OHR SRT News Summaries, 14 Sept. 1997

The elections were carried out in a democratic and peaceful atmosphere. This morning, Acting President of the SDS, Buha also voted, and said that he had mixed feelings – satisfaction, because the RS has its local elections for the first time, and bitterness, because a lot of people did not succeed to exercise their democratic right. Muslims, Croats, and Serbs were allowed to go and vote wherever they wanted, but it was not fair that those people in the RS who didn't want to live anywhere else but in the RS could not vote where they applied to stay for the future. The most manipulations occurred in Brcko just before the election process started and the Belgrade agreement was not respected (2,600 unregistered voters should have been put on the list), proving that it is IC practice to make fake agreements.
3:00

Elections review:
Brcko – 20 polling stations in Brcko will be open until the last voter on the lists votes, which was agreed between OSCE, PEC, and party representatives. This decision was made by the head of OSCE mission, Frowick and Supervisor for Brcko, Farrand after the RS PEC's letter which underlined a number of irregularities in regard to voters' lists that occurred yesterday, which could almost result, according to local EC President, Gavric, with closing down of polling stations. Ballots will be counted at the polling stations. The RS PEC President Cancar said for SRT that he is satisfied with the elections which passed without any major incidents, in a free and democratic atmosphere. According to unofficial figures, 90% of people voted in the RS. Until 17:30 hrs, 75% of people voted in the Banja Luka municipality. There were no incidents on the second day of elections.

Until 18:00 hrs, 98,4% voted in Serb Sarajevo; 90% in Ilidza; 84% in Trnovo; 85% in Han Pijesak; 88% in Vlasenica, and 185 voters from the Federation who personally came to cast their ballots; 87% in Sokolac; 89% in Serb Gorazde (a voter from Gorazde said that she voted for unity among the Serbs); 78% in Rogatica (there were 25 people from the Federation who came to vote on Sept. 13, but did not have proper documents so they returned to the Federation. However, SRT learns they did not come with proper documents today either); 60% in Visegrad; until 19:00 hrs about 90% voted in Bijeljina, but the polling stations were not closed when this report was made; until 18:00 hrs, 91% voted in Zvornik, whereas another polling station was opened this evening at 18:00 for 60 Muslims who used to live in Dugi Dio; until 14:00, 60% voted in Lopare, until 18:00 hrs, 83% voted in Foca, and 1000 Muslims who voted at a separate polling station; until 18:30hrs, 87% people voted in Trebinje, whereas 75% voted in Prijedor; until 16:00 hrs, 82% voted in Srebrenica, etc. The elections were democratic and fair in FRY as well. So far about 60% of 75,000 registered voters voted there. FRY also organised 11 buses for refugees who wanted to vote for their municipalities personally. The final results will be known on Sept. 16.
30:00

Regarding the local elections, the Ministry of Interior and its Minister Paleksic issued a statement saying that the police undertook a number of measures in order to enable carrying out of the electoral process as fair and safely as possible. Voters showed their political maturity, deciding to exercise this civil right and build the RS on the principles of democracy and DPA.
2:00

Flash news:
Various media reported that the DPA ‘bankrupted’ with holding of local elections, which will not prevent division along national and ethnic lines. US Envoy Gelbard said in Sarajevo

today that the Dayton BiH consists of two multi-ethnic entities, and that the US's main aim is to return all people to their homes.

Russian media reported that there was no disturbance of those media which are disloyal to the IC.

Associated Press reported that elections will annul the previous division lines, whereas CNN said the IC will work on implementation of the election results. Austrian media opinions are split between those who think that elections will bring multi-ethnicity to Dayton BiH, and those who think that BiH will finally be divided into three parts.
3:00

Summary SRT TV News Banja Luka

Headlines

The elections for the local authority institutions in the RS and in the Federation were successful – the assessment of the majority of the political observers
In 61 municipalities of the RS, except in Brcko, the polling stations were closed at 19:00 hours. The citizens of the RS were choosing their representatives for the local authority institutions who, according to their opinion, will improve the political and economic situation.

Here is the statement of Petko Cancar, the President of the Republic Electoral Commission:

"After two days of voting , all of the polling stations were closed, except those where a certain number of voters did not manage to register themselves regularly and on time. But they will vote, no matter how much time it takes.

I hope that by tomorrow afternoon we will have the information about the results of the elections from all 61 municipalities

of the RS, but those results will be provisional, because we will receive the final results from the Federation of BiH , the FRY, from abroad and from the absentee voters in a few days.

The important thing to say is that we were very democratic during the electoral procedure, we didn’t have any problems, and I think that the observers from the international organizations and from the parties will be surprised with this democratic behavior and discipline which is the attribute of every modern state.”

According to the information that arrived so far, the participation of the citizens in the electoral process is the following:

In Banja Luka , over 75% of the citizens voted.

In Kotor Varos 6857 citizens, or 70% of the total number of registered persons voted by 11:00 hours.

In Celinac, 11779 citizens were registered and over 50% of them voted by 13:00 hours.

In Doboj 43 polling stations were open at 7:00 hours. By 13:00 hours 72% of the registered persons voted.

21050 persons from Federation of BiH were registered to vote and 14000 of them voted.

In the Odzak municipality – Petrovo 2432 people voted and that is 40,11% of registered voters.

In Gradiska 40 polling stations were open yesterday and 60 % of them voted by 14:00 hours.

In 14 polling stations in Srbac 72 % voted by 13:00 hours.

In Kozarska Dubica, 16700 citizens had the right to vote and 10950 or 70 % of them voted by 14:00 hours.

In Prijedor 87062 persons were registered and 70 % of them voted by 14:00 hours. But 1700 voters are missing from the electoral lists in this town.

One hour before closing of the polling stations, the results of the voting in the municipalities of Mrkonjic Grad, Sipovo and Jezero were the following:

In Mrkonjic Grad 62 % voted.
In Sipovo 80 % voted.
In Jezero 93 % voted.

The assessment of the Republic Electoral Commission is that on the basis of the present results it can be expected that over 90 % of the voters took part in the elections.

In the eastern part of the RS all of the polling stations were open on time this morning. According to the reports of the agencies the elections went on without any problems and without the objections of the international and party observers .

In the municipalities of Bijeljina , Ugljevik and Lopare 77 polling stations were open, where 100 000 voters were registered. In one of 50 polling stations in Bijeljina due to the incorrectly filled forms, the voters who arrived from the FRY did not vote.

In Vlasenica and Milici 23435 persons were registered and 8861 of them are from Federation. Everything went on without problems.

In Pale over 50 % of people voted by 12:00 hours, and similar was in the municipalities of Srpsko Sarajevo, Srpska Ilidza, Sokolac.

In Visegrad 56 % of people voted by 13:00 hours, and 8000 voters in this town will vote in absence, and similar was in Ljubinje.

Bad participation of the voters was noticed in Nevesinje, where 11227 people were registered and only 3706 of them voted. No one came from the Federation.

In Trebinje the participation wasn't that good by 13:00 hours, only 40%.

For the City Parliament of Banja Luka, 36 political parties and coalitions and 12 independent candidates were registered.
10 min. 34 sec.

In Drvar local Croatian authorities stopped a great number of Serbs to take part in the elections

The people from Drvar who were registered on time were disabled to carry out their city obligation today, to vote in the place from which they escaped in the autumn of 1995.The buses which were going to Drvar were blocked and they are on the way from Mrkonjic Grad, Kljuc and Petrovac to Ostrelj. But, according to the last information that we received from TANJUG , the people from Drvar will be enabled to vote by midnight.

No matter how hard the IC wants to find the culprit on the other side, the culprit for everything what was happening to the people from Drvar who wanted to vote in their town, are the Croatian local authorities in Drvar who tried to disable the Serbs from Drvar to vote in every way they could. In Velecevo, near Kluc three buses were stopped .They spent 30 hours under the open sky and with only one blanket and some food that the international humanitarians gave them.

The statement of one lady from that crowd:

"Nobody understands us. Nobody wants to let us vote. I asked the representatives of SFOR and OSCE who is the one to stop us, who is the one not to allow us to continue this trip, but nobody gave us the right answer. Everyone is avoiding to tell us the answer. They are telling us just to be patient. Well,

we have been patient for 6 years now, and we do not want to be patient any more. But we will hold on till the end even if have to walk.”

Around 13:00 the road near Mrkonjic Grad was blocked. The head of the Center for the Public Security of this town Brane Pecanac is disappointed and angry with the behavior of the international forces.

The problems of the people from Drvar were in the center of the attention on this evening’s press conference in Banja Luka where the spokesman for OSCE still didn’t give the answer who is going to be responsible for the tragedy of people from Drvar.
5 min. 16 sec.

The electoral atmosphere showed that the inter-entity animosity in BiH is still strongly present – assess Russian commentators

The Russian media followed the electoral process with the great attention, emphasizing that the voting went on without bigger problems and with the relatively good participation of the voters. The commentators assess that the IC organized those elections hoping to mild the inter-entity borders in BiH , created mainly during the war. But, the electoral reality showed that the borders between the RS and Federation will remain. That means, according to their assessment, that the main nationalistic parties of all three nations will win the elections. The IC will face then the failure of the DA.

The official Washington considers the elections one step forward, towards the realization of the DA.

French media assess that whether the SFOR mandate will be prolonged depends on the success of the local elections, which is very important for the IC and especially for the Americans.
1 min. 37 sec.

The Vice-President of the Government and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Aleksa Buha after he voted in Pale stated that he was satisfied and bitter at the same time. Satisfied because the elections took place and bitter because the great number of Serbs were not able to realize their right to vote. Buha said that 160 000 citizens from the FRY and 70 000 from the RS were not able to vote.
1 min. 03 sec.

20 polling stations were opened this morning at 7:00 hours In Brcko and they will remain open until there is a need for that.

An interesting information is that the polling station number 720, where absentee voters were supposed to vote was open at 15:00 hours. This place which was closed this morning at 9:00 hours by the decision of the OSCE , and the electoral board was changed, because one part of the 3270 citizens voted for the municipal power institutions in Brcko and not for the places they lived in during 1991.
1 min. 23 sec.

We received the information from the Press center of the international organizations that the pre-electoral silence will be prolonged until the temporary electoral commission publish officially that all of the polling stations in the RS and Federation of BiH are closed.
30 sec.