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BiH State-related Issues

OSCE, Ministry of Treasury hold meeting, discuss financing of October elections

Representatives of the OSCE mission to BiH and the BiH Ministry of Treasury chaired on Tuesday a meeting on financing of the general elections which are scheduled for October. OSCE spokesperson, Urdur Gunnarsdottir told ONASA news agency that over 30 ambassadors and representatives of international organisations were invited to the meeting. Earlier, the Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft, and the BiH Minister of Treasury, Ante Domazet, stressed that BiH will need support in order to finance the upcoming elections, which could cost around 11 million KM. He stressed that BiH authorities have already secured one third of the necessary funds and urged the International Community to provide the additional 7,6 million. (Electronic and print media in the Federation also report on this item)

Lagumdzija-Svilanovic: BiH, FRY to sign a series of bilateral agreements

BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, and his Yugoslav counterpart, Goran Svilanovic, agreed yesterday (Tuesday) in Belgrade that BiH and FRY will, in the next three months, sign a series of bilateral agreements. During a session of the Inter-state council between the two countries, Lagumdzija and Svilanovic concluded that the bilateral relations between BiH and FRY are on the upswing, and promised to, in the upcoming months, also resolve the outstanding issue of dual citizenship and ratify the Free Trade Agreement between the two countries. (All news agencies carry the item, Oslobođenje on the front page, electronic media place the item quite prominently)

BiH House of Peoples speaker: Karadzic to be arrested within two months

The speaker of the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples, Sejfidin Tokic, said yesterday (Tuesday) in Banja Luka that one of the most wanted war crimes suspects, Radovan Karadzic, will be arrested or will voluntarily turn himself to the ICTY within the next two months. News agencies quote Tokic as saying that the authorities of Republika Srpska and the Federation will take adequate measures which will make life impossible for all those who have been indicted on charges of war crimes and who are still at large. (Top story in electronic media in the Federation)

Constitutional Changes

Federation drafting constitution to include Serbs in top state posts

The Federation government decided on Tuesday – in line with its legal authority – to be the carrier of the entire process of constitutional changes in the Federation. At a session in Sarajevo which was attended by the president and the vice president of the Federation, Safet Halilovic and Karlo Filipovic respectively, the Federation government upheld the draft amendments to the Entity Constitution which were prepared by the Federation Constitutional Commission .

In order to improve these solutions, the Federation government will prepare a single version of amendments to the Federation constitution which will be examined at its session on February 25. Federation President Safet Halilovic said after the session that the government will propose the introduction of the post of second vice-president of the Federation which would belong to the Serb nation. In addition, posts of deputy Speaker would be introduced in both houses of the Federation parliament and would belong to the Serb people, as well as the post of deputy prime minister. Halilovic said that the government, the president and vice president of the Federation are unanimous in their stance that the basis for the formation of executive authorities should be the 1991 census, providing that there could be no more than 49 per cent representatives from one constituent nation, nor less than 20 per cent among the government officials.

The Federation government also believes that the bicameral Federation parliament should continue to exist, but with a reduced number of deputies. According to government proposals, the House of Representatives should have up to 100 deputies, while the House of Peoples should have between 45 and 60 deputies. According to the same proposal, the status of national minorities should be regulated by a special law and their representation ensured in the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives and canton assemblies.

The Federation government stressed yesterday that it has remained true to its position that in the implementation of the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court symmetrical solutions must be found in both entities. (all news agencies, electronic and print media carried this item)

BiH Parliament's House of Peoples speaker: Constitutional changes will mean an end to the RS created by Karadzic and Mladic

The speaker in the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples, Sejfidin Tokic, said that the implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling on the constituent status of all peoples on the whole territory of BiH will mean the end of the RS which was projected by Radovan Karadzic and his SDS (Serb Democratic Party) and the Federation, as was envisaged by the Washington Agreement. Speaking at a press conference in Banja Luka, Tokic said that by changing the entity constitutions, RS and Federation will essentially change their substance. (Dnevni Avaz)

Ruling RS party alarmed by Croatian calls for BiH without the RS

The spokesman of the Party of Democratic Progress [PDP], Igor Crnadak, told SRNA on Tuesday that the repeated statements from Zagreb calling for the RS to be disbanded were inappropriate and very dangerous.

"Now that constitutional changes are being adopted in BiH, it can be very dangerous, and it is certainly inappropriate, to make statements such as those uttered by the Croatian Deputy Speaker Zdravko Tomac," Crnadak said. According to Crnadak, neighbouring states, such as Croatia, should try to exert a calming and positive influence in a situation which is sensitive for BiH. "It is obvious that the Croats in BiH and Croatia want to redefine the relations in BiH but they have to be aware that no solution bringing the RS into a less favourable position will be accepted," Crnadak said. Tomac said on Monday that "the constitutional changes in BiH are the last chance to disband the RS".

Zlatko Tomcic on canceled meeting and climate between Zagreb and Sarajevo: Relation with BiH not worsening

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Although it was announced in the media, the meeting between the Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zdravko Tomac and the BiH Ambassador to Croatia never took place. Although the Ambassador Zlatko Dizdarevic was supposed to be hosted by the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zdravko Tomcic, Tomcic "shifted" the obligation to Tomac. Tomac-Dizdarevic meeting did not take place because the Ambassador excused himself due to other obligation and tight schedule. Ambassador Dizdarevic is carried as saying that he sent a letter to Tomcic a month and a half ago asking to be received. "There was no reply until last Friday, when Tomcic's cabinet informed me that Tomcic could not see me and that I would be hosted by Deputy Speaker Tomac. I could only say, taking into account that Tomcic can be busy, that I will be patient and wait until the day he has time for our meeting", says Ambassador Dizdarevic adding that his office received a call from Tomac's office on Friday when his (Dizdarevic's) secretary told them that the Ambassador "would probably come". The written invitation arrived on Monday and Dizdarevic sent a letter to Tomac informing him that he was not going to meet him because of previous engagements.

Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zlatko Tomcic comments on canceling of inaugural visit of the BiH Ambassador to Croatia Zlatko Dizdarevic and his dissatisfaction with the fact that he was going to be hosted by the Deputy Speaker of the said Parliament Zdravko Tomac and not Tomcic himself. "It is a usual practice that if the Speaker is hindered the Ambassadors are hosted by one of Deputy Speakers. I was simply busy and I suggested that Deputy Tomac did it. Ambassador Dizdarevic should have directly contacted my cabinet and express discontent with the scenario and we would have made another appointment. So far I have received almost every Ambassador in Croatia so there were no reasons not to see him too", says Tomcic. Tomcic disagrees with journalists' claims that BiH-Croatia relation was damaged although admitting that there were outstanding issues. Tomcic reminded of the fact that Croatia had a constitutional obligation to take care after the Croats in BiH especially in light of the fact that Croatia is a signatory of the DPA. "It is a thin line between abiding by your Constitution and the fact that we are a signatory of the DPA in relation to the moment when activities of the Authority or individuals from the Authority are interpreted as mingling into domestic affairs of BiH. It is really a thin line and one has to be really

careful in it. I personally feel that the best remedy to stop accusations about the mingling would be to have a continuous dialogue at highest state levels”, says Tomcic.

Ivo Komsic, Vice President of SDP prior to talks of party leaders on constitutional changes: Either a House of Peoples or nothing

(provided by OHR Mostar)

In light of the announced meeting of leaders of political parties in Sarajevo scheduled for February 20, Slobodna Dalmacija carries an interview with Ivo Komsic, the SDP's Vice President, in which he talks about forthcoming constitutional changes. When questioned as to how many official proposal on amendments to the Federation Constitution have been submitted so far, Komsic said that there have been two such proposals. One that was submitted by the Constitutional Commission of the Federation Parliament that was formed by the High Representative and the other one submitted by Croat Caucuses from Houses of Peoples from the Federation and State Parliament. “We also received HDZ standpoints, which were harmonized with other parties within the HNS, which deal with proposal of amendments to the Constitution that were the working version of the Constitutional Commission. But so far it has not been forwarded into official procedure”, says Komsic. When questioned if any of the two envisaged abolishment of House of Peoples or shrinking of its competence, Komsic ruled out the possibility. “There were some alternative solutions that were submitted by the Constitutional Commission in the working version, such as the house of Cantons, but it was dropped in the end. The aim of the Commission was to create such solutions that would not create distance between entities but get them closer because that's the intention of parties in the Federation. They are of opinion that the entities should be symmetrically established especially when it comes to protection vital national interests. In relation to introducing of a House of Peoples in the RS, Komsic says that the problem lies in facts that the RS Assembly was not originally envisaged as a two-chamber Parliament and that the Petritsch's Constitutional Commission, when making amendments to the RS Constitution, did not envisage two chambers within the RS Parliament, which in Komsic's opinion is the key problem. When questioned as to what were the odds of having the two chambers in the RS Assembly, Komsic said that from this perspective the odds were not looking good regardless of continuous efforts of Bosniak and Croat MPs in the RS Assembly because of the fact that they are minority in it. Komsic believes that the resistance in the RS shows that something must be done and that a pressure must be exerted on the IC in order to accomplish symmetric solutions, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Miljenko Brkic, President of the Croat People's Community (HNZ), on Zagreb talks: We did not go to Zagreb to get an opinion

(provided by OHR Mostar)

At a press conference held yesterday in Mostar, Miljenko Brkic, the president of the Croat Peoples Community, said that the HDZ still has the greatest support of the Croat voters. “Those, who claimed that HDZ stands behind the meeting, which was held in Sarajevo's suburb of Stup, accused us that we are bringing up this party from the ashes. It is well known that the HDZ has not been reduced to the ashes and that, according to all public opinion polls, it still has the biggest support of the Croat voters. If ‘the bringing up from the ashes’ refers to the HDZ returning to the House of Peoples of the Federation Parliament, then we accept that qualification with pleasure, because we have been advocating that all legitimate political options act within the framework of the institutions.’

Ivan Plejic, a Vice President of HNZ and a member of the Commission for Constitutional Changes, participated at the meeting in Stup last week. According to him, at that meeting, HNZ did not agree with the number of Caucuses in the House of Peoples of the Federation Parliament and with the amendment on the Government composition, that this party requires to be grounded on the decision on constituency, that is, that the Government is composed according to a parity principle.

Talking about the meeting in Zagreb, which was convened by Ivica Racan, the Croatian Prime Minister, Brkic said that this meeting did not have a quality of any kind of the agreement. Also, conclusions of any kind have not been passed at this meeting. The meeting was convened in order to inform Prime Minister Racan, in details, about the constitutional changes in BiH.

Brkic also said: 'The time, when one went to Zagreb to get an opinion, has gone. However, the time, when the Croats from BiH cooperate with the official Croatian Authorities to the benefit of the Croats and other two peoples in BiH has not gone.'

International Community

High Representative: BiH has achieved progress

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, addressed on Monday in Brussels the foreign ministers of the European Union, at the EU's General Affairs Council. The High Representative highlighted the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina has moved forward in the past three years and a basic – yet solid – foundation has been put in place on which to build a viable and stable state capable of meeting its responsibilities to its citizens as well as its international obligations. He called upon the EU Foreign Ministers to engage BiH and provide it with a clear and achievable perspective as a supportive yet demanding partner. In the course of his visit to Brussels, the High Representative also met with Austrian Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Croatian Foreign Minister Tonino Picula, and the Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact, Erhard Busek, and briefed them on current developments in BiH. (Click here for the full [OHR Press Release](#). All news agencies carry the item, Oslobođenje on page 4 – not very prominently placed -. Slobodna Dalmacija and Dnevni List also reports on this)

OHR urges RS to improve implementation of property legislation

Spokesperson for the Banja Luka OHR Sonja Pastuovic said on Tuesday that the Departments of the Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Republika Srpska (OMIs) should improve the implementation of the property legislation in the RS by applying the Memorandum of Understanding. She noted, once again, that this Memorandum had been signed on November 29, 2001 by RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and High Representative in BiH Wolfgang Petritsch, and added that the Memorandum committed the OMI employees to issuing at least three property repossession decisions every day in the RS. (ONASA, SRNA and RTRS report)

Wolfgang Petritsch appoints new head of Banja Luka OHR

Banja Luka OHR spokesperson Sonja Pastuovic announced on Tuesday that High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch appointed Paul Martin as Deputy High Representative and Head of the OHR Banja Luka Office. Martin is to replace Georges Bordet, who was leaving the OHR after having run the Banja Luka office for exactly one year. (ONASA, Oslobođenje, Dnevni Avaz, Slobodna Dalmacija carry the report)

OHR: Claims for return of property will be accepted by February 28

At Tuesday's press conference, OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmeier reminded all those who are temporary occupants and have not yet claimed their private property must do so by February 28th or they will lose their right to alternative accommodation. "Also anyone who have already received a positive decision for the return of their property issued by one of the housing authorities or the CRPC must request enforcement of this by February 28th of this year or within sixty of receiving it if this date is later, otherwise they will also lose the right to alternative accommodation," Stiglmeier said at a press conference quoted by Oslobođenje and Avaz.

UN sacks three Serb policemen for war-time atrocities

Three Serb policemen have been sacked by the IPTF after war crimes investigators provided evidence that they were involved in atrocities during the 1992-1995 war, officials said on Tuesday. Dusko Zoric was fired for taking part in paramilitary operations in western BiH in 1995 and serving in detention facilities in northwest BiH where Bosniaks were tortured, UN spokesman Stefo Lehmann said. Two other Serbs, Vojislav Starovic and Dragisa Tesic, were dismissed for acting as interrogators in detention facilities where Bosniaks were beaten, he said. (All news agencies carried this report)

Editorial

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija: Racan's initiative and UNDP's research raises concerns in Federation: Rojs - the most popular foreign politician in BiH

With regards to the alleged research conducted by the UN (see Cropres summary February 14) according to which the HDZ and Ante Jelavic are among most popular political parties/politicians in the Federation, Slobodna Dalmacija reads that the OHR's request to the Mostar Cantonal Court, requesting the Court to contests the validity of the HDZ registration, does not come as a surprise at all adding that another political scandal is in store. "The OHR's request is based on the fact that the suspended and removed member of the BiH Presidency, Ante Jelavic, is still the President of the HDZ, so that's a reason good enough for the IC to put an administrative ban on the most popular political party in the Federation and prevent them from taking part in the elections. But there is no legal ground for that. The appeal period to the registration of the HDZ is way behind us and the party's Statute envisages a possibility that authorities of the President can be shifted to the party's Vice President or other officials within the party. Such moves by the IC only contribute to growing popularity of Ante Jelavic and HDZ BiH" (...), reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Headlines

Dnevni List

- Investigation against Sarajevo zombies: Special units called 'Seve' were killing according to politicians' orders?
- Dr. Miljenko Brkic on the talks in Zagreb: We did not go to Racan to get an opinion

Vecernji List

- Our special reporter Zdenko Jurilj at Milosevic's trial: Izetbegovic might testify in The Hague

Oslobodjenje

- FRY - BiH: Dual citizenship law to be passed in the near future

Dnevni Avaz

- SFOR: General Vranj suspended

Jutarnje novine

- Prisons to move into old army barracks

Glas srpski

- New Seal For Waiting: Uncertain destiny of apartments whose privatization was disputed by Wolfgang Petritsch
- OHR – Officers Facing Dismissals

Nezavisne novine

Zlatko Lagumdžija met with Zoran Djindjic and Goran Svilanovic in Belgrade