

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 8/10/2002

BiH Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Lagumdžija – I will respect judgement of my own party

Dnevni Avaz: Ashdown – protest, not return to nationalism

Nezavisne Novine: SDA, SDS, SNSD and HDZ strongest in BiH Parliament; Dodik offers coalition to Ivanic

Glas Srpski: Carla [Del Ponte] asks for help in investigation of crimes committed by Bosniaks; US double standards

Blic: Ashdown – I will judge new authorities by their deeds, Coalition-making is on the scene

Slobodna Dalmacija: Lijanovic asks for Covic's withdrawal; Ashdown – BiH threatened by criminals, not nationalism

Dnevni List: Silajdzic will not enter into coalition with SDA

International Media Headlines on BiH Elections

The New York Times: Nationalist appear to regain power in Bosnia

Associated Press: Bosnian Elections sparks new fears

Washington Post: Nationalists take lead in Bosnian elections

Guardian: Nationalist revival in Bosnia threatens reform

Deutsche Presse Agentur: Bosnia going back into the future

Die Welt: Bosnia punishes corrupt government

Die Welt Op-Ed: Bosnia needs a second Dayton

Die Tageszeitung: Rainy days for Bosnia

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: Perspectiveless

Die Presse: Defeat of multiethnic parties

Frankfurter Rundschau: The Bosnian Truth; Election show how far BiH citizens are from the European vision of a multiethnic state

Sueddeutsche Zeitung: Nationalist victory – sign of protest

Political party statements

HDZ

In reaction to media reports that victory for nationalist parties means a step back, and that victorious nationalist parties will not implement reforms, the acting president of the HDZ, **Barisa Colak**, told **Hrvatski Radio Herceg-Bosna** that such statements are unfounded. *"I am completely sure that those parties that were elected will implement reforms, because I am convinced that our programme, the programme of this coalition consisting of the HDZ and another two parties, is such that it calls for reforms in BiH to be carried out so that we should turn BiH into a prosperous country, a country in which human rights of all citizens will be guaranteed, as well as equal rights of all three nations achieved. Finally, we shall build a law-governed state in this area so that BiH should really become a constituent part of Europe."*

In a statement for **BHTV 1**, the most likely Croat member of the BiH Presidency, **Dragan Covic**, said that the HDZ is open to any coalition with reform-minded political parties. *"Most natural coalition would be with SDA and SBIH,"* Covic explained.

SDS

Mirko Sarovic, the **SDS** candidate for BiH Presidency member, said that the party has won the elections at four levels, and added that preliminary election results were unofficial and that it was necessary to wait for the official results to be announced. Sarovic pointed out that he did not doubt that the BiH Presidency was a fully functional institution, and expressed his hope that the institution would perform even

better than it has in the past. *"There are a lot of issues that must be included in the BiH Presidency's agenda. I will do my best to fulfill my constitutional role by representing people and the RS, protecting vital interests of people and promoting all progressive reforms which will enable BiH to build its own sustainable society and to be part of regional and European integration, where it belongs,"* Sarovic said.
(SRNA, RTRS)

In a statement quoted in most electronic media last night, the SDS president, **Dragan Kalinic**, said that the victory of nationalist parties at the elections is not a *"return to the past, but a new reality for BiH and RS."* *"Those who claim otherwise lost touch with reality and they ought to ask themselves why, seven years after Dayton, we have this reality now. Even if Serbs made a mistake by voting this way, is it possible that Bosniaks and Croats did as well,"* asked Kalinic.

SNSD

The leader of the SNSD, **Milorad Dodik**, said that SNSD has several possibilities to create authority in the RS and that one of the options is the establishment of a coalition with PDP and a few more parliamentary parties. *"The establishment of a coalition with PDP does not depend on us, we would let **Mladen Ivanic** decide whether he will continue to work with SDS or with us. We will not wait for a long time. If Ivanic again decides to join coalition with SDS, it would only strengthen the SDS position and, at the next elections, the SDS will be absolute winner."*

After the meeting with the British Ambassador, **Ian Cliff**, Dodik also said that *"It is impossible to create any sort of agreement with SDS."*
(Nezavisne Novine, p.7)

SDA

In an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page), **Hasan Muratovic**, the head of the SDA Election HQ, rejected the

possibility of creation of a new Alliance for Change or any similar coalition which would not include national(ist) parties. *"An average politician cannot even think about this possibility. You know very well how the Alliance was formed, and what it had achieved in the past two years...something like that ought not happen again. We have to get used to true democracy. We have to respect the will of majority of people."* Muratovic explained that SDA will be open for a coalition with any pro-BiH oriented party and a party accepted by the High Representative. *"Most logical cooperation would be with Party for BiH or with some parties which represent Croat people."* (Muratovic gave similar statement last night at **BHTV 1** prime time news)

SDP

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that **SDP Presidency** will most likely schedule a session of the party congress in November. According to the daily, the congress is to discuss the responsibility of the party president, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, for the fiasco at Saturday's elections. *"I will recommend that that the congress discusses not only my responsibility, but responsibility of all other senior officials in the SDP. Until then, no one has right to speculate about or try to extort any resignations."*

Analyses/commentaries on post-election coalitions

Dnevni List (page 3, by D.L.) reports that national parties have returned on the political scene in BiH. According to the article *"by all accounts, BiH and especially the BiH Federation are entering a political crisis, with a lot of political games and calculations and nobody knows as to what might be the final result of it."* The article also says that *'conflicts within SDP are entering their final phase and it can be expected that **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, the current President of SDP, might leave this position.'* Also, DL says that *'there are many information saying that there are also disagreements within Party for BiH and, according to the article, there is*

the information saying that **Haris Silajdzic** is thinking about his withdrawal from politics.' According to the sources close to SDA, 'it is quite certain that this party will not form a coalition with HDZ, and they also do not even think to share power with Party for BiH.' Also, Party for BiH is sending signals that this party does not want to form the coalition with SDA, since on the contrary they would get on the wrong side of the International Community. DL concludes that 'it is quite realistic that, regardless of personal animosities, SDP and Party for BiH will remain together in a political game and we shall see whether the other members of the Alliance for Changes will remain with them.'

BHTV 1 commentator from Banja Luka noted in last night's prime time news that although the **SDS** is one of the biggest winners at these elections, it could easily come out as the big loser unless it forms a coalition with one of the two other strongest parties in the RS – **SNSD** or **PDP**. "SDS is quite aware of this, and it wasted no time in terms of opening the discussion on this matter," BHTV 1 reported. At a press conference on Monday, SDS official **Dragan Kalinic** said that his party is ready to enter a coalition with any political party in the RS, including the SNSD and PDP. "All bad feelings must be put aside now. All parties are welcome to join our Alliance for the RS," Kalinic said.

Asked about the prospects of the three strongest parties forming a joint RS coalition, PDP president **Mladen Ivanic** was more skeptical. "I don't think that this alliance would be possible. The alliance of these three parties would simply be unnatural," he told the **FTV**.

Most commentators note that more likely outcome would be a coalition between SDS and only one of the other two parties. SNSD president **Milorad Dodik**, however, rejected the possibility of his party cooperating with SDS. "The SNSD is at crossroads, which is very unpleasant, but it is impossible to reach any agreement with the SDS," he said.

Mladen Ivanic was not as clear about this, but noted that PDP

would be open for coalition with any political party strongly committed to implementation of reforms in the sphere in judiciary and economy. He also appeared not to be inclined to a closer cooperation with SNSD. *"There have been some harsh words between us in the past...but, we will see,"* Ivanic said. Dodik, however, openly stated that a coalition between SNSD and PDP is possible, but did not want to go into details. **BHTV 1** concluded that the post-election coalition-making will also largely depend on the International Community and OHR in particular. *"There are already indications that some OHR officials are openly lobbying for the alliance between SNSD and PDP,"* concludes the report.

Despite the obvious victory of nationalist parties at Saturday's elections in BiH, an Oslobodjenje commentator Emir Habul argues in **BH Radio 1** prime time news that nationalism has not been deepened, nor has BiH returned to 1990. The voters voted against the authorities that achieved less than promised, which is in a way a normal civic rebellion. *"The first comments about the past elections generally say that people voted for nationalist parties. Dramatic warnings that BiH has gone back to 1990's have been made, which is, let us say it right away, an exaggeration: 2002 is not 1990. In the meantime, BiH has changed. Its inner being is different and many other circumstances are different. At the first multiparty elections, the people voted for nationalist concepts, which then played an autonomous political role. Last Saturday the voters voted against the authorities that achieved less than promised, which is in a way a normal civic rebellion. In this light, one should look at the theses that nationalism has not deepened, although national affiliation is still the main feature of political and all other choices...."*

"However, the most important question now is who will side with whom, what new authorities will look like and what are possible consequences for the state. From statements by Doris Pack or Paddy Ashdown, it can be concluded that the SDA, which

is being seen as becoming more of a party of the centre, is an acceptable partner. On the other hand, the party leadership says that it regards as acceptable all partners who manage to get support of the international community. Possible combinations should be left to the time when the final results are known. However, a possible cross-party government or even a government of experts should not be excluded from the post-election story," concludes Habul.

In a commentary for last night's **"60 Minutes"** political show, **Slobodna Bosna's** editor-in-chief Senad Avdic noted that the elections results show that majority of people in BiH voted for nation with no perspective. *"They chose a failure of their state. A state, which could not be killed during the war, but will be buried in peace."* *"Between Mladen Ivankovic, who provided jobs and a steady income for thousands of workers in his company, and Dragan Covic, who brought that many people to their ruin in Soko company, Croat voters chose the later...Between SDP, who promised working on reforms, on uprooting crime and corruption, and SDA, which promised a future in which criminals will rule, voters chose the SDA!?* *It is wrong to only blame those who did not vote. One thing is certain – those who did vote, did so irresponsibly – they will reduce this country to its ruin!."*

Reporter magazine (by Igor Gajic)speculates that now, after the elections, SDS's Dragan Kalinic is going to try to create a coalition that would enable his party to participate in the executive power in the RS and on BiH level. According to the weekly, SNSD is the only party, in coalition with which, the SDS would be able to form a majority in RS National Assembly. The preliminary results have shown that SDS is in a position to dictate conditions for any future negotiations due to the fact that their 30 seats in the NA guarantee that they cannot be avoided. *"It is a paradox, but the Serb Radical Party (SRS) that reappeared at the political scene, is the one least interested for negotiations with SDS. What one needs to bear*

in mind is that SRS, with 4-5 seats in the RS NA will play significant role."

In an Op-Ed in **Dnevni Avaz**, Sead Numanovic argues that those parties who believe that election result will be their sole guarantee that they will be in power could become greatest losers if reforms are not implemented. *"While public is concerned about post-election coalition-making, **Ashdown** is preoccupied with the platform of new authorities and their position on reforms. Time for BiH is running out, warns the High Representative, who will not tolerate any delay or obstruction."*

In a commentary in **Oslobodjenje**, Mirko Sagolj argues that BiH has just made a step back to the past. *"It is a great mystery why **Paddy Ashdown**, known for his negative position on social-democratic idea, behaved as an English queen – neutral. His thesis that the past elections were a voice of protest against ruling parties is correct, however the thesis that this is not a return to nationalism of the 90s, indicates that Ashdown still doesn't know where he is working. In any case, those who voted nationalist, voted for division of BiH...The High Representative will have a chance to realize this."*

In an editorial in **Dnevni List** Slavo Kukic notes that *'nationalists because of whom we went through horrors of war have returned to power again.'* *"The SDA victory is the biggest surprise of the last elections, and, according to Kukic, the reason for it lies in the fact that **Alija Iztebegovic** and Reis Cerić mobilized SDA voters, while the parties belonging to the Alliance for Changes failed to mobilize about 45% of their voters who stayed at home.'*

Daniel Simpson in **The New York Times** writes that the victory of the nationalist parties is a slap in the face for the foreign officials who have run Bosnia since the Dayton. Simpson, however, agrees with Ashdown's thesis that the voters were mostly disillusioned with the failure of the Alliance,

hence the alarming election results. **Associated Press** (via The NY Times), **Washington Post** and **Guardian** also quoted Ashdown, while explaining the weekend vote which brought nationalist parties back in power. *"The weekend vote was a protest, a cry for help, not a vote for more of the same or a return to the nationalist past."*

German newspapers, however, appear not satisfied with this explanation. Erich Rathfelder in **Die Tageszeitung** writes that the High Representative's adventurous argument cannot be accepted. *"True is that the elections forced on BiH by the OSCE were as pointless as stepping in front of a bus. The fact that the government led by the social democrats was only given two years to implement the necessary reforms in the state and in the economy has led them into a mission impossible. In addition, it was precisely for this reform government that less financial aid was available. The hardships could be felt, the successes were not visible, yet...."*

"It would be completely wrong to leave Bosnia out in the cold. In one regard and without any doubt Paddy Ashdown is right: Still the majority of the population wants Europe. And he still has means of power at his disposal to get the nationalists on course. Even they are dependent on the aid from abroad," concludes Rathfelder.

Reactions

At a press conference held in Sarajevo on Monday, High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** said that one of the most certain things during Saturday's election was that people voted against parties in power, and not for return to the nationalist from ten years ago. *"According to the partial results announced yesterday, 2 of the 3 nationalist parties saw their vote go down. The only one that saw its vote increase is the one that had done most to move back to the center...there was no surge of support for other parties: quite the reverse, turnout was the lowest in BiH's post-war history...Saturday's vote was a protest vote, a cry of help: a*

cry for faster reform, for more progress. It was not a vote for more of the same or a return to the past. And if you don't believe me, ask yourself one simple question: was the last government punished for changing too much, or changing too little." (**BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz** front page "Protest, not return to nationalism," **Oslobodjenje** p. 3 "Voice of protest", **Nezavisne Novine** p. 2 "Voice of protest against ruling parties," **Blic** front page "I will judge new authorities by their deeds," **Dnevni List** p. 5 "Switzerland an example for BiH," **Slobodna Dalmacija** front page "BiH threatened by crime, not nationalism. **Glas Srpski**, p. 4)

US Embassy in BiH commended citizens and authorities in BiH for organization of the Saturday's elections, which were marked as fully free and fair. *"We are calling on political leaders in this country to work together on forming coalitions on the state and entity levels which will continue implementing reforms."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Oslobodjenje** p. 4)

EU High Representative for common foreign and security policy, **Javier Solana**, said that he believes that results of the general elections in BiH are a sign of dissatisfaction with slow reforms, rather than return to the past. *"These results show that BiH citizens want more, and not less progress...EU is ready to work with any government which is genuinely committed to intensive reform in BiH."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Oslobodjenje** p. 4)

Dnevni List (p. 2) quotes **Ian Cliff**, the British Ambassador in BiH, as saying that *'it is disappointing that 51% of citizens have turned at the general elections and it is 9 % less voters than at the last elections.'* Cliff also expressed regret because a small number of young people turned out at the elections and added that this is a clear message sent to politicians in BiH and international organizations, saying that they did not do their part of job properly.

UN Mission in BiH and the chairman of the **OSCE** also congratulated BiH citizens and authorities on successfully organized elections. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Oslobodjenje** p.5)

Blic (p. 3) and **Vecernje Novosti** (p. 4) report that the elections results have caused a great concern and disappointment in Brussels.

Reactions from Croatia

Vladimir Seks (HDZ): *"Only politically ignorant did not expect the triumph of national parties in BiH. 'National' issue is unresolved and it would be quite illogical to expect that citizens gave their votes to 'civic' parties"*. **Anto Djapic (HSP)**: *"Results of elections in BiH show that people in BiH can not be modelled and there is no other choice than to seek for talks with legitimate representatives of people"*. **Luka Trconic (HSS)**: *"I think that 'national' parties have politically matured in the meantime, and that they understood that democratic development, integration processes and democratic co-operation with neighbours are guarantee of stability"*. **Drazen Budisa (HSL)**: *"Ruling coalition did not fulfil expectations of citizens, in spite the support of international community they had. It is obvious that Croat parties from that coalition (Alijansa) did not get support of Croat voters, who showed that they see HDZ BiH as the party that represents their interests"*. **Zlatko Kramaric (LS)**: *"Results of elections in BiH are a slap to actual authorities. On the other hand, it is obvious that one could defeat right block only with common performance of a left block, and everything else is experiment"*.

Reactions from Yugoslavia

Yugoslav President **Vojislav Kostunica** hailed the victory of the SDS at weekend elections, saying the party was "awarded" for its "wise" policy, **Beta** news agency reported Tuesday.

"The reasonable and wise policy that the SDS has led has been rewarded at the elections," Kostunica was quoted by the agency as saying in a TV interview late Monday. He said the SDS, *"cooperated with the international community, namely with the*

High Representative in Bosnia,", Kostunica said.

OHR activities/reactions

FTV (prime time news) reports that most cantonal officials in the Federation welcomed **the High Representative's** decision to abolish the special status to two mixed cantons, Central Bosnia and Hercegovina-Neretva. *"I welcome Paddy Ashdown's decision to abolish special status regimes in the two cantons in the Federation, because this move is in line with the Constitutional Court's decision on constituent peoples in BiH. As for the decision to abolish the post of presidents and vice presidents of cantons, and deputy ministers, it is in line with reform processes aimed at reducing the administration and improving the efficiency of canton administration,"* **Nedžad Hadžić**, the president of the CB canton told FTV. FTV reporter notes that most Croat officials in HN Canton also welcomed the decision, saying that many post in cantonal governments, such as deputy ministers, were levers of parallelism.

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz**, Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** said that High Representative's decision on implementing CoCo ruling on the cantonal level is fully acceptable for the Federation government and in line with some of its previous proposed laws. *"Special regime could be abused for purposes of preserving ethnic dualism and such cantons are not useful. I believe that we ought to abolish cantonal governors and deputy ministers in order to make the government bureaucracy less expensive and more efficient, which is in the interest of the citizens,"* Behmen said. The president of the Zenica-Dobož Canton, **Mugdim Herceg**, also welcomed Ashdown's decision. *"I expected this wise decision and I am not upset that my post will be abolished,"* he said, adding that this will help cantonal governments to function more efficiently and prevent the unnecessary obstruction.

Deputy Governor of Central Bosnia Canton, **Rudo Vidović**, told **Slobodna Dalmacija** that he is surprised with the HR's Decision. *"I am surprising that the HR made this Decision directly after the elections not giving enough to cantons to*

time to harmonize their Constitutions. The author of the article says that the word in the Central Bosnia Canton is that the HR **Paddy Ashdown** was influenced by the result of elections when taking the Decision.

FTV, BHTV1, BH Radio 1 and **Federation Radio** prominently reported yesterday about the decision of the High Representative to change cantonal constitutions and bring them in line with constitutional changes adopted in April. **Glas Srpski** p. 3, **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 3, **Slobodna Dalmacija** front page, **Blic** p. 7

Dnevni Avaz (p. 11) carries short biographies of the most senior officials in the State Information and Protection Agency (SIPA), which were appointed on Sunday by the decision of the High Representative. Also **Blic** p. 6

Commenting on the set of **High Representative's** decision on curbing officials' immunity, **Oslobodjenje** (p. 7) reports that this change will affect not only future, but also ongoing legal criminal processes.

Cvijetin Nikic, a member of the SDS Main Board, stated yesterday that SDS welcomes Ashdown's decision on immunity. At a press conference, Nikic said that *'elected leaders and heads will not be able to hide behind immunity and law any longer and they will be held responsible for their work.'* *'This is a good move that takes BiH further towards European Integration.'* (**Dnevni List** p. 10)

BiH State-level issues

Representatives of the successor states of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia [SFRY] have agreed in Sarajevo that the division of monetary gold should take place according to the principles and coefficients previously agreed on in the succession agreement, BiH Central Bank Vice Governor **Kemal Kozaric** said on Monday, and warned that Croatia, which had not ratified the succession agreement, was an obstacle.

According to the agreement, FR Yugoslavia is entitled to 38 per cent, BiH to 15.5 per cent, Croatia to 23 per cent, Macedonia to 7.5 per cent and Slovenia to 16 per cent of the all funds from the succession amount.

Kozaric said that the fact that Croatia had not ratified the Agreement on Succession of Property of the former SFRY was a special obstacle to this process. (**BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz** p. 8)

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Election Commission announces more preliminary results
- Possibilities of coalition-making in Federation and RS
- High Representative imposed decisions on limiting officials' immunity, appointments in SIPA and changes to cantonal constitutions

FTV

- Only four parties entered the Federation Parliament
- Ashdown harmonises Federation Constitution with constitutional amendments adopted in April this year.
- Out 87 million US dollars worth gold that is a property of former SFRJ , 15,5% went to BiH.

RTRS

- BiH Election Commission announced new preliminary results – National parties lead with majority of votes
- Ashdown – Election results show citizen's protest against previous authority
- RS Government cancelled 0.15 KM of special tax on gasoline and diesel fuels trade
- Board for distribution of the former SFRJ assets achieved agreement
- UN weapons inspectors started with training ahead of possible return to Iraq