

BiH Media Round-up, 27/3/2002

Constitutional reforms

- The agreement on the constitutional reform signed
- OHR reiterates that seven parties signed the agreement, four of them with reservations
- Special session of the RS National Assembly to be held tomorrow
- SDS: Final decision over constitutional changes should be made by National Assembly

BiH State-related Issues

- The BiH Presidency initiates adoption of two laws to regulate the country's foreign policy
- Inter-state expert teams continue talks on the laws on dual-citizenship to be signed between BiH and its neighbors
- Memorandum on the reconstruction of four religious facilities signed in Sarajevo
- Dnevni List: BiH, Croatian officials meet in Sarajevo to discuss resolving of crises in Drvar

Federation

- Mirko Boskovic elected president of the BiH Federation Constitutional Court
- BiH Federation Government needs donations to compensate dismissed soldiers
- BiH Federation House of Representatives adopts amendments to the property laws
- Dnevni List: Crises of authority in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton continues

Republika Srpska

- RS President Sarovic meets in Belgrade with FRY President Kostunica
- RS Government decision: salaries and pensions to increase

International Community

- OHR announces its quarterly economic report on BiH
- ICG: Laws not ruling in BiH
- Srebrenica Memorial Foundation Governing Board holds session at the residence of US Ambassador in Sarajevo
- AFP: UN staff infected by Q-fever in southwestern Bosnia
- Delimustafic sentenced to three months in prison

Headlines

Constitutional reforms

The agreement on the constitutional reform signed

After resolving all open issues, the leaders of the leading political parties in BiH signed the agreement on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples early on Wednesday in the OHR building in Sarajevo. The talks on the issue, facilitated by OHR, have been lasting since the March 8. Since then, the parties have had nine plenary sessions amounting to more than 70 hours of intensive negotiations. The parties from the Republika Srpska insisted that two of their reservations related to the transitional government and vital interest trigger mechanism are spelled out, as the representatives of the HDZ did not sign the agreement at all. The signatories are: Zlatko Lagumdžija (SDP BiH), Safet Halilović (Party for BiH), Kresimir Zubak (NHI),

Mladen Ivanic (PDP), Milorad Dodik (SNSD), Dragan Kalinic (SDS) and Petar Djokic (RS Socialist Party). (Note that just electronic – FTV, RTRS and SRNA as a news agency, and not the press report on the completion of the constitutional reform talks, because the Wednesday's newspapers were already issued when the talks ended and when the agreement was signed. Reports in the press therefore concern the final phase of the talks from the yesterday night and do not have relevance any more)

OHR reiterates that seven parties signed the agreement, four of them with reservations

During the first hours after the signing of the agreement on the constitutional reform in Sarajevo on Wednesday, a controversial media reports appeared on who signed and who did not sign the document. However, in a statement for Fena news agency, Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer reiterated that seven participants in the talks on the constitutional reform in the OHR building in Sarajevo (all except HDZ), early on Wednesday signed the agreement, four of which signed it with reservations (political parties from the RS). "The party representatives have developed and agreed the mechanisms that will fully protect the vital interests of the constituent peoples in both Entities and ensure their full representation in the decision-making bodies. Representation has been addressed through a combination of parity, representation based on the latest census, and minimum quotas," OHR said in a [press release](#) issued later in the day. In addition, The PIC Steering Board at ambassadorial-level met on 27 March 2002 to consider the progress of the leading BiH political parties to reach an agreement on the implementation of the Constituent Peoples' Decision. "It is with satisfaction that the Steering Board welcomes the agreement reached by the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina on implementation of the Constituent Peoples' Decision on 27 March 2002. This represents a decisive step forward in terms of Bosnia and Herzegovina's democratic development and commitment to the rule of law. The Steering Board notes that some of the leaders have signed the agreement with specific reservations and strongly urges them to accept it in full," the Board said in the [Communique](#).

Special session of the RS National Assembly to be held tomorrow

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas srpski reports that the RS National Assembly (NA) will hold 4th special session on Thursday, with only one item on the agenda and that is discussion and adoption of the proposed amendments on the RS Constitution. As announced from the Cabinet of the Speaker of the RS NA, Dragan Kalinic, a session of the NA Commission for constitutional issues would be held before the NA session.

SDS: Final decision over constitutional changes should be made by National Assembly

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The SDS President, Dragan Kalinic briefed the Main Board of the party on negotiations over constitutional changes, held in Sarajevo. Glas srpski quotes Kalinic as saying: "The agreement of the leaders of eight political parties from the RS and the Federation, mediated by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, over constitutional changes should be a ground for making of a final decision by the RS National Assembly." According to Kalinic, the SDS Main Board is of the opinion that final decision should be made by the NA.

BiH State-related Issues

The BiH Presidency initiates adoption of two laws to regulate the country's foreign policy

Oslobodjenje reports that, at a regular meeting in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the BiH Presidency agreed to initiate drafting and the adoption of the two laws to stipulate the sector of the country's foreign policy. "We believe that through the laws we should strongly affirm interests of BiH and consistently implement the last year agreed principles of the foreign policy. In this way, a realistic way will be ensured of the BiH representation in the world, since it is about a very specific state," Serb member of the Presidency Zivko Radisic told journalists following the meeting.

Inter-state expert teams continue talks on the laws on dual-citizenship to be signed between BiH and its neighbors

According to Oslobodjenje, the spokesman for the BiH Foreign Ministry, Amer Kapetanovic, told a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday that the inter-state expert team preparing the agreement on the dual citizenship between BiH and FRY had achieved much better results than the one working on the definition of the same issue between BiH and Croatia. Kapetanovic could not say which of these two agreements would be signed first, but he emphasized that the BiH/FRY expert team had already agreed the vast majority (99 percent) of the issues. Commenting on the recent talks of Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic with Croatian Prime Minister Ivica Racan in Zagreb, Kapetanovic said that the BiH Foreign Ministry considered as a failure a fact the BiH Ambassador to Croatia Zlatko Dizdarevic had not been invited to attend the meeting.

Memorandum on the reconstruction of four religious facilities signed in Sarajevo

According to Oslobodjenje, the members of the BiH Inter-Religious Council (Head of the Serb Orthodox Church Nikolai, Head of the BiH Islamic Community Mustafa Ceric, Cardinal Vinko Puljic and Head of the BiH Jewish Community Jakob Finci) and Head of the UN Mission to BiH Jacques Paul Klein signed on Tuesday in Sarajevo the memorandum on the reconstruction of the four religious facilities in the country. The facilities include the Aladza Mosque in Foca, Orthodox Church in Sarajevo, Catholic Church in Derventa and the Jewish Cemetery in Sarajevo.

Dnevni List: BiH, Croatian officials meet in Sarajevo to discuss resolving of crises in Drvar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The representatives of two countries, who discussed the problem of the Croats settled in Drvar, concluded during their meeting in Sarajevo that BiH and Croatian Authorities agree that it has to be made possible for all refugees to return to their pre-war places of residence and that the property rights should be respected in this process.

Lovre PejkoVIC, a Head of the Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees of the Croatian Government, and Josko Paro, an Assistant of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, also met with IC representatives in BiH. Paro stressed that during the talk with the IC representatives it has become clear that they also see the situation in Drvar as a problem. Mijat Tuka, a Federation Deputy Minister for Refugees, stated that the representatives of two countries will hold another meeting soon and they will elaborate a special plan for Drvar.

Federation

Mirko Boskovic elected president of the BiH Federation Constitutional Court

Oslobodjenje reports that Mirko Boskovic (Croat) was elected President of the BiH Federation Constitutional Court on Tuesday, as Kasim Trnka (Bosniak) and Nedjeljko Milicevic (Serb) were elected his deputies. The Court said in a press release that Boskovic, Trnka and Milicevic would perform their duties in one-year term.

BiH Federation Government needs donations to compensate dismissed soldiers

Dnevni Avaz reports that the BiH federation Government on Tuesday withdrew from the parliamentary procedure the draft program to take care about the soldiers to be dismissed from the Entity's Army. The draft is expected to be considered on Wednesday at the continuation of the BiH Federation House of Representatives' session in Sarajevo. The reason for the move is a new version of the program, according to which 50 out of 100 million KM to be intended for the payment of the financial compensation to the soldiers will be provided by the Federation Budget, as the rest of the money will not be provided through loans as was initially proposed but through donations.

BiH Federation House of Representatives adopts amendments to the property laws

According to Dnevni Avaz, at its session in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the BiH Federation House of Representatives adopted the amendments to the property laws related to the legalization of the exchange of tenant's rights made in the period from April 1, 1992 to February 7, 1998, and more strict criteria for getting alternative accommodation, which had been imposed by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch.

Dnevni List: Crises of authority in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton continues

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

On Monday in the office of Dragan Vrankic, the Governor of the HNC, consultations regarding the offered resignations of the Bosniak Ministers of the HN Cantonal Government were held. Governor Vrankic was ready to speak openly about the resignations and he demanded that his Deputy Sefkija Dziho declare himself. Dnevni List says that a day later, a response arrived to Vrankic's office saying that Dziho does not accept the resignations of Bosniak Ministers and this refers to deliberate creation of a political crises in this Canton.

Republika Srpska

RS President Sarovic meets in Belgrade with FRY President Kostunica

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the FRY President Vojislav Kostunica met on Tuesday in Belgrade with the RS President, Mirko Sarovic to discuss "the implementation of an order of the Yugoslav president of the abolishment of 30th personnel center and of a decision of the Federal government on the stoppage of its financing." "It was concluded that all issues have been solved in the best possible way, in accordance with the interests of Yugoslavia and the RS, in accordance with the president's order and decision of the Yugoslav Government, as well as in accordance with conclusions of the working group of the RS and Yugoslav Defense ministries and Headquarters of the RS and Yugoslav Armies of February 22 this year," – according to a statement from the military cabinet of the Yugoslav president. Kostunica and Sarovic stressed that the respecting of the Dayton Agreement and all documents which follow from it, including the agreement on the special parallel relations of Yugoslavia and the RS, is needed. "Kostunica stressed that the agreement on constitutional change must not threaten the Dayton RS," said Sarovic after the meeting, according to SRNA news agency. Sarovic told reporters that Kostunica supported RS' readiness to implement constitutional reform. The Yugoslav President stressed that the FRY would not allow any sort of rearrangement of RS.

RS Government decision: salaries and pensions to increase

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas srpski reports that the RS Finance Minister Milenko Vracar said on Tuesday in Banja Luka that the RS has met all the obligations set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the extension of the stand-by arrangement, but that it is still uncertain, because the Federation has not met its conditions. Vracar told reporters that crucial and final talks with the IMF were held on Friday and that it was stated that the RS has met all the conditions. "But, the IMF has not agreed upon all things with the Federation, particularly regarding the planned revenues. This may result with IMF's refusal to allow the arrangement, which would affect the RS too, because they look at the two entities together," Vracar said. He said the RS is very worried with this, because the withdrawal of the IMF does not just mean that the budget would not receive funds from this source, but also that the World Bank (WB), European Commission (EC) and all other institutions would give up supporting the budget. "We have final talks at the state level tomorrow, and we will try to overcome the problems between the Federation and IMF, but I have a feeling that the agreement might not happen, which would have huge consequences for the entire country," Vracar said. The Finance Minister also stated that the RS Government would provide 35 million KM, in order to improve situation of the pensioners and health workers.

International Community

OHR announces its quarterly economic report on BiH

The quarterly Office of the High Representative Economic Newsletter, which has just come out, contains the latest information on a variety of sectors, including the banking sector, where there has been a comprehensive shake-up in both Entities during the last year or so, Oslobođenje and Jutarnje Novine quote OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan as saying at a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday. "The result of the shake-up is that more than 80 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina banking assets are now controlled by 41 private banks. For the first time since the war, the Federation banks showed a net profit in 2001, to the value of KM33 million. Also at the end of 2001 banking deposits shot up. In addition to continuing the trend of increasing public confidence in the banking system, people changed their Deutsche Marks ahead of the change over to the Euro, and instead of taking cash, they deposited their savings in the banks," Sullivan emphasized.

ICG: Laws not ruling in BiH

"The law does not yet rule in Bosnia & Herzegovina. What prevail instead are nationally defined politics, inconsistency in the application of law, corrupt and incompetent courts, a fragmented judicial space, half-baked or half-implemented reforms, and sheer negligence. Bosnia is, in short, a land where respect for and confidence in the law and its defenders is weak," the ICG said in its latest report carried by all Sarajevo dailies (For more information

Srebrenica Memorial Foundation Governing Board holds session at the residence of US Ambassador in Sarajevo

The governing boards of the Foundation for the Srebrenica/Potocari Memorial and Cemetery met on Monday at the US Ambassador's residence in Sarajevo, OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan told journalists in Sarajevo on Tuesday, according to FENA news agency and Dnevni Avaz. "The High Representative took a break from the constitutional discussions to chair the meeting. The primary topic covered was the plan proposed by the Advisory Working Group to move forward with the design and layout of the designated land in Potocari. The proposal was presented by Sadik Sehlimovic, a family association representative. Other issues discussed included the site assessment currently underway at the Battery Factory across the road. The site is under evaluation for adaptation to possible uses in connection with the memorial and cemetery," Sullivan said.

AFP: UN staff infected by Q-fever in southwestern Bosnia

Fifteen United Nations staff serving in Bosnia have been infected by Q-fever, an animal transmitted disease with symptoms similar to severe influenza, a UN spokesman said Tuesday. The disease, which primarily affects cattle, sheep and goats, can be contracted by humans through inhalation of contaminated dust. The infected UN staff worked in an office located near to a sheep farm in the southwestern Bosnian town of Livno, spokesman Stefo Lehmann told reporters. The infected staff were treated with antibiotics and are currently recovering, he said. The area of Livno has been affected by Q-fever in the past and some local residents were also infected by the latest outbreak. The illness in humans causes chills, fever and muscle pain and can, if untreated, develop into liver and heart complications. Most human victims work in slaughterhouses, on farms or as sheep shearers.

Delimustafic sentenced to three months in prison

The war-time (1992) Republic of BiH Interior Minister, Alija Delimustafic, was sentenced on Tuesday to three months in prison for possessing forged FRY identification documents. Oslobodjenje reports that, according to the Belgrade Court's ruling, the sentence will include the time Delimustafic has already spent in prison.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Traffic accident near Zavidovici: Mother and three sons from Srebrenica killed

Dnevni Avaz

- BiH Federation Government asks for donations to compensate dismissed soldiers

Jutarnje Novine

- On the Zavidovici-Banovici road: Five death in car crash

Nezavisne Novine

- Four days before the expiration of Washington deadline to FRY: Kostunica and Sarovic on US conditions
- Belgrade: Alija Delimustafic sentenced to three months imprisonment
- Traffic accident on Zavidovici - Banovici road: Five dead in a WV Golf

Glas Srpski

- BiH Presidency: Actions against terrorism slow
- The Republic's PIO Fund: Pensions according to payments

Vecernji List

- Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen requests from Zagreb: Sarajevo wants documents of Herzeg-Bosnia
- Miroslav Tudjman: Ashdown drew on Tudjman's napkin