

BiH Media Round-up, 25/4/2002

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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

BiH accedes to the Council of Europe

BiH joined the Council of Europe at a formal ceremony on Wednesday, a key step towards European integration for the impoverished Balkan country still struggling with the legacy of its 1992-95 war, all BiH media, AFP and Reuters reported. Walter Schwimmer, the General Secretary of the Council, the continent's top human rights watchdog, said BiH's accession as its 44th member would open new doors for the divided state in its efforts to forge closer

ties with Europe. Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija said joining the European body marked the beginning of a new era in its history. "Bosnia and Herzegovina is today formally enlisted as a European country," Lagumdzija told reporters. According to Dnevni Avaz, Lagumdzija thanked the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, "who did not formally sign anything on Wednesday, but who did sign enough in the past days."

Belkic pledged that BiH would live up to its new status

As a part of a ceremony admitting BiH to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Wednesday, Beriz Belkic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, signed protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights, already part of Bosnia's constitution under the Dayton accords that ended its war, but which it still needs to ratify. According to all BiH media, in a speech delivered to the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly on the occasion, Belkic pledged that BiH would live up to its new status by urgently reforming its judiciary, strengthening its chronically weak central institutions, fighting crime, corruption and terrorism, and catching war crimes fugitives.

Petritsch: BiH belongs to Europe

"I am touched because BiH became a full Council of Europe member. This seemed impossible a year ago. This is really a historic day for BiH. An important chapter closed today. When I came in 1999, BiH was still not a state in real sense of the word. At the end of my mandate, I am convinced that, now, BiH is a modern, democratic state with lot of inter-ethnic tolerance. BiH is genuinely an European country and it belongs to Europe," the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, told journalists following the BiH's admission to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on Wednesday. (All Sarajevo-based media carried the statement)

International organizations, BiH's neighbors and BiH political parties welcome the country's accession to the Council of Europe

According to BiH media, the international organizations engaged in BiH including the OHR, OSCE Mission to BiH and UNMIBH welcomed on Wednesday BiH's admission to the Council of Europe as a step towards the European integration. The admission was also hailed by BiH's neighboring countries, Croatia (press release) and FRY (through its ambassador to BiH, Stanimir Vukicevic), as well as the BiH political parties and officials. (BiH media rather quoted the HR's statement than carried the OHR Press Release)

Vecernji List: BiH post-accession tasks

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Thorough reorganization of the judicial authority and military forces, cooperation with The Hague, struggle against terrorism and all forms of crime as well as return of displaced persons are only some of the conditions that BiH has to fulfill after the admission to Council of Europe. Deadlines for fulfilling of the aforementioned conditions are from six months to three years, depending of their legal weight. Council of Europe will demand from BiH to resolutely prevent corruption, which rules within the system of legislative and political authority.

Brcko District

Fena: Clarke: Limitation of traffic a hostile move

Decision on the limitation of traffic over the Brcko-Gunja bridge to 6 tons, passed 4 months ago by the Republic of Croatia's authorities, was called by the supervisor for Brcko, Henry Lee Clarke, "a hostile move of a neighboring state". At the press conference held on Wednesday in Brcko, the supervisor Clarke pointed out that, by the

unjustified measures, heavily trade and financial harms were done to the Brcko District. He demanded an urgent revocation of the unilateral decision taken by the Croatian authorities, explaining it by the findings of the expert teams who estimated that the bearing capacity of the bridge was 45 tons.

ONASA: Bidders selected for privatization of three companies in Brcko

The tender commission for sale of companies in the Brcko District has selected the most favorable bidders for three companies that are to be privatized in the first round, Brcko Supervisor Henry Clarke said on Wednesday. Clarke said that the best bidder for the company Biljana from Maoca was a German firm, while Antunovic company offered the best program for hotel Revena and storehouse in Brcko.

Federation

Tensions raise over a terrorism-related part of the last Monday's FTV 60 Minutes program

According to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz, Bakir Hadziomerovic, the editor of the FTV 60 Minutes program, accused the media houses Director, Jasmin Durakovic, and Editor-in-Chief, Marija Topic Crnoja, of turning their backs to him and the journalist Damir Kaletovic. According to Hadziomerovic, they failed to react on fierce verbal attacks on him and Kaletovic by SDA deputies to the BiH Federation Parliament following a part of their last Monday's program related to the training of terrorist in the Pogorelica camp. The Coordination of the BiH Journalist Associations and the Appeal Association of Journalists condemned the SDA deputies' pressures on journalists.

Vecernji List: Evidence collected against former AID agents

Tomislav Limov, the Federation Deputy Minister of Interior, stated that members of the Ministry had collected the evidence, which are sufficient for filling criminal charges against three former high-ranked AID (BiH Agency for Investigation and Documentation) officials suspected of espionage and terrorism. Limov also said that, at the request of the Federation Prosecutor's Office, the Police undertook all measures necessary to file a report against Bakir Alispahic, a former Minister of Interior and Head of AID, and his two associates. Limov said that it has been expected that the Federation Supreme Court decide on further steps.

Slobodna Dalmacija: President of BiH Croat Cultural Association Napredak visited Aluminum Company in Mostar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija quotes the President of Napredak, Franjo Topic, as saying that the "Aluminij" case is too politicized, and that it would be better if we had more companies like that one in BiH, because that is the only way to ensure future for the people. Topic stated that BiH should be proud of "Aluminij", which can be confirmed by the fact that the greatest world companies, like Daimler-Benz and Glencor, are interested to invest in and cooperate with the company.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Milenko Brkic, President of

HNZ

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija carries a short interview with Milenko Brkic, president of Croat People's Community. Brkic says that recent constitutional changes do not follow the decision of the Constitutional Court on constituency of peoples in the whole territory of BiH, and that, if the imposed solutions are implemented, Serbs are constitutive in the whole BiH, Bosniaks in one its part, and Croats a little bit everywhere, but nowhere in full. Judging position of HDZ BiH, Brkic said that HDZ is in serious crisis, partly due to internal dissatisfaction and partly due to decision of the High Representative, and added that some kind of internal democratization of that party, that takes place, gives hope. Brkic called all Croat parties to join the block of HNZ-HKDU, and called all voters to take part in the elections, because by not participating in the elections, those who abstinent are actually giving their votes to largest people or largest party.

Republika Srpska

RTRS Board of Governors removed RTRS general manager; Radomir Neskovic appointed RTRS acting general manager

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the RTRS Board of Governors yesterday removed RTRS general manager, Jelena Davidovic and appointed Radomir Neskovic an acting general manager of RTRS. Jelena Davidovic has been removed due to bad financial situation the RTRS is currently in.

Criminal charges filled against former RS Prime Minister Dodik and two of his associates

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the Banja Luka Public Security Center forwarded to the Banja Luka Basic Prosecutor's Office criminal reports against former RS prime minister and leader of the Party of Independent Social Democrats, Milorad Dodik, former RS finance minister, Novak Kondic and Chief of the Dodik's Cabinet, Djordje Latinovic. The criminal report charges Dodik with damaging the RS budget for 1,617 000 KM. Dodik is also suspected of approving the monthly extra allowances, amounting to 2,000 KM, to the ministers in his government. The paper reports that the money was paid in accordance with the statutes, dated on November 23rd 1998, which has never been published in the RS Official Gazette. Referring to the same statutes, former RS finance minister, Novak Kondic, ordered payment of 1,506 000 KM. The paper also says that these extra allowances were never claimed as income. Dodik also signed two documents in which he allowed former chief of his cabinet, Djordje Latinovic, to take 12,000 KM from the petty-cash. Both paper quotes former RS prime minister, Milorad Dodik, as saying that he is not surprised with this, because now the time has come for the current RS Government to render the accounts to the people of RS and it does not come as a surprise that the Government launched this campaign against him because the election campaign has already started.

RS Education Minister: OHR says that pupils from the Serb part of Dobrinja should attend school in BiH Federation

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that construction of three elementary schools in Banja Luka, Srpsko Sarajevo and Srpski Sanski

Most was supposed to start few days ago. The Japanese Government has already provided 12 million KM for construction of these three schools, but, as things stand now, corner stones for the schools will not be laid. The paper quotes RS Education Minister, Gojko Savanovic, as saying that two days ago the RS representatives were supposed to meet with the representatives of the construction company, hired to build these three schools, to discuss laying of corner stone for the school in Banja Luka. "On the same day, the Japanese Embassy in Sarajevo informed us that the Office of the High Representative is against construction of the school in Srpsko Sarajevo", Savanovic said. According to him, the Office of the High Representative explained that the main problem is the location on which the school should be built. "The OHR's view is that children from Serb Sarajevo should go to school in the part of Dobrinja which belonged to the BiH Federation by the Arbitration Award on Dobrinja 1 and 4, instead of building the school in the part of Dobrinja that belonged to the RS after the arbitration", Savanovic said. He said that Srpsko Sarajevo needs not one, but three schools because the population in this town is increasing. Savanovic said that the RS Education Ministry has been negotiating construction of four elementary schools in the RS with the representatives of the Japanese Government for a couple of years. "The representatives of the OHR have been involved in the negotiation from the very beginning and they have known, for a long time, about the locations where these four schools were supposed to be constructed. They have also been privy to all the details regarding this matter", Savanovic said. The paper reports that the contract on construction of three elementary schools was signed in Japan in March and that Japanese and Yugoslav contractors were chosen. "I have an impression that this decision is a blow to the RS, because I do not see any other reason as to why after all the OHR would make such move only a day before the construction works were supposed to start", Savanovic said.

International Community

Ashdown to assume the duties of the High Representative on May 27

Paddy Ashdown plans to come to Sarajevo on May 27 and assume the duties of the High Representative of the international community in BiH, one of Ashdown's associates told Dnevni Avaz. At the end of a two-day meeting of the High Representative's Cabinet on Wednesday, Ashdown met with the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, the BiH Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the RS Premier, Mladen Ivanic, in Madestone, a place 100 kilometers southeast from London. The three BiH politicians spent around three hours with Ashdown informing him about the current situation in BiH and presenting their ideas on future priorities. "Lord Ashdown's meeting not only with the BiH politicians but also with the heads of the international organizations in BiH was very useful," his associate told the newspaper. The incoming High Representative congratulated the BiH officials on their leading role in reaching the agreement on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples. He called them on to express the same courage in the process of the Agreement's implementation. Ashdown assessed the Wednesday's admission of BiH to the Council of Europe as a triumph both of the country and the three politicians, as well as an important step towards the establishment of BiH as a normal, European state. With the representatives of the international organizations, Ashdown discussed the future priorities with special attention paid to the economic reforms.

Lagumdzija, Ivanic and Behmen meet with Ashdown in London

"I am very satisfied with our meeting today with the heads of the international organizations engaged in BiH, which was chaired by incoming High representative, Paddy Ashdown. The participants expressed a very high level of agreement not only about the strategic goals but also about our priorities," the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, told Dnevni Avaz following the meeting in London also attended by the BiH federation prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the RS Premier, Mladen Ivanic. "It is quite clear that the top priorities include the economic reforms, and the creation of new jobs through foreign capital and investments," Lagumdzija emphasized. In a statement with the newspaper, Behmen said that Ashdown's wish and interest to exchange views with the BiH politicians on the future priorities showed that the incoming High Representative wanted at the same time to ensure continuity with the engagement of his predecessor, but also to accelerate necessary reforms. Ivanic told Dnevni Avaz that, at the meeting, Ashdown had been much more listening to the other participants than speaking,

which meant that the key BiH officials would in the future have a more important role in creating the general international policy in BiH. (ONASA news agency, BiH Federation TV and RTRS also reported on the meeting and Ashdown's preparations for the incoming duties)

Carla Del Ponte: FRY and RS authorities know the whereabouts of most of the 31 indictees

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), Carla Del Ponte, stated on Wednesday that there are 31 persons indicted for war crimes who are at large and that the authorities of the FRY and RS authorities know where they are, Nezavisne Novine reports. Addressing the CoE Parliamentary Assembly, she welcomed the voluntary surrender of a number of indictees that are in Serbia, but also requested full FRY cooperation with the ICTY. Del Ponte said she hoped that all indictees, including Ratko Mladic, would be brought to justice. She said she could not say that Mladic is currently in Serbia, but that he "was in Serbia a few weeks ago". The Hague Tribunal chief prosecutor also stressed that in the past period she has been dissatisfied with the Tribunal's cooperation with Yugoslav authorities, but also with the international community, and even the UNMIK. According to her assessment, there are problems with the investigations of crimes committed by Albanians in Kosovo because of the lack of cooperation, given that the ICTY does not have an access to military archives in Belgrade, which is crucial for these investigations.

FRY justice ministry submits 17 indictments to courts

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The Yugoslav Justice Minister submitted indictments against 17 persons, wanted by the ICTY, and who did not respond to the appeal for voluntary cooperation, to the Belgrade District Court, stated the Federal Information Secretariat, Nezavisne novine reports. The indictments have been submitted in line with the FRY Law on Cooperation with the ICTY. Of the 23 persons indicted by the ICTY, six surrendered voluntarily and agreed to appear before the ICTY, and their indictments have not been forwarded. Dragoljub Ojdanic, Milan Martić, Mile Mrksić, Nikola Sainović, Vladimir Kovacević and Momčilo Gruban have agreed to voluntarily appear before the ICTY. Their obligation is to report to the ICTY within 15 days, with the exception of Mrksić, who has been allowed a 30-day period, due to health problems. In the case that a person who has agreed to appear before the ICTY does not meet this requirement, the FRY Justice Ministry will initiate the adequate procedure before the competent court. Immediately upon arriving at the ICTY, the FRY Government, and government of the resident republic, will provide the necessary guarantees for the suspect to be temporarily released. Persons that the indictments and arrest warrants pertain to are: Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladic, Vinko Pandurević, Stojan Zupljanin, Ranko Čević, Savo Todović, Gojko Janković, Mitar Rasević, Radovan Stanković, Dragan Zelenović and Zeljko Meakic (all from the RS). The FRY Justice Ministry also submitted indictments and arrest warrants against 6 FRY citizens with district courts in Belgrade and Podgorica. These persons are: Milan Milutinović (Serbian president), Milan Zec, Sredoje Lukić, Milan Lukić, Miroslav Radic and Veselin Sljivancanin.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- BiH admitted to the Council of Europe

Dnevni Avaz

- BiH admitted to the Council of Europe: In European land register under the number 44

Jutarnje Novine

- Since yesterday, our country has been the 44th Council of Europe's member: BiH on a new path!

Dnevni List

- Vandalism of SFOR members on location of old Christian basilica and St.Ivo shrine: SFOR armed personnel carrier damaged walls of old Christian basilica
- Interview: Ivo Sanader, HDZ President: How have I won Pasalic
- Exclusively from our journalist in Strasbourg: Zlatko Lagumdžija: Now, at the end we see light at the end of Balkan tunnel

Vecernji List

- Why there are no Croats at Ashdown?
- Due to increasing number of debts: Diplomacy in collapse

Glas Srpski

- Banja Luka Police forwards criminal reports against Dodik, Kondic and Latinovic to Banja Luka Prosecutor's Office;
- Earthquake on Kosovo;

Nezavisne Novine

- BiH admitted to Council of Europe – BiH in Europe;
- Banja Luka Police forwards criminal reports against Dodik, Kondic and Latinovic to Banja Luka Prosecutor's Office;