importers would pay taxes at the border and increase of 8% of revenues in August is consequence of changes of tax collection". Assistant Minister from Federation Ministry of Finance explained that VAT was waiting for Indirect Taxation Authority. BiH is only country in the region, beside Serbia and Montenegro, without the VAT. Start of VAT application is expected at the beginning of 2005.
Strike of Potocary Battery Factory's workers	RTRS – Workers of the Battery Factory in Potocari announce strike. Workers demand better severance payments after High Representative Paddy Ashdown decided to transfer ownership over the factory to the Srebrenica – Potocari Memorial Foundation. RS Government decided to allocate around 260,000 KM to compensate 42 workers but, according to them that's not enough. Director of the factory Radomir Zekic says that, according to the collective contract, allocated redundancy is around 1300 KM per worker which is "miserable". Workers union decided not to accept offer and to demand compensation of some 10,000 KM per workers. Strike starts on Tuesday and would no stop until demand is fulfilled.

Banja Luka Autoprevoz	RTRS – Even announced, strike of workers of the Autoprevoz transportation company from Banja Luka is not going to take place. Workers planed to go on strike fearing that other shareholders are going to make privatisation fraud. Management has accepted the most of demands, which are mainly related to protection of workers and company's properties, but issue of payment of April salary remains unsolved. Extraordinary session of the company board is scheduled for 27th December and unions announce a warning strike if that last demand is not going to be solved.
DL on reforms in BiH, Bulldozer	Dnevni List (page 2, "Success of international community", by Jurislav Petrovic) – the author is not happy with the implementation of reforms in BiH, which is best illustrated in his words that the "big Bulldozer, after the pictures and kind words, was returned to the yard of the company it had been borrowed from and now it awaits whether the reforms will define what is whose job in this country of ours so the 'bulldozer' is digging and not taking pictures with politicians". The author also argues that the announced reforms have not been observed and goes on to say that one gets an impression that domestic politicians do not have a problem with it because they, according to the author, do not deserve their salaries.

Director of 'Teol' dismissed	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3 – 'Director of 'Teol' dismissed' – the daily has learnt from its sources close to the RS Telekom that the Director of internet provider 'Teol', Dragan Ljubotina was dismissed by the decision of the RS Telekom Director General, Zeljko Jungic. The same sources claim that Ljubotina was dismissed for not accepting company 'Telefonija' at the most recent tender, worth 1,5 million KM, as insisted by the company Directorate. Also, the internal auditor of the RS Telekom, Jovo Radonjic, was dismissed, upon the proposal of Zeljko Jungic.
PM Mikerevic visiting London to talk about investments in RS	Blic pg. 6 'Mikerevic travels to London to talk on investments in RS' – RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic on Sunday left for London where he will stay two days and hold a number of meetings with British officials and representatives of companies interested in investing in the RS and BiH – the RS Government press office informed. Mikerevic is expected to meet director of the British Foreign Office for Europe, Middle East and America, Caroline Miller, director of the British Foreign Office for Wider Europe, Linda Duffield, and representatives of the British Petroleum company.

The Fourth Economic Forum of Cities and Regions of South East Europe	Vecernje Novosti pg. 21 'Europe in Prijedor' – The Fourth Economic Forum of Cities and Regions of South East Europe, in whose work more than 300 experts from this field from 23 countries will participate, will start today in Prijedor. Participants will discuss several topics from the field of economic and social policy, with special reference to the process of privatisation and transition in countries of South East Europe, as well as the refugee return. The organisers of the Forum are the Congress for Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and Foundation for Economy and Sustainable Development of European Regions. The sponsor of the Forum is the Stability Pact of South East Europe. RS President Dragan Cavic, PDHR Donald Hays and head of OSCE Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft will address the participants.

Social problems of refugees from Croatia	Blic pg. 6 'There will be 20,000 homeless people' – The RS will face a new problem in 2004 – 20,000 Serb refugees from Croatia will not be able to use someone else's apartments and houses in RS, and their pre-war property will not be returned to them. Practically, that means that Serb refugees from Croatia will become social cases. The Croatian Government has made a programme for accommodating Serb refugees, but only those who want to return permanently. The Government has not accepted the request of IC to include the occupancy rights of Serbs who do not wish to return in the programme. The representatives of IC agree that the Serb refugees will have a lot of problems, but they hope efficient solutions will be found and alternative accommodation will be provided by Croatian authority. President of the Association of Serb refugees from Croatia Petar Dzodan says that after a lot of meetings on this issue there is no concrete solution and that the IC still does not want to change its stand toward Croatia, that has discriminatory laws for the Serb refugees. "I know we cannot stay in someone else's property forever, but we also cannot wait forever for returning of our property in Croatia," Dzodan says. He thinks that the invitation of Croatian President Stjepan Mesic for organising a meeting of presidents of Croatia, BiH and Serbia and Montenegro is political promotion of Croatia in front of European and the world public, and not a wish to solve the problem of Serb refugees.

Political developments

DL: “Sarovic places trap for Kalinic”	Dnevni List (front and page 4, by Miso Relota) – the author argues that there are two fractions within the SDS, one led by Mirko Sarovic, the other by Dragan Kalinic, despite recent statement by the SDS leaders who denied rumours about the rift. DL also announces an assembly of the SDS that is scheduled for September 26, which should be of informative nature. Despite the announcements of informative nature of the assembly, the author says the connoisseurs believe there could be more to it than meets the eye. DL also comments recent report published in “Slobodna Bosna” that even Radovan Karadzic is not supporting Kalinic any more. In that context, DL says the rumour has it that Kalinic is ready to betray Karadzic to save his position and that’s why Kalinic is ready to co-operate with the IC, aware that he needs the IC in his corner. Relota reckons that the coming days will see fierce lobbying of the two sides.

Interview with SDP's Damir Hadzic	Dnevni List (front and pages 8 and 9, "Damir Hadzic: equality of peoples in Mostar is priority of restructuring, number of city municipalities is less important issue", by Zvonimir Jukic) – in an interview for DL, Head of Sarajevo's Municipality Novi Grad (New Town) and member of SDP Presidency, Damir Hadzic, introduced by Jukic as "one of most perspective BiH politicians", when questioned to present the position of the SDP Presidency on the issue Mostar restructuring, says the Main Board of SDP was clear that Mostar must be place for everyone, regardless of ethnicity. Hadzic goes on to say that Mostar must function without anyone's supremacy and that the future organizational set-up of Mostar or the number of municipalities should be a natural product of solution to pending issues.
Interview with FBiH Minister of Culture and Sport Gavrilo Grahovac	Dnevni List (front and page 7, "Sarajevo must not be only cultural center!", conducted by B. Galic) carries an interview with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Culture and Sport, Gavrilo Grahovac. Asked whether too much money has been invested in cultural life of Sarajevo compared with other cities in the FBiH, Grahovac says that about 80% of funds allocated for culture go to Sarajevo. Grahovac also said that this way of distribution is unsustainable and added: "If we continue this way we shall have Sarajevo as the center of cultural events and everything else will be the provinces."

Interview with President of NSRZB M. Ivankovic-Lijanovic	Vecernji List (front page, “Mixing of languages is impermissible”, and page 5, “Creation of one ‘mixed-language’ is impermissible”, by R. Bubalo) carries an interview with President of People’s Party Working for Prosperity, Mladen Ivankovic-Lijanovic. With regard to the problems in functioning of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Government, Ivankovic-Lijanovic says: “Namely, the Government can function and pass decisions even without participation of HDZ Ministers and this shows that partnership relations do not function at all.” With regard to the education reform, Ivankovic-Lijanovic says: “Unfortunately, I have to say that representatives of the International Community have started with this process too fast, not taking into account many details…Creation of one mixed-language, that some people wish, is also unnecessary or it is better to say impermissible.”

Feral Tribune on HDZ BiH	Commenting on the change of behaviour and rhetoric of leaders of the HDZ BiH, Ivan Lovrenovic reminds in Feral Tribune (pages 32 and 33, “From Alaska to Bistrik”) of “freakish ideology” the HDZ BiH had been conducting in BiH in the past. The author also disagrees with the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, who stated the other day, commenting about demographic problems the Croats are faced with, that “the Croats will make it up with their entrepreneurship spirit”. In that context, Lovrenovic is amazed where the HR Ashdown “bought” the stereotype about the Croat entrepreneurship, as if they were superior to the Serbs in that category. To sum it up, Lovrenovic says the wartime and post-war history has taught us that what Ashdown saw as the “entrepreneurship spirit of the Croats” is in fact “Covic’s profiteering, equally distributed in all three ethnic milieus”.

Security affairs/investigations/legal proceedings

316 criminal charges being prepared against person who illegally imported vehicles	Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3 – ‘316 criminal charges being prepared’- The F BiH Customs Administration will press criminal charges against 316 individuals from Tuzla and Zenica – Doboj Canton for using forged documents in import of vehicles. According to the Customs Administration Spokesperson, Andja Cosic, the forged documents in question are the invalid’s certificates on their special right to import vehicles for their personal needs. At the moment, according to Cosic, there are only estimates that the Federation budget was damaged for millions of KM.

Bocinja developments	Glas Srpske, cover page – 'Islam offered to Serbs'- 'If Serbs in Bocinja want to live a peaceful life, they should convert to Islam.'- according to the daily, this is the statement given by the Spokesperson of Bocinja mujahedins, Enes Islamovic to Federation media. The leader of the Serb returnees to Bocinja, Bosko Jovanovic, said that this is not the first time Serbs were called to convert to Islam, as if they do so, mujahedins will guarantee their safety. Jovanovic emphasises that nothing can surprise him and his fellow returnees any more. Speaking about the recent visit of the SDHR Werner Wnendt to Bocinja, Jovanovic said that Wnendt promised he would help Serb returnees to resolve some burning issues. GS tried to get a comment from OHR Tuzla on the most recent action of Bocinja mujahedins, but people authorised to give statements were in the field.
Trial of Prijedor Policemen begins	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3 – 'The trial to former policemen from Prijedor begins' – the daily reports that the Banja Luka District Court will today open the trial to eleven former police officers from Prijedor, indicted for crime against civilians, Former police officers are indicted for murder of Catholic Priest, Tomislav Matanovic and his parents, Josip and Bozana Matanovic, in 1995.

Education

SD: “Classes for primary school students from Stolac start today”	Slobodna Dalmacija (page 16, by Ivo Raguz) carries that in spite of a clear stand of the Trade Union at the level of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton not to call off the strike of teachers in this Canton, teachers of Primary School Stolac and Primary School “Crnici” from Dubravska plateau decided to start with the classes today due to demands of parents. SD also says that the teachers from both these schools stress that their employees will participate in the protest rally that is to take place in front of the building of the HNC Government on Thursday at 10 o’clock. According to the article, the parents from the Stolac area are satisfied with the fact that the classes for their children will start today, however, the leadership of the HNC Trade Union harshly criticizes this decisions even saying that this is a betrayal of vital, national interests.

Vecernji List on education reform in Central Bosnia Canton	Vecernji List (page 2, “Only ethnic languages in Kiseljak and Travnik!?”, by S. Stipovic) carries that during the last session of the Central Bosnia Canton Government the proposal for the network of a part of secondary schools was passed, while the proposal of the primary schools network was sent back to the Ministry of Education for revision. According to the proposal of the secondary schools network, which was agreed upon after all, two secondary schools in Travnik unify into one school that will work according to the Bosnian curriculum only. Also, in Kiseljak two secondary schools will unify into one school that will work according to the Croat curriculum only. VL also says that the curriculum will be in both languages in the Municipalities Vitez, Bugojno, Busovaca, Uskoplje/Gornji Vakuf.

Presidency of SDP Youth Forum on education reform	Dnevni List (page 7, “To higher-quality education through unified university”, not signed) carries that the Presidency of the SDP Youth Forum issued a press release saying that they believe that the education reform is in crises, and they especially criticize the situation in the Central Bosnia Canton and the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton with regard to this issue. The press release also says: “Using of children for another raising of the darkest, ethnic divisions is the way towards disintegration of BiH as a state and society.” According to the press release, the Presidency of the SDP Youth Forum also stands for the unified University in Mostar.

Other issues

VL on decreasing number of Croats in BiH	Front page splash of Vecernji List, under title “300 thousand less Croats”, continued on page 3, “There are more Croats that left BiH than Croats who stayed”, by Frano Matic, which says that the official statistics of the FBiH Statistics Bureau say that the Croats make up only 21,7% of the population of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. VL also notes that as much as 62% of the Croats in BiH had moved from their homes during the war and that only 100.000 Croats returned to their homes, whilst 300.000 are outside BiH. The author also notes that many Croat refugees and DPs have settled in settlements in Herzegovina where they built houses on state-owned land. In that context, VL says the trouble is that the new Law on Construction Land foresees that every square meter of the land has to be paid 10 KMs which will in turn create additional problems on the ground, because most of the refugees and DPs do not have the money.
VL: “Croat flag torn apart with message ‘Never again 93’”	Vecernji List (page 2, by fm) – reports that the “flag of the Croat people in BiH” was removed from the pole at Radimlja, Stolac, nearby the medieval tombstones. Apparently, the flag was left by a route-sign which had a message on it that reads “Never again 93”.

Gradiska: Petritsch – honorary citizen	Glas Srpske, pg. 3 – 'Petritsch – honorary citizen', Blic pg. 6 'Award for Petritsch' – the daily reports that the municipal assembly of Gradiska municipality decided to declare former High Representative to BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch the honorary citizen of the Gradiska municipality. The Secretary of the Municipality, Nada Zivkovic, explained that Petritsch made a great contribution to strengthening of the peace, opening of Gradiska municipality to other local communities and states.