

Local elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Elections for mayors and city council members took place in all Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) municipalities on the 5th October, the day Serbia remembers fall of Slobodan Milosevic. Analysts say that outcome of the elections indicate what may be the result of the national parliamentary elections in 2010 – a drastic victory of political parties based on ethnic principles.

In the Republika Srpska (RS), 41 municipalities were won by current RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik's Union of Independent Social Democrats, including RS capital Banja Luka and three more municipalities in the Bosniak-Croat part of BiH. Former Radovan Karadzic's Serbian Democratic Party got 1 mayor in RS so far.

The winner in the Bosniak-Croat part of BiH was predominantly Bosniak Party of Democratic Action which will have 38 mayors, including 6 Sarajevo municipalities and municipalities in central part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it competes with Croatian parties.

Participation in the elections was above 50%, while in urban areas lower than in the countryside.

Sources: Southeast European Times, B92, BalkanInsight.com

Montenegro and Macedonia recognize independent Kosovo

With Montenegro and Macedonia on board, it makes already 50 countries that recognized independent Kosovo. Podgorica – which until recently made up one state with Serbia – recognized independence on the 9th of October, while Skopje followed several days later. Reasons for recognition were different in both cases. The reaction of Belgrade however was same in both of them: envoys of Macedonia and Montenegro became *personas non grata* in Serbia.

Reactions coming from Belgrade varied. While Serbian Prime Minister Mirko Cvetkovic used moderate language, minister of interior and leader of the Serbian Socialist Party Ivica Dacic was harsh on Macedonia, mentioning the name dispute with Greece as a possible pay-back.

On the other hand, Kosovo authorities welcomed decision of its two neighbours. Kosovo Prime Minister Hasim Thaci called it a "gesture which strengthens peace and stability in the region".

Meanwhile, the first Arab country and 51st in row to recognize Kosovo as an independent state is United Arab Emirates.

Sources: Southeast European Times, B92, BalkanInsight.com

Countries in the UN supported Serbia's bid questioning legality of Kosovo

United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) backed Belgrade's bid for International Court of Justice to assess legality of Kosovo's declaration of independence. Serbia's initiative

was approved by 77 countries, while 6 including USA and Albania were against. 76 countries, including majority of European states, abstained from the vote.

While Serbian diplomacy praises the UN's vote as a tremendous victory, Pristina remains calm. In fact, the decision of the court – which may take years to bring – will not be legally binding. Pristina therefore calls this attempt just another waste of time and ignoring reality.

One of Serbia's neighbours, Montenegro, voted for the bid but recognised independent Kosovo meanwhile.

Sources: International Herald Tribune, BalkanInsight.com