

MACEDONIA HOSTED A CEFTA SUMMIT

- ☒ Central European Free Trade agreement (CEFTA) members gathered in Skopje for a one day summit Wednesday November 21. The summit ended with a joining declaration signed by the participants providing for greater regional cooperation in implementing free trade. In his opening speech, Macedonian prime Minister Nikola Gruevski said that the treaty signed in December 2006, which extended CEFTA to the countries of the Balkans has had an especially positive impact on the region's small economies by and by strengthening their attractiveness for foreign investments". Since December 2006 the group has included Albania, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Moldova, Montenegro Serbia and through its UN administration, Kosovo. CEFTA is seen as a preparation for EU membership, because a very large part of its member-countries' trade is with EU countries.[21/11/07,www.birn.eu.com;23/11/07, Setimes]

THE FINAL ROUND ON KOSOVO STATUS BEGIN MONDAY

- ☒ The final round of Kosovo Talks, mediated by international Troika will start today in Baden, Austria. Under Troika guidance, both delegations, Belgrade and Pristina will review the progress made so far and will propose the new ideas and solutions. Serbian Kosovo Minister, Slobodan Samardzic. Samardžić told news agencies that the Serbian team would continue to outline its perspectives on Kosovo's future status, on essential autonomy, and that it would present certain arguments and experiences characteristic to Europe. Kosovo, led by Kosovo Prime Minister Agim Ceku delegation repeated their main goal of independence. According to Ceku A declaration of Kosovo independence was a necessary step and the only acceptable solution that would be beneficial for Serbia and the region. He added that Belgrade proposal have nothing to do with the future and therefore it is irrelevant. The final round starting today, will continue tomorrow with direct talks. Before, the Troika, as usually, has separate talks with two sides. Negotiations are expected to culminate on Wednesday morning,

when the delegations will meet for the last time .[25/11/07, B92]

ELECTIONS IN CROATIA

- ☒ Sunday 22, Croatians voted on general elections. The main battle was between two main rivals Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and the left wing Social Democrats (SDP). Both parties, despite the differences, share the same values and priorities such as NATO and EU accession. Both are also committed to minority rights, promoting democracy, rule of law, judicial reform and fight against corruption. On the other hand the key points of deference are mostly economic questions. According to State election commission and its nonofficial results based on 5 % of vote count, the ruling Democratic Union (HDZ) takes slight lead before SDP and third is the coalition of Croatian People's party and Liberal Democrats.[22/11/07,Makfax;25/11/07 Setimes]