**Balkans Journal:**

**Serbia**

**Ben Spiers**

**September 6, 2011**

Article: Serbian Official Convicted of War Crimes

Source: New York Times,

Source address: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/07/world/europe/07hague.html?ref=europe>

 Former Yugoslavia Army Chief of Staff Momcilo Perisic was convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity by an international court tribunal at The Hague. Perisic was involved in Serbian attacks against civilians in Bosnia and Croatia during the 1990’s, as soldiers under his command carried out these attacks. Perisic and soldiers under his command committed terrible acts including massacring Muslims civilians, as well as placing civilians of major cities like Sarajevo and Zagreb under artillery bombardment. Perisic’s conviction and the rounding up of other Serbian war criminals will help Serbia’s case to join the European Union (EU).

**September 10, 2011**

Article: US Open 2011: Novak Djokovic beats Roger Federer beats in five sets

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/14868433.stm>

 Serbian tennis player Novak Djokovic was able to beat Roger Federer in a hard fought five set match at the U.S. Open Semifinals in New York, which is one of tennis’s four grand slams. Djokovic is currently ranked the number one tennis player in the world, and he will be playing to defend that ranking in the U.S. Open Finals. Djokovic has already won three grand slam titles, including two this year.

**September 13, 2011**

Article: Djokovic deposes Nadal in U.S. Open epic

Source: CNN

Source address:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/SPORT/tennis/09/12/tennis.djokovic.nadal.us.open/index.html>

 Novak Djokovic beat Rafael Nadal in four sets to claim the US Open title. This is the sixth straight time Djokovic has defeated Nadal. The US Open title Djokovic’s fourth career grand slam title, including a third one just this year. The U.S. Open title virtually guarantees that Djokovic will remain the number one ranked tennis player in the world. Djokovic’s title and ranking should be a source of great pride for Serbians.

**September 14, 2011**

Article: Djokovic eyes career Grand Slam

Source: CNN

Source address:

 <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/SPORT/tennis/09/13/djovokic.us.open.interview/index.html>

 Just after winning the U.S. Open, Novak Djokovic vows to win the French Open next year. The French Open was the only Grand Slam event he was not able to win this year. Rafael Nadal has dominated the French Open, which is played on a clay court. Djokovic still considers 2011 his best year in tennis, and he still believes he can continue to have success against his two main rivals: Roger Federer, and Rafael Nadal.

**September 15, 2011**

Article: Kosovo Set to Take 2 Key Border Posts

Source: New York Times

Source address:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/16/world/europe/16iht-kosovo16.html>

 Tomorrow, Kosovo plans on occupying the last two border posts on their border with Serbia. This could reignite tensions between the two nations, as a previous attempt by Kosovo to occupy these border posts in July was met with resistance from local Serbs. The Serbs set up roadblocks, plus some shots fire at Kosovo and NATO peacekeeping forces resulting in the death of one Kosovo police official. The main reason Serbia does not want Kosovo to occupy these two border posts is that Northern Kosovo is populated mainly by Serbians, not Kosovar Albanians. The Serbs currently living in Northern Kosovo are still adhering to the laws of Serbia, not Kosovo. Serbia knows that this border dispute with Kosovo must be resolved before Serbia can attempt to join the EU.

**September 16, 2011**

Article: EU police fly in to secure Kosovo border crossings

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-14943576>

 In an attempt to prevent violence, the EU police decided to secure the last two border posts between Kosovo and Serbia. Before July’s violence, Kosovo Serbs were guarding the border posts; however, Kosovo’s government suspected these guards were allowing banned imports into Kosovo from Serbia. Kosovo has a ban on Serbian goods in response to Serbia’s ban on imports from Kosovo. It was unknown whether or not any of the EU police forces were Kosovar Albanians. This border post issue between Kosovo and Serbia looks to remain a serious problem. Kosovo Serbs are committed to keeping Kosovar Albanians from manning the border posts. Making matters worse, the Serbian government in Belgrade has still not recognized Kosovo, as an independent state; while Kosovo Serbs do not recognize Kosovo’s government in the capital Pristina either.

**September 17, 2011**

Article: Serbia fight back against Argentina in Davis Cup semi-final

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/14961056.stm>

 In tennis, Serbia was able to keep its hopes alive of defending the Davis Cup title, as Nenad Zimonjic and Viktor Troicki defeated their Argentine counterparts in the men’s doubles semifinals. U.S. Open champion Novak Djokovic hopes to play in Sunday’s singles match, as he had to pull out of his opening match in the tournament with lower back and rib pain.

**September 18, 2011**

Article: Davis Cup: Novak Djokovic retires as Argentina beat Serbia to reach final

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/14965516.stm>

 Djokovic had to retire during his semi-final singles match due to back pain. It was determined he had a minor rupture of his back muscle. Djokovic hopes to play in the China Open in early October.

**September 26, 2011**

Article: Serbia: Property Confiscated after WWII to Be Returned

Source: New York Times

Source address: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/27/world/europe/serbia-property-confiscated-after-wwii-to-be-returned.html>

 Serbian lawmakers passed a law to help compensate victims of Yugoslavia’s communist regime confiscation of personal property after World War II. The Serbian government will return the land to the people whose property was taken or in the cases where that is not possible, financial compensation will be given to the victims. Serbia see’s this law as another step in trying to join the EU.

**September 27, 2011**

Article: Kosovo-Serbia border clash leaves several hurt

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15082675>

 Tension over Kosovo’s border crossings with Serbia continue, as local Serbs and NATO peacekeeping forces clashed. As NATO forces were attempting to remove a roadblock set by local Serbs at the Jarinje border crossing, the Serbs started throwing rocks and pipe bombs at NATO peacekeepers. NATO peacekeepers responded in self-defense with tear gas and rubber bullets. A few NATO peacekeepers were injured, as well as a few local Serbs. A Serbian official claimed some of the Serbs were injured be live rounds, not rubber bullets. The Serbian government also claims that NATO’s actions were unacceptable, since they fired on unarmed civilians. This violence is occurring as Serbia and Kosovo are preparing to resume talks under EU mediation in Brussels, Belgium.

**September 28, 2011**

Article: Kosovo-Serbia talks off after renewed clashes

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15091857>

 After recent Kosovo-Serbia border violence involving NATO peacekeeping forces, the Serbian government has decided to call off planned talks with Kosovo. The Serbian government will not resume talks with Kosovo until the issue with the majority ethnic Serbian population in Northern Kosovo is addressed.

**September 29, 2011**

Article: Kosovar Serbs Contemplate Life Under Albanian Rule

Source: New York Times

Source address:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/26/world/europe/26iht-kosovo26.html?_r=1&ref=europe>

 With NATO peacekeepers and Kosovo attempting to secure its border crossing with Serbia, Kosovo Serbs in Northern Kosovo know that one day in the near future they could be living under direct Kosovar Albanian control. A majority of Kosovo’s Serbian population already lives in the portion of the country controlled by the majority Kosovar Albanian population. These Kosovo Serbs can vote and have representation in Kosovo’s government. Despite this the majority Serbian population in Northern Kosovo does not want to come under direct control from Kosovo’s government in Pristina at all. The Serbians in Northern Kosovo believe that if Kosovo has a right to break away from Serbia, Northern Kosovo has a right to break away from Kosovo. The Serbian government in Belgrade is going to have to resolve the problems in Northern Kosovo if they want to join the EU.

Article: Novak Djokovic withdraws from China Open with back injury

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/15109916.stm>

 Djokovic’s back has not healed to the point where he could play in the China Open. He may also have to miss the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in a couple of weeks.

**September 30, 2011**

Article: Serbia bans gay pride parade citing violence fears

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-15134182>

 A planned gay pride parade Sunday has been banned in the Serbian capital Belgrade, with Serbian officials citing public safety concerns. A gay pride parade last year in Belgrade resulted in several injuries as police and far-right groups were trying to end the parade. The Serbian government wants to prevent the violence and chaos that happened at last year’s parade. It is also important to note that some reporters have said homophobia is extensive in Serbia, and the Serbian Orthodox Church opposes the gay pride parade on moral grounds.

**October 3, 2011**

Article: Serbian Official Criticises Proposed Croatian Law

Source: BalkanInsight

Source address:

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-state-sec-criticises-proposed-croatian-law>

 Serbian Secretary of State Slobodan Homen has strongly criticized a proposed a Croatian law that would nullify any criminal acts committed by Croatians against Serbians in the 1990’s, especially in the Vukovar region. Homen believes this law would negatively impact Serb-Croat relations. Croatian President Josipovic does not believe this proposed Croatian law is a good idea either. Josipovic believes that all war criminals whether Serb, Croat, or any other nationality should be brought to justice. Lately, Serbia and Croatia have been working together to bring all war criminals from both sides to justice.

**October 7, 2011**

Article: Novak Djokovic pulls out of Shanghai

Source: ESPN

Source address: <http://espn.go.com/tennis/story/_/id/7072278/no-1-novak-djokovic-withdraws-shanghai-masters>

 Due to continued back pain, Novak Djokovic has had to pull out of another tennis tournament. This time Djokovic has pulled out the Shanghai Masters and he will continue his rehabilitation; as the results from a recent check on his back were not good.

**October 11, 2011**

Article: Belgrade, Pristina fail to reach dialogue agreement

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/10/11/feature-02>

 Despite EU mediation Serbia and Kosovo have failed to make any major progress on the situation in Northern Kosovo. Kosovo refuses to negotiate about the two border crossings: Jarinje and Brnjak. Instead, Kosovo wants to continue to negotiate on telecommunications, electricity, and representation in international meetings. Both sides have been blaming each other for the lack of progress in the negotiations. The situation in Northern Kosovo needs to be solved to help Serbia’s chances of being accepted into the EU.

**October 14, 2011**

Article: Kosovo Urged to Open Belgrade ‘Embassy’

Source: BalkanInsight

Source address:

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-urged-to-open-belgrade-embassy>

 American diplomat Daniel Serwer wants Kosovo to open an embassy in Belgrade, similar to the U.S. having an embassy in Moscow during the Cold War. Serwer believes this is important for Kosovo so they can better know what is going on in Serbia, and not have to rely on other diplomats. Serwer also believes that Kosovo should have a presence in Moscow since Russia and Serbia are close allies. Serwer also wants Kosovo to try to fight more for the rights of the Albanian minority in Serbia.

**October 18, 2011**

Article: Who controls Kosovo's north?

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/10/18/feature-01>

 Serbia and Kosovo are still at odds with each other with times being over who is manning the barricades at the Serbia-Kosovo border. Serbian officials say their just locals, while Kosovar officials say they are organized criminals supported by Serbia. Kosovo claims these criminal groups commit acts ranging from smuggling to murder. Zvonko Veselinovic is the main criminal leader; however, he claims to just run a construction company despite admitting to being at the border when Serbs clashed with Kosovar police.

**October 21, 2011**

Article: Croatia Risks Low, Annuls Serb War Crimes Charges

Source: BalkanInsight

Source address:

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/croatia-risks-row-annuls-serb-war-crimes-charges>

By a narrow margin the Croatian parliament passed a law that would nullify criminal acts committed by Croats against Serbs in the 1990’s. Some Croat government officials are concerned this new law could strain relations between Serbia and Croatia; as well as undermine cooperation between the two nations in prosecuting war criminals on both sides. Like President Josipovic, Croatian chief prosecutor Mladen Bajic opposed the new law. Serbian special prosecutor for war crimes Vladimir Vukcevic, the EU, and human rights organizations have also opposed the new law as well.

**October 24, 2011**

Article: Poll: Half of Serbian Students Believe Abortion is a Sin

Source: Balkan Insight

Source address: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/poll-marriage-is-sacred-abortion-sin-for-serbian-students>

 In a poll conducted in Serbia’s major cities by Serbia's Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, a majority of Serbian students in secondary schools believe in the sanctity of the family and marriage. Thirty percent of the students believe a woman’s life is fulfilled when she has a child. Half of the students believe abortion is a sin, and some believe only men should make a decision on abortion matters. A majority of the students do believe a father should be involved in parenting. A majority of the students were not aware that domestic violence was a major problem, while disturbingly ten percent of the students believe that it’s ok to occasionally beat a woman. Also, half of the students polled have faced violence in school. The students considered Russia and Greece national friends; while the Croats, Americans, Roma, and Albanians were considered national enemies by the Serbian students.

Article: No prospects for Kosovo split

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/10/24/feature-04>

 Officially both the Kosovar and Serbian are both not considering the possibility of separating or partitioning Northern Kosovo from the rest of Kosovo, despite its Serbian majority. The Kosovar government considers Kosovo a united country. Kosovo does not seem like it will even consider having Northern Kosovo separate, if Kosovo can gain independence from Serbia in return. Serbia officially opposes partitioning Northern Kosovo as well, since Serbia does not want Kosovo to become an independent state. However, some people in the Serbian government are considering the partitioning of Northern Kosovo from Kosovo a possibility. These officials believe that Kosovar independence is likely, and separating Northern Kosovo is the best option for compromise.

**October 25, 2011**

Article: Census in Serbia shows population decrease

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/10/25/feature-02>

 As a result of low birth rates and emigration, Serbia lost 300,000 citizens in less than a decade during the recent census. Around 7.5 million census forms were filled out: however, official population numbers may be lower due to citizens being registered twice. The political, plus the reglious leaders of the Albanian and Bosniak minority in Serbia wanted their ethnic groups to boycott the census over the census forms not being printed in their respective languages. Serbian officials said the country does not have the capability to print the census forms in multiple languages: however, the census questions could be read to anyone in their native language. EU officials strongly recommended Serbia’s minorities to take part in the census and not boycott it.

**October 27, 2011**

Article: Serbia, Croatia to Cooperate in Military Exercises

Source: BalkanInsight

Source address:

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbia-croatia-to-cooperate-in-military-exercises>

 As long as both countries ratify it, Serbia and Croatia have agreed to defense cooperation, including participation in joint military exercises. Some of the areas that both countries would militarily cooperate in include: military medicine, military police, peacekeeping operations, and protection from a biological, chemical, or atomic attack.

**October 29, 2011**

Article: Arrests made in Sarajevo embassy shooting

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/10/29/feature-01>

 Fifteen members of an extremist Muslim sect known as Wahabbis, were arrested in Sandzak, Serbia in connection with the recent shooting on the U.S. embassy in neighboring Sarajevo, Bosnia. The gunman of the shooting is twenty-three year old Mevlid Jasarevic of Novi Pazar, Serbia. Jasarevic is a Wahabbis and Novi Pazar has a large Muslim community. Serbian police have strengthened security at the US Embassy in Belgrade as a result of the shooting.

**November 1, 2011**

Article: Belgrade students rally for tuition changes

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/11/01/feature-03>

 For a couple of weeks now, students at Belgrade University have been protesting over the university not granting free tuition to students who earn forty-eight points in the previous academic year; as well as not granting the price of tuition not be higher than three months of Serbian minimum wages. The University’s philosophy and philology teachers have not been able to conduct classes as a result of the student protests. Two official student organizations already agreed the Education and Science Ministry proposal, that a student needed sixty points to be exempt from paying tuition. Philology faculty officials say that students who earn forty-eight points already do not have to pay tuition. Protestors have been accused of verbally harassing students that try to attend class lectures. University officials are less than pleased with the protestors and they want the protests broken up by force if necessary. Serbia’s college tuition rates are the highest in the region, as tuition rates for studying Architecture in Belgrade is twice the amount of studying that subject in Zagreb, Croatia.

**November 3, 2011**

Article: Serbia: split in Islamic community proves hard to heal

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/11/03/feature-01>

 Despite a reconciliation agreement between the two Islamic organizations in Serbia, the two groups continue to be at odds with each other. The two groups are the Islamic Community of Serbia and the Islamic Community in Serbia. The main source of the division between these Islamic groups is that the Islamic Community in Serbia recognizes the leader of the Islamic community in Bosnia as their leader as well. The Islamic Community of Serbia wants the leader of the Muslim faith to be in Serbia, not another nation. Turkey has tried to mediate between the two Serbian Islamic groups. Albanian Muslims in Southern Serbia are skeptical of the agreement as well, and will not acknowledge it since they have not been involved in the making of the agreement. Belgrade may also need to become more involved in the reconciliation process between the two Serbian Islamic communities.

**November 7, 2011**

Article: Serbia’s Tadic Rejects Calls for Kosovo Negotiations

Source: BalkanInsight

Source address: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/tadic-rejects-plan-on-turnover-in-serbia-s-policy-towards-kosovo>

 Serbian President Boris Tadic has rejected calls by the Serbian opposition party and other groups to return to the negotiating table with Kosovo over the border dispute. The Serbian opposition party and other groups believe it is important for Serbia to return to the negotiating table with Kosovo, to improve Serbia’s chances of joining the EU. However, Tadic refuses these calls; believing that doing so would result in giving up on Serbian interests and Serbia being seen as weak in the eyes of the world.

**November 9, 2011**

Article: Serbia's step closer on EU integration path

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/11/09/feature-01>

 Serbia will find out by December 9th whether or not it has been accepted in the EU. Serbia was granted EU candidate status by the European Commission or EC in October. Serbia’s achievement of candidate status is not an automatic guarantee that Serbia will be accepted into the EU. Serbia has done a better job of rounding up war criminals and must continue to do so. Serbia needs to continue to crack down on corruption. Serbia must also continue to work toward resolving its issues with Kosovo.

**November 10, 2011**

Article: Serb killed in northern Kosovo incident, tensions at borders remain

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/11/10/feature-01>

 One Serb was killed and two other people were wounded in a Serbian-Albanian clash in the Northern Kosovo neighborhood of Brdjani/Bergjani on November 9th. The motive of the clash seems to be a Kosovar individual robbing a building site. The Kosovo Serb Mayor of Mitrovica, Krstomir Pantic condemned the incident and expressed his displeasure with KFOR. Kosovo and EULEX are working together to bring the criminals to justice. The Serbian Minister for Kosovo Goran Bogdanovic wants EULEX not Kosovar police to take over the investigation, as Bogdanovic sees this clash as a terrorist incident.

**November 14, 2011**

Article: Vuk Jeremic to Head Serbia’s Tennis Association

Source: Balkan Insight

Source address: <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/vuk-jeremic-to-become-head-of-serbia-s-tennis-association>

 Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic will likely be the new head the Tennis Association of Serbia after former Yugoslav tennis great Slobodan Zivojinovic resigned as its president. The Tennis Association of Serbia had faced a lot of turmoil and faction-fighting this year. Novak Djovokic’s dad and tennis manager Srdjan Djokovic was upset with Zivojinovic being elected president since the organization had nothing to do with Novak’s success. So Srdjan formed a rival group known as the Association of Tennis Professionals of Serbia. Jeremic is a family friend of the Djokovic’s. The Djokovic’s are from Kosovo and they as well as Jeremic support Kosovo remaining part of Serbia.

**November 15, 2011**

Article: Andy Murray to face Novak Djokovic at ATP World Tour Finals

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/15739037.stm>

 The number three ranked tennis player in the world Andy Murray will play world number one Djokovic in the ATP World Tour Finals in London, England. Djokovic defeated Murray earlier this year at the finals of the Australian Open. However, in August Murray did win his most recent match against Djokovic in August at the Western & Southern Open in Cincinnati, OH.

**November 18, 2011**

Article: Belgrade and Pristina poised to continue talks

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/11/18/feature-01>

 Talks between Serbia and Kosovo about the border situation in Northern Kosovo are supposed to resume on November 21st. A main point of contention between the two sides is that Kosovo’s wants these borders to be national borders and to fly their flags at the border, which Serbia opposes since it violates the Serbian Constitution and a UN Resolution. Kosovo Serb mayors in Northern Kosovo opposed any agreement that harms Kosovo Serb or Serb interests in general. Many Serbs do not even want the talks between Serbia and Kosovo to resume. The EU has continued to be involved the talks. Serbia’s effective dialogue with Kosovo over the border situation is important if Serbia wants to join the EU.

**November 21, 2011**

Article: ATP Tour Finals: Battling Novak Djokovic beats Tomas Berdych

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/15824953.stm>

 Djokovic saves a match point and comes from behind to defeat Tomas Berdych at the ATP Tour Finals. Djokovic had been battling injuries as of late including a shoulder injury; however, he said that did not bother him during the match. Djokovic said he did not play his match in this contest. Djokovic will now go on to play David Ferrer in the next tennis match in the ATP Tour Finals.

**November 23, 2011**

Article: David Ferrer beats Novak Djokovic at World Tour Finals

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/15865015.stm>

 Djokovic was soundly defeated by fifth seeded Spaniard David Ferrer at the ATP Tour Finals. Ferrer had already defeated Andy Murray in his previous match. Djokovic looked flat and said this was worse match of the season he had played. Djokovic did not mention if his recent injuries were a factor in his defeat.

**November 25, 2011**

Article: Novak Djokovic crashes out of the ATP World Tour Finals

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/tennis/15896254.stm>

 Djokovic is out of the ATP Tour Finals since he did not qualify for the semi-finals of the tournament as a result of his tennis defeat to fellow Serb and friend Janko Tipsarevic. Tipsarevic replaced Andy Murray in the match due to Murray being injured. Tipsarevic cannot qualify for the semi-finals either. Djokovic look tired and worn out during the match, probably as a result of being not conditioned as well as usual due to his recent injuries. Despite recent setback Djokovic is still very proud of all the great things he accomplished in tennis this year.

**November 29, 2011**

Article: Kosovo: Peacekeepers Wounded in Clashes With Serbs

Source: New York Times

Source address: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/29/world/europe/in-kosovo-peacekeepers-wounded-in-clashes-with-serbs.html?_r=2&ref=europe>

 Another incident has occurred in Northern Kosovo as a German NATO officer and solider were shot; as well as around twenty-three German and Austrian peacekeeping forces were injured in clashes with Kosovo Serbs. The clash began as NATO forces were removing roadblocks that were put up by the Kosovo Serbs to prevent Kosovo from taking control of the region from Serbian de-facto rule.

**December 2, 2011**

Article: Serbia and Kosovo reach border management agreement

Source: BBC News

Source address: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16014188>

 Serbia and Kosovo have agreed to jointly manage their border crossings. Despite the agreement there are still a few details that need to be worked out. This border agreement is an important step to joining the EU. It is important to note that Serbia has not recognized Kosovo’s independence as a result of the border agreement.

**December 3, 2011**

Article: More than music: Dino Merlin reconciles Belgrade and Sarajevo

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/blogreview/2011/12/03/blog-03>

 Bosnia’s largest music star Dino Merlin had three concerts in Belgrade in late November. This is the time Merlin has performed in Belgrade since the Bosnian War. Thousands of Serbs attended the concerts. Merlin sees this concert as one way of promoting reconciliation between Serbia and Bosnia. Serbian extremists known as the NASI tried to start a boycott of Merlin’s concert since the NASI claimed Merlin spread religious and nationalist hatred against the Serbs during the Bosnian War.

**December 6, 2011**

Article: Corruption on the rise in Serbia

Source: SETimes.com

Source address: <http://www.setimes.com/cocoon/setimes/xhtml/en_GB/features/setimes/features/2011/12/06/feature-04>

 A recent study by the 2011 Transparency International concludes that corruption is on the rise on Serbia. Serbia is having trouble with healthcare corruption, inadequate judicial reform, anti-corruption law violations, and political influence in government jobs. Serbia 86th out of 182 countries in transparency, an increase from 71st the last two years. Corruption is a major roadblock for Serbia in becoming an EU member.

**Summary:**

By far the biggest issue in the news this semester about Serbia was the continuing conflict between Serbia and Kosovo, especially along the Serbia-Kosovo border. This is a situation that may take a while to completely resolve as both sides at times do not seem to be willing to compromise with each other. While Serbia’s relationship with Kosovo may still be very poor, some stories this semester indicated its relationship with Bosnia and especially Croatia may be improving some. The stories this semester also provide evidence that Serbia still faces corruption, ethnic, and economic problems within its own borders. The Albanian as well as other Muslim minorities in Serbia proper have had problems with the Serbian government, and sometimes each other. Newstories this semester also indicated the role of religion and nationalism seems to be still high in Serbia, compared to Western Europe. Also, following tennis star Novak Djokovic’s setbacks this semester after winning major tennis tournaments this year was important. It is interesting the power Djokovic’s family has in Serbia as a result of his success on the tennis court, and their desire for Kosovo to remain part of Serbia since they are from Kosovo.