

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 30/9/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: New trade war or protection of domestic production – Croatia to block import of flour from BiH?

Dnevni Avaz: Paddy Ashdown – We do not have our favorites

Dnevni List: Political malversations of Party for BiH – Sale of BiH for party's interests

Vecernji List: Oil dealers threaten to block the roads

Glas Srpski: 3,000 icons stolen from Serb Orthodox churches in BiH during the war; Banja Luka: Not even foundations of flats to be built

Nezavisne Novine: Serbia elects president; The story of a RS Government employee Nada Lakic-Zekovic – Let them dig us a mass grave

Euro Blic: RS fuel traders announce blockade of roads; President of War Veterans Association beaten up in Bijeljina; Serbia voted; Sarovic: There is no RS without SDS

Vecernje Novosti: People elected a way out; Cavic: A rescue in assembling

Nacional: Big electoral irregularities

Paddy Ashdown: We do not have our favourites

"The international community will not forge election results given that we are not controlling the election process, and even if we control it, we would not do something like that. And even if the international community would have wanted at some point to interfere in the election process, which I believe might not happen in these elections, we do not have our favorites," the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said in an interview for Dnevni Avaz (front page, p 5).

At a ceremony in Sarajevo on Sunday, the High Representative,

Paddy Ashdown, officially opened an Ars Aevi bridge presented to the Sarajevo citizens by the world-wide famous architect, Renzo Piano. Ashdown accompanied with Alija Behmen, Ilija Simic, Muhidin Hamamdžic, Mustafa Pamuk and a number of other local officials crossed the bridge, a part of which symbolizes doors of the future Ars Aevi museum complex. (Dnevni Avaz, p 4, Oslobodjenje, p 15, mentioned on the front page)

Vecernji List: In clinch – Paddy Ashdown versus Slavisa Vukovic

Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative in BiH: *‘Leaders of Great Britain, France and Germany told me that we cannot count on the visa abolishment as long as 60% of activities regarding white slavery goes over BiH, as well as 50% of drugs trafficking.’*

Slavisa Vukovic, a Head of State Border Service: *‘I have heard of these information. I am sorry because I do not know as to who gave these information. I have our information that we monitor. The information about illegal immigration and routes of coming and human trafficking, at the European level, have been stated recently and 10% of it goes through BiH.’*

BiH/Croatia relations; other BiH-related news

Croatia imposes marks for the flour in order to combat import of the cheap flour from BiH and gray economy in the bakery industry. According to the Oslobodjenje front page story (continued on p 3), the evidence marks, which will be printed by the Croatian Government, should contain data on the origin of the imported flour. The officials in the BiH Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Ministry are not informed about the details of the new measures to be taken by the neighboring state, and they say they will carefully look into the matter. (Title of the newspaper’s article: New trade war or the protection of the domestic production – Croatia to block import of flour from BiH?)

In an interview with Oslobodjenje (pages 4-5, mentioned on the

front page), Hugh Edleston, the military adviser for High Representative Paddy Ashdown and the head of the OSCE Office for Security Cooperation, pointed out at the significance of the appointment of the BiH Standing Committee for Military Matters' General Secretary, as well as the importance of the role he would play in the new state structure of command over the armed forces. The existence of a commanding structure over the armed forces at the state level is the main pre-condition for the BiH's accession to the NATO Partnership for Peace Program, and it also, according to Edleston, fully complies with Ashdown's efforts aimed at building the institutions at the BiH's level.

An authorized BiH Council of Ministers' commission has determined a final list of candidates for the heads of the State Information and Protection Agency. The list should now be considered and adopted by the Council of Ministers and the BiH Presidency. However, the representatives of all political parties interviewed by Dnevni Avaz (p 2, mentioned on the front page), including SDP's Sejfidin Tokic, NHI's Mijo Anic, HDZ's Dragan Covic, SDA's Hasan Muratovic and SNSD's Milorad Dodik, believe the SIPA heads should be appointed following the establishment of the new authorities in accordance to the October 5 election results.

Vecernji List (front and page 3, "Quarrels in Foreign Ministry, by Dejan Jazvic) and **Dnevni List** (page 3, a FENA report) carry similar articles which read that the BiH Presidency has stopped the implementation of its decision on closing down of BiH embassies to South Africa and Argentina until the BiH Foreign Ministry has informed the Presidency whether the Ministry had followed the procedure before it sent the proposal on the closure of the two embassies. (FYI, the Ministry sent the proposal to the Presidency some ten days ago). Both dailies say that the Presidency withdrew its original decision after a complaint coming from the Chair of BiH Council of Ministers, **Dragan Mikerevic**, who accused the

Foreign Ministry and **Zlatko Lagumdžija** of submitting the proposal without the knowledge of the Council of Ministers. VL's source in the Foreign Ministry is quoted as saying that everybody is aware that the two embassies would be closed down because there is no justification to keep them running i.e. because there is no economic co-operation with the two countries. *"The situation has been unnecessarily politicized. Mikerevic is playing (a role of) a big Serb before the elections and creates problems only because the Ambassador to South Africa is a Serb"*, says the source. The closure would save BiH around 3 million KMs. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 7, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4)

Vecernji List (front and page 2, by Robert Soldo) carries that by taking over control over the border-crossing Bosansko Grahovo-Strmica on Monday, the BiH State Border Service will control the whole land border and natural borders at rivers. In this way, the complete control over border crossings towards Croatia and Yugoslavia will be taken over. VL says that the BiH Ministry of Communications and Civil Affairs stated that *'an expert group was formed, which will give solution for the border-crossing near Samac, where the Tax Administrations of two entities dispute a micro location.'* (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p 3)

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas Srpski** (p 2) and **Nezavisne Novine** (p 3) report that after five years of preparations, the Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications in the BiH Council of Ministers, **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, and Mayor of the Srbac municipality, **Dusan Popovic**, on Sunday temporarily opened the international and local ferry border crossing on the Sava River between Srbac and Davor in Croatia. Speaking at the opening ceremony, Mihajlovic said that this was a practical example of connecting people in this part of Europe, because "this was the only way that BiH can join the EU and Brussels rather than Tehran, as some would like it to do". *"Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb must understand that we will*

not have a future unless we reach Brussels (join the EU)," Mihajlovic said, adding that he will be working with representatives of the Croatian government on drafting an annexe to the agreement on opening a permanent border crossing, which would significantly reduce traffic at the Gradiska crossing.

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Eldina Medunjanin) carries that after failed negotiations and unfulfilled promises of competent authority bodies, **dealers with oil** and oil products from the **RS and BiH Federation** announce a blockade of roads. VL says *that 'all important roads in BiH might be blocked as early as at the beginning of October, while it has been threatened that the Brcko District will be totally blocked.'* The oil dealers from both entities claim that *'they demand the same taxes for oil, since oil dealers from the Brcko District are in a much better position due to a lower tax rate and for this reason they achieve a better profit.'* For this reason, fuel in the Brcko District is cheaper from 0,18 to 0,30 Marks per liter.

Fuel traders in the RS have asked for harmonisation of the petrol duties and taxes with those in the Brcko District. **Vukasin Vojinovic**, the fuel traders' association's chairman, announced a plan to block roads (Brcko and Banja Luka) for an hour on Tuesday 1 October if the RS government failed to reduce petrol duty from 15 pfennigs to five per litre of fuel. Fiscal duties have been harmonised at entity level, but in Brcko taxes are paid in lieu of import price of 50 pfennigs. This has become the most popular way of bringing fuel into BiH since this allows the black market sale price to be reduced by 30 pfennigs or 1 convertible mark [KM] per litre. Private traders want all taxes and duties to be paid upon entry into the country rather than as part of the sale price. The latter means that only fictitious companies benefit as a result the entity governments policy. Annually, the RS loses about 70 million KM in unpaid taxes on oil and oil derivatives. (**Blic** p

7, **Vecernje Novosti** p 11, **BHTV1 on 28 Sept**)

RS minister of Finance **Simeun Vilendecic** has announced talks with Brcko Supervisor **Henry Clarke** to discuss this problem. In a letter to the minister on Friday, Clarke said that the district had not been asked to introduce any taxes. (**BHTV1 on 28 Sept**)

Pre-election statements/commentaries

Vecernji List (page 2, by Gorden Knezovic) reads that unlike the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, and the European Union's **Javier Solana**, who have in the author's opinion both, albeit in disguise, supported the Alliance in their statements, the US Ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, has openly supported the Alliance for changes in his pre-election address when he said that that *"Alliance for changes has done a relatively good job in a last year and a half (...) I am of opinion that the Alliance has a basis to implement solid reforms which will result in economic results in the next four years and that the country joins Europe"*.

The same article carries the President of HSS, **Ilija Simic**, as saying that if the national parties (SDS, SDA and HDZ) win in the October 5 elections, the IC will create a political *"sanitation corridor"* towards BiH and wait for next elections hoping that reformer politicians will take victory in the elections to follow.

Vecernji List (page 4, by Dalibor Ravic) carries results of the latest opinion poll conducted by "Fibro" agency conducted on 2200 interviewees in 27 Federation of BiH's municipalities. According to the poll, 87% of the interviewees confirmed that they would be voting in the elections. With regards to the election of Croat member of BiH Presidency, most of the interviewees say that they would vote for HDZ-HD-HNZ candidate **Dragan Covic**. The same mood applies for the Croat parties i.e. HDZ-HD-HNZ apparently enjoys a support from 69% of the interviewees.

Ibrahim Prohic wrote in **Oslobodjenje** In Focus column that, if the predictions about the 40-percent citizens' abstinence from participating in the elections come true, we would all have a problem, both those who have voted and those who abstained. *"All the citizens will suffer. Only those (political parties and individuals) will benefit who would not gain enough votes in a neutral political atmosphere in which an optimal number of citizens participate in the elections. Those will benefit who has had power and material benefits for more than a decade now, while the state is sinking and the citizens are living below the poverty line,"* Prohic emphasized.

At the regular session of the Circle 99 Independent Intellectuals Association in Sarajevo on Sunday, **Srdjan Dizdarevic**, the Director of the Elections 2002 NGO Coalition, said that, according to some assessments, from 23-28% of the citizens would not participate in the upcoming elections. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 4)

Vecernji List (page 4), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 11), **Jutarnji List** (page 2) and **Dnevni List** (page 4) carry that Herzegovinian Franciscans called on Croats to turn out at the elections. Friar Slavko Soldo, a Provincial of the Herzegovinian Franciscans, stated: *'We have to participate in the matter of a joint interest, because we cannot be indifferent towards the fact as to who will represent us. Circumstances in BiH are not favorable for the Croats, however, the future of the people and common good depend on us. These elections do not make possible equality of the Croat people with other BiH peoples. We are expressing a wish that everybody gives his/her contribution with his/her vote for common good.'*

At the pre-election rally in Trebinje, **Mirko Sarovic**, RS President and a candidate for BiH presidency, said that *"the fight against an unitary BiH is the biggest task of SDS and any attempt of violating of our interest will be a reason for launching the issue of referendum in BiH"*. He said that noone

could revise the DPA or abolish the RS, although there were indications that some forces around the Alliance, behind which **Zlatko Lagumdžija, Haris Silajdzic** and **Sulejman Tihic** were, might try to change the BiH Constitution next year. (**Blic** p 7, **Nacional** p 11)

Commenting on the recently revealed **FOSS** (Federation Intelligence and Security Service) report incriminating a number of former Bosniak officials for organized crime, the honorary president of the SDA, **Alija Izetbegovic**, said that *“some representatives of the International Community, who cannot deal with the specific moral character of the BiH Army, are behind this.”* *“Sometimes, I really have impression that they are unhappy because the BiH Army did not commit crimes, and because they cannot put everyone in the same basket and make their job here easier. The fact that the Orthodox church in Sarajevo or in Tuzla still stand, and Ferhadija and Aladza are leveled with the ground simply complicates their job,”* said Izetbegovic in an interview with this week’s **Ljiljan**.

Dnevni List (front and page 5), by Ivica Glibusic) carries an article which allegedly illustrates *‘pre-election tricks of Party for BiH that sheds light on a whole action that Haris Silajdzic had led whilst he was one of the leaders of SDA’*. The daily says that whilst **Alija Izetbegovic** was the public leader of Bosniaks and an official representative of BiH, Silajdzic was busy with financial transactions and installment of his cadres in important offices thus creating a good basis for securing power in the elections to follow. In that context, Glibusic cites cases of the Pakistani loan, Kuwaiti involvement in BH Steel in Zenica, removal of former Federation Finance Minister, **Nikola Grabovac**, as cases which allegedly show Silajdzic’s preparations aimed to secure power for himself and his party.

RS-related developments

Glas Srpski quotes on its **front page the Serb Orthodox Church**

Museum Director, Slobodan Mileusnic, as saying that more than 3,000 icons disappeared from Serb Orthodox churches in BiH during the war. According to him, this figure is not final, because the SOC Museum processed the data only for five eparchies. The paper quotes the Dabrobosanska Eparchy Archpriest, Momir Vasiljevic, as saying that most of these artifacts are out of country. "However, the SOC knows that some of the icons are hidden in the BiH Federation", said Vasiljevic.

Glas Srpski reports on its **front page** that the construction of apartments in Ramici near Banja Luka has not started yet because the land allocation waivers have not been issued yet. The RS Geodetic Administration claims that the land allocation process has been initiated and that it will be finished next week. The paper states that, according to the Program for disbanding of collective centers, 20 apartments should be built in Ramici. The paper reports that 22 families or 44 persons still live in 4 collective centers in Zaluzani, Misin Han and Lazarevo.

Glas Srpski reports (p 4) that the veto of Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional commission on the RS Law on Ministries thwarts the re-structuring of the RS Administration in accordance with the constitutional changes. It also questions the appointment of a new RS government after the elections. The proposed RS Law on Ministries was withdrawn from the procedure because Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission requested that ministers and their deputies must have different ethnic background. The paper quotes the RS Deputy Prime Minister, **Petar Kunic**, as saying that this request has no grounds in the RS Constitution or the BiH Constitution, and that the Law, as it has been offered, will be discussed at the next session of the RS NA. "OHR does not request that ministers and their deputies must have different ethnic background", said Kunic.

Feral (pages 45/46, by Ivan Lovrenovic) carries an editorial on the destruction of a mosque in Kljuc, near Gacko. The

editorial says: *“By minimizing and relativizing a recent demolition of the mosque in Kljuc, **Mladen Ivanic**, the President of the RS Government, precisely reveals a social and ethic pathology typical for a nationalistic, mental framework: it is about ‘some small place of worship, in a remote village... This sentence portrays a character of a vulgar Machiavellian, hopelessly irradiated by an ethnic exclusivity, that only he understands, who is not aware that he himself is proclaiming the harshest verdict to himself.”* Lovrenovic also says that out of 78 persons, who lived in Kljuc before the war, only 7 of them returned to this place. Lovrenovic concludes that he dedicated this editorial to *“some small place of worship, in the remote village because the Kljuc paradigm can be applied on the whole BiH that has numerous small local communities of all three peoples, which have a problem of survival expressed in the same way.”*

DL: Interview: Alexander Griscenko, Russian Ambassador to BiH

Dnevni List (front and page 12) carries excerpts of an interview that the Russian Ambassador to BiH, **Alexander Griscenko**, gave to *Studio 88* of Sarajevo. Questioned to comment on arrest of **Radovan Karadzic**, Griscenko says: *“We believe that there should be a deadline for persecution of war crimes, but we are convinced that there are democratic authorities, democratic courts in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb that could prosecute these cases. I would like to mention that there are thousands of them (cases), not only Karadzic.”*

On Russian President Putin’s initiative on another conference about Balkans: *“Putin’s initiative is unambiguous and was made to strengthen sovereignty and integrity of every country in the region and that’s the point (...) It is assumed that UN would be a guarantor of such agreement (...) But sincerely, I believe that the war period is behind us. I do not see a realistic possibility of another conflict. The destiny of BiH is in hands of peoples and citizens of BiH, the state and*

society unfold in accordance to the DPA and I do not see reasons for fear. Finally, when questioned as to who are the reform forces in BiH, Ambassador Griscenko said that all the parties that took part in the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement and parties who have subsequently supported the constitutional changes are the reform forces.

Finally, Ambassador Griscenko labels SDP BiH as the party that fits multi-ethnicity the most.

Elections in Serbia

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas Srpski** (p 2) and **Nezavisne Novine** (front page, p 14), report on the presidential elections in Serbia. Both papers report that the turnout was over 50%, which is a requirement for the presidential elections to be declared valid. It seems that both papers were closed before the Center for Free Elections and Democracy (CESID) from Belgrade released first unofficial results. According to CESID, Kostunica won 31%, Labus won 27%, Seselj won 23%, Draskovic 4% and Pelevic 3%. This means that Kostunica and Labus qualify for the next round, which will take place in two weeks. (**New York Times**, **Washington Post**, **Guardian**, **Daily Telegraph**, **Independent** prominently covers the issue, as well as the Sarajevo dailies)

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Sunday, 1900)

- BiH/Croatia border crossing near Srbac opened after 10 years
- Presidential elections in Serbia and Kosovo with no incidents so far
- Israeli ended the siege of Arafat's HQ
- Ars Aevi bridge opened in Sarajevo as a part of the museum complex

FTV 1 (1930)

- Presidential elections held in Serbia
- Israel ended the siege of Palestinian leader Arafat's HQ
- Returnees to Sarajevo suburb Dobrinja continue with protests in front of the Federation Government

RTRS (1930)

- Presidential elections in Serbia
- Consolidation of the BiH oil market
- Israel unblocked Arafat's headquarter