

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 31/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Customs Administration evades taxes, Federation Interior Ministry overspends; Ashdown warns about a dirty pre-election campaign

Dnevni Avaz: Ashdown – BiH desperately needs reform

Jutarnje Novine: Ashdown before the Federation Parliament – Don't give promises you cannot deliver

Vecernji List: High Representative Ashdown in the Federation Parliament: Voters run away from pre-election campaign; Consequences of dispute regarding border between Croatia and BiH: Kostajnica caused quarrel among Serb politicians

Dnevni List: NHI's ultimatum to Ashdown; Ashdown addresses Federation PMs: I am concerned about the low voter turn out

Glas srpski: Islamic Community is building a mosque in Ilijas despite the ban issued by OHR; Mrkonjic Grad – One square meter in industrial zone costs 1 KM;

Nezavisne novine: Computer virus in the government of Mladen Ivanic – Savanovic and Viloendecic are the main hackers?

Paddy Ashdown/Federation Parliament

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, addressed on Tuesday deputies in both chambers of the Federation Parliament. Media across BiH note that a good portion of Ashdown's speech was dedicated to the upcoming elections and the ongoing "*dirty pre-election campaign*". Ashdown: *"...I have to say I am saddened at the way this campaign has begun. Allegation and accusation. Slur and innuendo. Attack and counter attack... I am really worried about a low turnout on October 5th. These*

'smear wars' will make that more likely. So, when we come back from our summer holidays, I hope that candidates will tell people why they should vote for their party, not why they shouldn't vote for the others." Ashdown also commended the deputies in the Federation House of Peoples for withdrawing the proposed Law on Veterans' Rights, thereby meeting requirement for signing the stand-by arrangement with the IMF. *"So I applaud those who withdrew the veterans' bill, and in so doing, saved the tens of millions of dollars that can now be spent on the elderly, on the young, on the unemployed, on the disabled and, of course, on the veterans themselves. Not passing this bill was the brave thing to do – and the right thing to do. It has saved this country's reputation with the outside world. And it has proved that the Government in BiH can be trusted."* After the speech, the High Representative also gave opportunity to the deputies to ask questions. **Dnevni Avaz** and **Oslobodjenje** note the exchange between HDZ representative **Ivica Marinkovic** and Ashdown. Avaz: *"After a complaint by Marinkovic that the participation in the authority at the entity level is not very favorable for Croats, Ashdown replied brusquely – 'Imposing a unitary identity of monoethnicity, the idea that one can only be a Croat or a Serb, and, at the same time, not also a citizen of BiH is an utter stupidity. If you impose this unitary idea, you will have a blood on the streets.'"* (also **Slobodna Dalmacija** and **Dnevni List**)

(**Oslobodjenje** front page "Ashdown warns about the dirty pre-election campaign", **Dnevni Avaz** front page, full speech on p.4, **Jutarnje Novine** front page, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 5 "Ashdown against smear wars", **Vjesnik** page 2, 'Ashdown demands more tolerant pre-election campaign', **Vecernji List** page 2 and front page, 'Voters run away from pre-election campaign', **Slobodna Dalmacija** 16 and last page, 'Harsh response to HDZ' and 'Partnership is key word of future cooperation', **Dnevni List** page 5 and front page, "I am truly concerned about a poor turnout of voters on October 5", **Glas Srpski** p.5).

In a commentary in **Dnevni Avaz**, Sead Numanovic commends the speech of the High Representative, noting that Ashdown “with his atypical but very effective ways, sets new political standards, which will have to be followed by the local politicians.” “Ashdown’s addresses to BiH politicians...proved to be an excellent method of political work...Ashdown talks about problems concerning every single citizen of this country. He is a voice of conscience to sleepy and self-important politicians. He is also an obstacle to extremism and intolerance, and a hope for all displaced persons.”

PIC Political Directors session in Sarajevo

The BiH authorities on Tuesday presented a joint economic reform program to a special session of the **Peace Implementation Council**, meeting at the level of political directors. The presentation took place in the Joint Institutions Building, Sarajevo, under the chairmanship of the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. Following an introduction by Foreign **Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija**, the main presentation was given by Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations **Azra Hadžiahmetović** and State Treasury Minister **Ante Domazet**. This was followed by interventions by Entity Prime Ministers **Alija Behmen and Mladen Ivanic**.

Hadžiahmetović: “Our aim is to transform the economy and make it more attractive to foreign investors. This is our only way out of the poverty...Our aim is to create 60,000 new jobs by 2004, to move the business from the gray market to the formally regulated framework, and to encourage small businesses to reduce poverty.”

Ashdown said that this PIC session is of historic importance. “The International Community, together wither BIH partners, gathered here for a joint plan of activities for the future, ...which will ensure that this country is moving towards modern economy and the European integration. Above all, our aim is to open possibility for employment of ordinary citizens in this country.”

Lagumdžija: *"BiH is no longer a territory, it is a European state, it no longer has a reason to fear wars or ghosts of the past."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Oslobodjenje** p. 8, first item in **BHTV 1**, **FTV** prime time news, second item in the **RTRS** news)

Federation Affairs

At yesterday's session, the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives failed to secure the necessary number of votes to confirm the appointment of a new Federation Finance Minister and Minister of Social Welfare and Refugees. According to media reports, the two candidates, **Franjo Franjic** and **Omer Djug**, did not get the needed support of at least 71 deputies in the House. (**Dnevni Avaz**, **Oslobodjenje**, **FTV**, **BHTV 1**)

The New Croat Initiative [NHI] has announced that should the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, fail to appoint a new Federation minister of finance, members of the Federation government from this party will not take part in the work of the Federation government and the work of the Council of Ministers until further notice. In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 3), the Federation Defense Minister and a senior official in the NHI, **Mijo Anic**, added that his party would also withdraw from the Alliance for Change. Anic: *"We should know more after our meeting with Ashdown. I will tell him openly that the NHI does not want to be in the Alliance, since it is incapable of finding a way to ensure that Franjic is finally named to his post. I will ask [Ashdown] to use his powers and personally name Franjic to the post of the Finance Minister."*

(Front page splash in **Dnevni List** titled "NHI's ultimatum to Ashdown")

Federation Ministry of Defense issued on Tuesday a press release, emphasizing that Ministry's documents for the period from 1997 to 2001 are still in hands of **Ferid Buljubasic**, the Federation Deputy Minister of Defense. According to the press

release, the Office for the budget audit had at its disposal documents on transactions of a Croat component of the Federation Army for the period from April 1 until December 31, 2001. *'Practically, there are no documents for the previous period and for this reason Minister of Defense Mijo Anic demanded assistance of the Federation Government so that they can draw the line in the transaction of the Croat component'* Minister Anic will propose forming of an independent audit group made of international experts.

(**Dnevni List** page 2, and **Slobodna Dalmacija** page 17)

BiH Foreign Affairs

Kostajnica

Members of the **BiH Presidency** met yesterday in Banja Luka with the RS vice president, **Dragan Cavic**, and the RS National Assembly speaker, **Dragan Kalinic**, to discuss the ongoing dispute over the border crossing in Kostajnica. Presidency chairman **Beriz Belkic** stressed after the meeting that that the contentious Kostajnica issue ought to be resolved by the BiH state institutions. Belkic: *"This is not a job of the RS, but of the BIH state institutions. Naturally, there is a need for an efficient internal communication. BIH institutions watch for the entity interests and one should have full confidence in them."* (First item in the **RTRS** news, **Oslobodjenje** p. 5)

Nezavisne novine quotes (p. 2) the President of the Croatian Commission for border crossings with BiH, **Filip Vucak**, as saying that Croatia proposes that a joint border crossing with Croatia should be 60 m away from the river Una, at the location where members of the SBS currently are. IN a statement for the daily, the Minister for Civil Affairs and Communication, **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, said that this location is acceptable for BiH. *"We shall discuss it when we receive the official document regarding the proposed location of the border crossing, but I do not expect any problems"*, said

Mihajlovic.

Vecernji List (page 3 and front page, signed by Dejan Jazvic) reports that the dispute over the Kostajnica border crossing has aggravated relations within BiH and caused a conflict between **Dragan Mikerevic**, the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, and **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, the Minister of Civil Affairs and Communication, who are members of the two rival Serb parties. The daily notes that the conflict culminated when Mihajlovic demanded removal of **Slavisa Vukovic**, the Head of the State Border Service, who is also a close associate of Dragan Mikerevic. **Amer Kapetanovic**, a Spokesperson of the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated: *'I believe that after misunderstandings and heightening of tensions at the beginning we are on a good way to resolve problems regarding the border and border crossing in Kostajnica.'*

"If the Kostajnica border crossing is established according to the AVNOJ's borders, the SNS will sue BiH before the International Court in Brussels in order that the border along Una River is determined in the same way," **Jovo Zoric**, the SNS Main Board's member, said. He claims that village Matijevici, near Dvor na Uni, according to the AVNOJ's borders belongs to BiH, and not to Croatia, which is the case now, **Blic (p16) and Nacional (p11)** report.

EU Integration

After a meeting in Sarajevo, the Deputy BiH Minister of European Integration, **Rasim Kadic**, and the EC head for Western Balkans, **Reinhardt Pribbe**, said that BIH achieved a significant progress in fulfilling the EU Road Map requirements, however noted that there some areas which need more improvement. **Kadić**: *"It is a matter of weeks when we will fulfill all the EU Road Map requirements. We have to say that, in some aspects, a fulfillment of BiH obligations that derive from the process of joining the EU integration, does not follow the wanted dynamic"* . **Pribbe**: *"There are three*

areas we are not completely satisfied with: implementation of decisions of institutions for human rights, financing state border service, as well as regulation of the PBS, actually adoption of the Law on PBS". (**Dnevni Avaz, Oslobođenje, BHTV 1, FTV**)

During a meeting of foreign ministers of Southeast European countries in Salzburg, the Serbian Prime Minister, **Zoran Djindjic**, said that "the unresolved issues on the territory of the former Yugoslavia hamper the process of the Balkan integration to the EU." "In the Balkans, there are presently two great problems, and those are two protectorates – Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina – whose fates are still unclear." (**Dnevni Avaz p. 5, Oslobođenje, Nacional**)

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 5), the founder of the Party for BiH, **Haris Silajdzic**, strongly condemned Djindjic's statement, calling it "unacceptable". "There will be no compensation at the expense of BiH."

RS issues

Glas srpski reports on its **front page** that despite the construction ban, which was issued by the High Representative, and protests of Serbs and Croats from Ilijas, the Islamic Community (IVZ) and the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) continued with the construction of a mosque in Ilijas, only 10 meters away from the town's high school and elementary school. The paper reports that the municipality offered to the SDA and IVZ to pick any other location for the mosque, but that they refused to consider that proposal. Glas srpski also notes that the High Representative sent two letters to the municipal authorities reminding them that places of worship cannot be built near schools. The paper quotes the president of the Croat Peasant Party municipal board, Petar Ilic, as saying that no one is against the construction of places of worship, but that religious facilities cannot be built near schools. Ilic told Glas srpski that the Police have been ordered to ban further construction works.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- BIH Foreign Trade Minister Azra Hadziahmetovic present to PIC Political Directors a plan for economic reform in BiH
- Council of Ministers chairman Dragan Mikerevic addresses a summit of South-east European Foreign Ministers and discussed ways of improving cooperation between countries in the region
- Deputy BiH Minister of Integration meets with the EC head for Western Balkans: BiH is very close to fulfilling all the EU Road Map requirements
- High Representative addresses the Federation Parliament, calls upon deputies /government to better analyze expenses in the social sector and evaluate the needs of this population

FTV

- PIC Steering Board and BiH authorities: BiH Minister of Foreign Trade Azra Hadziahmetovic says BiH authorities must ensure the opening of 65,000 new jobs, create a self-sustainable state, and wean itself of donations
- Federation Parliament House of Representatives fails to verify the appointment of the new Finance Minister, Franjo Franjic, and the Minister of Social Welfare and Refugees, Omer Djug.
- Appointment of the BIH Constitutional court judges confirmed
- High Representative addresses the Federation Parliament, calls upon deputies /government to better analyze expenses in the social sector and evaluate the needs of this population

RTRS

- BIH Presidency members meet with the RS Vice President

Dragan Cavic and Assembly speaker Dragan Kalinic to discuss the dispute over the Kostajnica border crossing. Presidency chairman reminded the two RS officials that this issue is under a competency of state, rather than entity institutions

- PIC Steering Board and BiH authorities: BiH Minister of Foreign Trade Azra Hadziahmetovic says BiH authorities must ensure the opening of 65,000 new jobs, create a self-sustainable state, and wean itself of donations
- High Representative addresses the Federation Parliament, calls upon deputies /government to better analyze expenses in the social sector and evaluate the needs of this population
- BiH close to fulfilling all EU Road Map requirements