

MIA MEDIA MONITORING UNIT
Monthly media review on
EU coverage in BiH
1 – 31 October 2009

Client:

XXXXXX

SAMPLE

Media monitoring

This report was prepared on the basis of the around-the-clock media monitoring operation carried out by the Media Intelligence Agency (MIA) in a period from **1 to 31 October 2009** (*NB: report also takes into account electronic media coverage on 31 October*).

Media monitored by MIA were chosen on basis of the following criteria: circulation/viewership; political affiliation, if any; popularity among specific target group; speed and accuracy. MIA's consistent media monitoring over a long period of time enabled a comparative approach as coverage of the EU related issues was assessed against that recorded in the past and of other current affairs in this period.

For the purpose of this report, MIA took into consideration the following media:

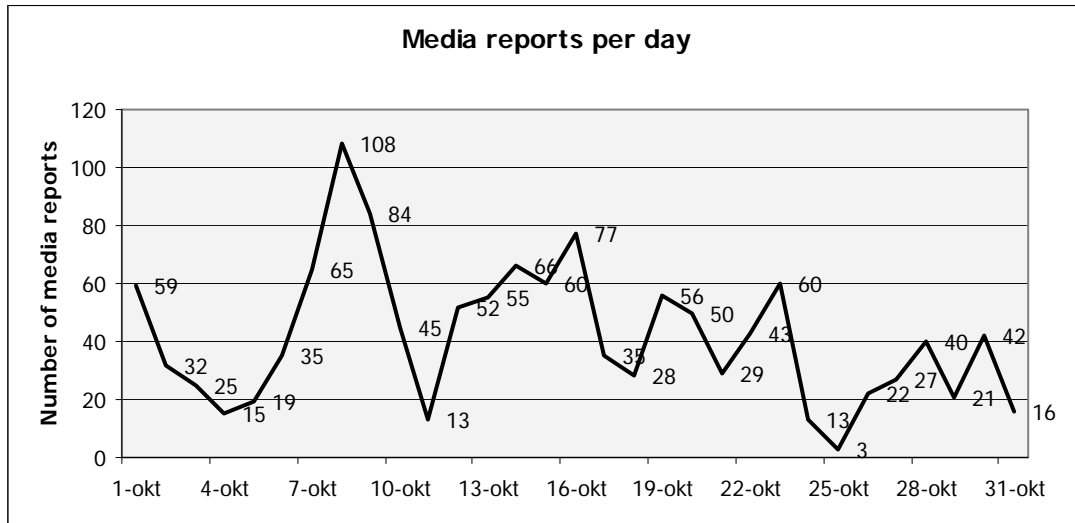
- main news broadcasts and current affairs programs of: Public Broadcasting Service of BiH (BHT 1 and BH Radio 1), Federal TV (FTV), Republika Srpska TV and Radio (RTRS), Radio Herceg Bosna (RHB), Independent TV Hayat (NTV Hayat) and TV PINK;
- weekly current affairs programs by Bijeljina TV (BN TV), Open Broadcast Network (OBN);
- dailies: Banja Luka-based Nezavisne Novine and Glas Srpske, BiH edition of Serbian daily EuroBlic; Belgrade-based Vecernje Novosti (popular in the RS); Sarajevo-based Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz; Mostar-based Dnevni List; BiH edition of Croatian daily Vecernji List; and Croatian newspapers popular among BiH Croats, Slobodna Dalmacija;
- magazines: Sarajevo-based Dani and Slobodna Bosna; Banja Luka-based Novi Reporter.

General findings

In the period covered under this report, in total, **1295 articles** and **electronic media reports** of interest to the client were identified.

Table 1 shows that general interest of media for the EU related stories have been significantly increased in comparison to the previous month (by over 50 percent!).

Table 1: Media reports per day



All the media reports in October could easily be narrowed down to two stories – Butmir talks and EC annual report on progress of BiH.

October started with media focus on Siroki Brijeg incident that resulted in one dead and dozens of injured. The story demonstrated just how deep is a division between peoples in BiH, but also pointed out to deteriorating relations between Croats and Bosniaks in FBiH. From media point of view, incident was not just an act of hooliganism, but also a reminder of the early 90s in the former Yugoslavia and, for some, a warning that BiH is on a dangerous path.

Amidst such reports, on 2 October the EU and US officials jointly announced holding the Butmir meeting. What followed is an avalanche of media reports, commentaries, analyses and political reactions in a manner we'd witnessed on numerous earlier occasions: extensive presence of foreign officials in media advocating in favor of the Butmir proposal; loud and robust appearance of the RS Prime Minister **Milorad Dodik**; return of (until recently rather silent) **Haris Silajdzic**; **Sulejman Tihic** in a role of "compromise man" and divided Croat scene. This time however, political activities also included strong presence of Russia, Serbia and Turkey in media.

As expected, the annual report on the progress achieved by the BiH in the process of European Integration has attracted plenty of media attention in BiH, with all key print and electronic media equally interested in this issue. They all focused on the same thing that **little or no progress** has been achieved in the past year, however opinions as to why is this the case greatly vary.

Daily average of over 41 media articles/reports on EU-related issues was registered in the course of October.

Specifics on media coverage in October

Out of 1295 reports in total, **901** referred to articles published by BiH daily newspapers and weekly magazines; and **349** were electronic media news and features about the EU-related stories.

Print media remain a major source of the all stories of interest to the client; this is specifically true in terms of interviews, exclusive features and elaborative articles. While **electronic media** slightly lag behind in covering the EU related stories, lengths of these reports are also limited by daily political developments.

BUTMIR TALKS

The first week of the month was dedicated to politicians taking up their stances and speculations as to what exactly the meeting means for both the country and the role of the International Community in BiH. Butmir gathering was taking place amidst already negative atmosphere caused by Siroki brijeg and dispute regarding the High Representative's decisions on functioning of the "Elektroprenos BiH". Early in the month, alike politicians, media also shared their already known stances – thus, RS outlets opposed to any kind of strong international mediation and interference in domestic matters; while those based in FBiH were particularly satisfied with the fact that the US envoys have been taking part.

Soon enough, the meeting was called "Dayton 2" which best describes the importance it was given in media and influence that such name could have on BiH public. Yet, the content and exact goals of the meeting remained highly speculative all until the second part of the month.

As politicians hardened their positions, thus it appeared that the foreign officials changed their vocabulary to adjust to those stances. In the first two weeks, numerous interviews of senior EU and US officials were aired and broadcast. Media space was dominated by...

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EU and US officials were particularly eager to demonstrate that they are united in their approach and stance on the BiH issues. Whereas several articles appeared suggesting that this was untrue...

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RS based media: RS PM winner

Early in the month, SNSD (and subsequently, RS media) criticized the selective approach in choosing the participants of the meeting, i.e. they were extremely harsh on the fact that **Dragan Cavic** was invited, while SDS was ignored. RTRS commented on 5 October that this approach has disturbed the relations among political officials in the RS. On the same day, Glas Srpske commented that it was "indicative" that SDS was not invited, arguing (alike Dodik and several other RS media) against Cavic's participation and reminding that his party has never even taken part in the elections. In the same editorial by Zeljka Domazet, daily took up the stance it held until today: Butmir process was "another experiment of the IC."

Nezavisne Novine (7 Oct) was more careful in expressing its opinion before the Butmir 1, noting that the meeting would show whether the IC was acting on behalf of Bosniaks was that was often the case in the past. At the same time, Glas Srpske

continued to insist that the RS and Russian officials have the same stance: no imposed solutions. Day later, daily also argued against any kind of proposals and measures that would lead towards creation of the unitary and centralized state. Nezavisne novine (8 Oct) decided in favor of more positive stance, and published an article which concluded that the International Community would certainly not give in to “destroyers” of BiH (without naming them).

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Triggered by Carl Bildt’s visit to Belgrade, media started to increasingly speculate on a role of Serbia in the process. Glas Srpske was particularly welcoming of such development and it praised the message delivered by the Serbian President **Boris Tadic** following the 18 October meeting with the RS parties. On 19 October, EuroBlic declared the entire process was doomed to failure especially since the EU and US were not harmonized in their approach, nor they had a joint stance.

Towards the end of month, commentaries and editorials repeated that “it is time to end OHR’s protectorate” (Nezavisne novine, 20 October) and that local politicians must reach agreement without foreign influence...

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In conclusions, RS media present Butmir as triumph of Serb officials, i.e. a victory of RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik.

Sarajevo based media: Bosniaks are losers

Most influential daily in the country, Dnevni Avaz, was the first media in the country to “learn” about the Butmir meeting and arrival of senior EU/US officials. The purpose of the meeting, it noted at that stage, was to close down the OHR, and ensure EU candidate status for BiH and invitation to NATO. It appears that – alike SBiH, SDA and SDP officials indicated at that stage – daily would not object closing down the OHR under those terms.

Hayat presented similar opinion. Until the end of month, Hayat was clearly and fully in favor of this process: while conducting the interview with senior EU/US officials, Kenan Cerimagic urged them to “twist arms, and twist them hard” of the local politicians so that BiH citizens could feel some relief (Cerimagic said that if Silajdzic and Dodik think that proposed measures are bad, then without analyzing one could say that they are certainly good for BiH citizens).

Oslobodjenje immediately supported the process for which it believed that it could be a chance for BiH (5 October) to move forward. Daily was particularly satisfied with seniority of officials directly involved, describing this as a clear signal of both EU and US interests in the region, and BiH.

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After Butmir 1, Dnevni Avaz started to consider options in case of failure of the Butmir and argued that then the IC would have to make radical change in its approach to BiH. Still, its editor-in-chief made it clear that this would not necessarily be good for BiH and its officials, and that perhaps it was better to push for Butmir.

On 12 October, Avaz started taking more cautious approach on potential benefits for citizens after Carl Bildt visited Belgrade. It was a secret visit, it noted, and this triggered a period of several Bildt-related articles...

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At the beginning of process, FTV insisted on its importance, especially considering the role of the US. Current affairs magazine '60 minuta' was also very critical of Carl Bildt, and towards the month they also became very critical of the proposed measures (i.e. of not addressing the issue of the entity voting) and the IC. Oslobodjenje commented that the reason why the IC was not dealing with this issue was the fact that it needed any kind of success...

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CRO press: Thanks God Butmir failed!

Stance of media targeting BiH Croats could be summed up in one word: NO! The largest of editorials on Butmir were published in Dnevni and Vecernji list, both of which presented numerous and various stances and arguments of the same conclusion: Butmir process was completely ignoring and marginalizing Croats and as such it should be failed.

At the beginning, dailies whose political affiliation is very different were not as harmonized in their attitudes as that was the best following the 9 October meeting. After that however, they insisted on two things: 1) Croats must stick together now; and 2) Zagreb must help them. Still, articles and analysis published by Globus and Vijesnik (Croatian publications) indicated that the official Zagreb was not considering the proposal as bad as two HDZs saw it.

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Vecernji list welcomed the fact that there was no "arm twisting" at the meeting, but was remained highly critical of the fact that only "cosmetic" changes were proposed. Daily also praised the fact that "Croats were finally united".

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Dnevni list later wrote that meetings of local leaders are just shows for public and foreigners, while Vecernji list claimed that (apart Croats) everyone is undermining Butmir apart from USA.

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EC PROGRESS REPORT

October 7: "Source" leaks content of draft EC report

Late morning on Wednesday, October 7, Banja Luka-based SRNA news agency reported that it came into possession of the **draft EC progress report** which calls on “constitutional changes without delay” (NB: phrase has been frequently reported). Has the information came in any other time, it is certain that this news alone would be enough for media throughout the country to focus on this story; however, considering that all cameras and microphones were turned towards the EU, US envoy and BiH politicians ahead of the Butmir meeting (October 9), the news did not trigger an avalanche of such stories.

Still, media attention did not lack either. Mostly owing to the fact that it has a correspondent in Brussels, **BHT 1** has immediately jumped on the story and also focused on the fact that the report raised the issue of **necessity of the constitutional reform**.

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In this week, Butmir talks certainly dominated media space and the “leaked” information on the content of the EC report did not emerge to be one of the very top stories. **Dnevni Avaz** has however commented (though story was placed on page 10) that this was one of the most significant as, for the first time, it mentioned a perspective of the “candidacy status” for BiH in a near future and implementation of the “constitutional changes without delay”. It is important to note that no media explained what those constitutional changes include.

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Avaz also carried “unnamed sources from Brussels” who underlined that this was one of the worst and most pessimistic reports for BiH, something that was repeated quite often once the report become public.

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On 12 October, media announced soon official release of the report and speculated that it primarily noted worsened political situation and inflammatory rhetoric.

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October 14: Negative report for BiH

On 14th October evening and 15th October, media throughout the country reported that BiH received a negative report on its progress towards the EU, as very little or no progress was registered in the key fields. Whereas all media were harmonized in focusing on this issue, the way they presented the information greatly varied.

For instance, **FTV** (by Amra Brzina) stressed an importance of the fact that the EC has for the first time brought up the issue of constitutional reform, and its being the condition for BiH admission to the EU. FTV has particularly stressed the fact that the report establishes the **entity vote** has often been misused in blocking the decision making process.

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It is particularly the entity vote has become a focus of the media coverage of the EC report. For instance, upon its release, report was carried as cover story of majority of the print publications in BiH, but their headlines best suggest difference in these reports. Dnevni Avaz reads that ' Brussels is against the entity vote', Oslobodjenje reports that "Entity vote prevents progress of BiH" and **Dnevni list** headline also reads that "Europe wants change to entity voting".

RS press on the other hand has entirely different focus; its headlines read: "No admission to EU with OHR" (Glas Srpske), "BiH achieves little progress" (Nezavisne novine), "No progress, politicians hinder it" (EuroBlic). As for the EU officials, a focus was on Olli Rehn who told BHT1 that *"No quasi-protectorate can join the Union."*

Glas Srpske carried the RS PM Dodik who stated that "Rehn's assessment is correct", and that he "agreed with Olli Rehn that BiH cannot join the EU as protectorate." He also used an opportunity to underline that "we do not have a problem with EU, with have a problem with BiH and expectations of Sarajevo aimed at taking an advantage of European integration to re-design constitutional arrangement, decision-making process and many other things."

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Only few comments were given by the BiH officials following the presentation of this report, owing to the Butmir process. While CoM Chair **Nikola Spiric** said that he did not want the report before first reading it in details, Bosniak member of BiH Presidency **Haris Silajdzic** used an opportunity while visiting Turkey to draw attention to the entity vote.

October 16-19

In the subsequent days, EC report was mentioned a number of times, mainly in the context of entity vote, constitutional changes and the parallel story on Butmir process.

The most critical reports were those published by Sarajevo weekly magazines which reflected the opinion already presented by Sarajevo-based **Oslobodjenje**. Namely, this daily (as well as **Slobodna Bosna** and **Dani** magazines) criticized not the report but Ambassador Kourkoulas for publically failing to say who is responsible for the current extremely difficult situation in BiH.

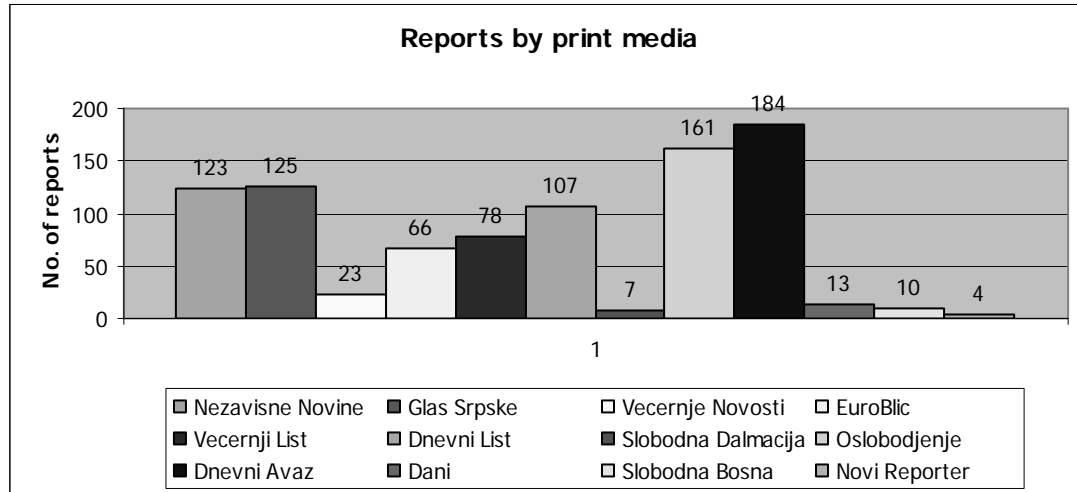
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In conclusion, it should be noted that very little media attention has been paid to content of the EC report other than those provisions referring to the entity vote and a fact that constitutional reform is necessary (**NB**: no media explained which changes exactly should be made).

Dailies Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodjenje lead in a number of print articles covering the EU-related topics, whereas BHT1 (83) and FTV (80) lead among the electronic media.

Table 2 shows individual statistics on a number of print media articles on the EU-related stories in period from 1 to 31 October 2009.

Table 2: Number of print media reports

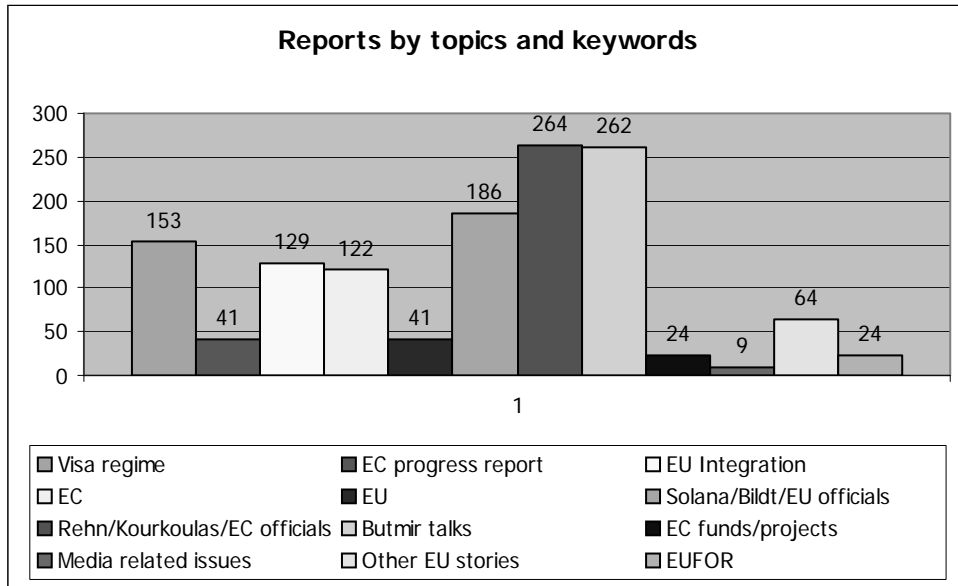


Reports of two Sarajevo dailies **Dnevni Avaz** (184) and **Oslobodjenje** (161) make nearly 40 percent the print media reporting, and over ¼ of the overall media reporting (print and electronic) on the EU related issues. **Glas Srpske** (125), **Nezavisne Novine** (123) and **Dnevni List** (107) and are nearly followed by **Vecernji List** (78) and **EuroBlic** (66). On the other hand, Vecernje Novosti, Slobodna Dalmacija, as well as political magazines published in total much more articles than usually, their relative number is almost insignificant in comparison to the other media. Number of reports broadcast is pretty much evenly dispersed between the monitored electronic media.

- **Media reports by topic and keywords**

In assessing the media coverage of the EU-related stories, MIA media monitoring team has taken into consideration which topics, personalities and institutions had the largest media exposure in the stories of interest to the client. Additionally, we have assessed a tone of the media reports and editorial commentaries.

Table 3: Reports by topics and keywords



The **European Union, European Commission** and/or their officials were, without any doubt, the most mentioned keyword/term counting a total of 631 articles/electronic media reports in October. If reports with focus on the **EC progress report** (41) are added, this makes more than one half of overall media reports on the issue. In addition, reports on the **Butmir talks** (262) was the single most mentioned key word in the media. Issues related to the **liberalization of visa regime** (153) and the **EU integration process** (129) also received significant media attention.

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