

BiH Media Round-up: 29/1/2002

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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

Italy to help Bosnia fight crime and terrorism

Italy and BiH agreed on Monday to work more closely together in the fight against organized crime, illegal migration and international terrorism. The agreement on the issue was signed, according to Oslobodjenje, by Italy's Interior Minister Claudio Scajola and BiH Minister of Civil Affairs Svetozar Mihajlovic. Italian police will open a liaison office in Sarajevo to exchange information and send border police for experience, Scajola told reporters following the signing ceremony. BiH has been a transit route for thousands of migrants seeking illegal entry to countries in western Europe. Many of the migrants are ruthlessly exploited by criminal organizations who offer to smuggle them to their destinations in exchange for money. The flow has slowed since border controls were tightened in 2000, but Scajola said BiH could not handle the problem alone and needed more help from Europe. Scajola praised the hand-over of the Algerians, whom the United States suspects of being involved with the al Qaeda network of Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden.

BiH Helsinki Committee Steering Board supports Dizdarevic

Dnevni Avaz reports that, at its session in Sarajevo on Monday, the Steering Board of the BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights supported work of the organization as well as the position of the NGO President Srdjan Dizdarevic on the deportation of the "Algerian Group." The Board also made a decision to call the organization's Assembly for February 15 this year, as was requested by 30 members of the Committee, which will discuss the current situation in and around the NGO. Disagreeing with such positions, Slavo Kukic, a prominent Committee member, left the meeting.

Federation

Prisoners in Zenica continue hunger strike

According to Oslobodjenje, the hunger strike in the Zenica state prison started a few days ago continues until further notice, meaning all until better living conditions for prisoners are not ensured in the institution. This was concluded following the Monday's meeting of the prisoners' representatives with the BiH Federation Justice Minister, Zvonko Mijan.

The Alliance for Change Coordination holds regular meeting in Sarajevo

Oslobodjenje reports that the Coordination Body of the governing Alliance for Change tasked at its regular meeting in Sarajevo on Monday both houses of the BiH Parliament to adopt all laws by the end of April this year, which would make the drafting of the study for the Stabilization and the Association with the European Union possible. According to Dnevni Avaz, the Alliance leaders also discussed the work of the BiH Federation Constitutional Commission. BiH Federation President Safet Halilovic and his Deputy Karlo Filipovic sent a clear message to the members of the Commission that they had to adopt a final version of the amendments without any alternatives and deliver it into the parliamentary procedure as soon as possible.

World Bank and IMF to help paying out the dismissed soldiers

According to Oslobođenje, the financial and political representatives of the international community agreed on Monday with the authorized BiH Federation officials to establish an expert team, which would be task to this week start discussion on how the soldiers to be fired from the Federation Army will be financially compensated. "We will not tolerate any further delay in this process," OSCE Head of the Mission Robert Beecroft told journalists following the meeting. The meeting in the BiH Central Bank's building in Sarajevo attended by the BiH Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, top Federation Defense Ministry officials, and representatives of the World Bank, IMF and leading international organizations in BiH was held in regard of the results of the audit into the BiH Federation military budget conducted by OSCE.

Veterans call local authorities, international community for a dialogue on the economic and social crisis in the country

The BiH Federation Association of the Demobilized Soldiers (veterans) called on the BiH Presidency, BiH Council of Ministers, BiH Federation Government, OHR and other local and international institutions for a dialogue on the current economic and social crisis in the country. The Association demands the adoption of the law on the veterans' right at the state level, withdrawal of the BiH Federation draft law on the issue and the removal of the authorized Federation Minister, Suada Hadzovic. The veterans warned that if their requests are not met, more than 100,000 demobilized soldiers would organize mass protests in all cantons at the beginning of March including the blockage of the state institutions.

Vecernji List: Is the resolution of the financial destiny of Hercegovacka Bank in sight - Lijanovici to purchase Hercegovacka Bank

Written by Zdenko Jurilj (Provided by OHR Mostar)

According to the information that the economic circles in Herzegovina have been speculating with, the Meat Industry 'Lijanovici' is allegedly willing to purchase the majority package of Hercegovacka Bank shares. People from 'Lijanovici' company could not comment on this information yesterday. Allegedly, the Lijanovici brothers have expressed their willingness to purchase the bank a few times already, during the talks they had with the Hercegovacka Bank Provisional Administration representatives and the bank shareholders.

Yesterday, we could not get any official information from Johan Verhayden, the Spokesperson for the Provisional Administration of the Hercegovacka Bank, says Vecernji List. According to unofficial information, some of the current Hercegovacka Bank shareholders' representatives have already exerted pressure on the other shareholders to make them sell their shares at a certain nominal value. A large number of shareholders do not think about the sale hoping that the bank will start to work after the investigation is completed. Allegedly, pressure was also exerted on the owners of a few reputable Herzegovinian private companies, whose shares in the bank are worth more than 1 million Marks. Vecernji List received the information that together with 'Lijanovici' company, one reputable Austrian company, that Lijanovici have been cooperating with for years, is ready to enter this financial acquisition.

By all accounts, the Management of Privredna Bank gave up the purchase because it was estimated that the alleged purchase might discredit their reputation. During the last few months, cocooned bank lobbies in BiH failed to hide that they would like to see the shares of Hercegovacka Bank within their financial structure. Austrian banks, that together with Zagrebacka Bank are slowly taking over the financial monopoly in BiH, have shown the greatest interest in it.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Mostar leaders meet with Executive Director of the Communications Regulatory Agency

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Mostar, Neven Tomic and Hamdija Jahic, on Monday met with the representatives of the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) in BiH. The Executive Director of the CRA, David Betts, stated he is aware that the media could have a very positive, but also a very negative influence on the normalization of the situation in general, and that the purpose of the meeting with the city leaders was to inform them about the CRA's activities and processes.

Mayor Tomic said that the role of the media in Mostar and a wider area has changed positively and that the Mostar City Administration will continue to help and monitor the work of the local media.

Deputy Mayor Jahic said it is in the interest of both the Agency and the City Administration for Mostar to have independent media that will be working for the citizens and create a positive climate.

It was said during the meeting that the number of the media in BiH has been reduced by 40% and that the number of the media with long-term broadcasting licenses will be known in March, after the expiration of the appeals period.

Dnevni List: Interview with Niko Lozancic, the HDZ negotiator in the Mrakovica meeting

Interview conducted by Marko Markovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an interview with Niko Lozancic, a member of the HDZ BiH Presidency and the Secretary General of the Croat National Assembly (HNS), who attended the meeting of the eight leading BiH parliamentary parties held on the Mount Mrakovica last week.

Lozancic says the President of the PDP, Mladen Ivanic, initiated the meeting and the HDZ BiH Presidency supported the initiative as they think that the domestic politicians must take responsibility for the destiny of BiH and communicate with the aim of unraveling the BiH tangle. It was the first time, says Lozancic, that the representatives of the strongest political parties in BiH of all the three peoples met at one place without any arbitration or mediation of the international community.

They discussed the harmonization of the Entity Constitutions with the BiH Constitution through the implementation of the Constitutional Court Decision, and they all agreed that the constitutional changes must be finalized as soon as possible, that the instruments for the protection of the rights of all the three constituent peoples must be ensured, as well as an adequate representation in the authority institutions, and that the state apparatus, which is currently too complicated and too expensive, must be rationalized. However, there were certain differences in terms of the ways of doing it.

The position of the HDZ BiH and the HNS was that the Constitutions of both Entities must undergo deeper changes. "If the equality and constituency at the state level are ensured through the two-chamber parliament, equal representation of the constituent peoples in the House of Peoples, BiH Presidency, Council of Ministers or the Constitutional Court, and if the decisions related to the vital interests of each of the constituent peoples are taken the way they are taken, even with the instruments of protection – through the entity vote in the House of Representatives – what would be the ways of ensuring this at the entity level, if not the ways I just mentioned," says Lozancic.

In answer to the interviewer's question as to whether his participation in the Mrakovica meeting could be interpreted as a sort of rehabilitation of the HDZ, i.e. HNS on the political scene in BiH, Lozancic said it could be interpreted that way, but he thinks is rather a sort of satisfaction with the ideas and positions of the HNS, since they were the first to insist on the principle of each people electing their own representatives and the first to "cry out" against all attempts of de-constituting of the Croat people. They were the first to speak out about an equal

representation of all the three peoples in the legislative, executive and judicial institutions. "Have they not imposed sanctions against us and have they not put us on trial because of that? This confirms how justified our policy is and it shows that, in the long run, one cannot count on ordered political trials against one's former party colleagues, destruction of banks, putting oneself at the service of some well-intended IC representatives or the chameleon-like politics for the purpose of self-promotion."

Asked as to whether the aforementioned was his comment on the statements that the Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic recently gave for Dnevni List, Lozancic said it is about all those who were in charge of the HDZ for the last ten years and who were using their positions for their personal benefit and promotion, thus reducing the Croat people to a national minority.

In Lozancic's words, this will be the year of "to be or not to be" for Croats in BiH and BiH citizens in general since all the peoples in BiH are interconnected. He expects that the constitutional changes will be conducted to the benefit of all, that everyone will realize it is impossible to build one's own happiness on the foundations of others' misfortune. Lozancic thinks this should be the year of turns when the international arbitration will prove to be unnecessary.

Dnevni List: Mostar University Rector, Dr. Frano Ljubic gives a press conference - Questionable survival of Mostar University?

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dr. Frano Ljubic, the Rector of the Mostar University, gave a press conference in Mostar yesterday and rendered an account of his mandate in terms of the tasks completed, the current problems and future plans. He said since the Cantons and Public Companies are not meeting their liabilities to the Mostar University, the University Senate decided to organize a roundtable discussion and invite professors and student's union representatives, as well as the representatives of the cantons and Public Companies that are not meeting their liabilities to participate in this discussion. The purpose of the discussion is to inform the public once more about the situation at the University, as its survival will be questionable due to a lack of money. Unless the cantons come up with their stand about the financing by the end of February, the University Senate might as well tender a collective resignation, said Ljubic. As for the Croat-majority cantons, Ljubic said that the Cantons 7 and 8 are meeting their liabilities, but that the money they pay amounts to less than 5% of the revenues collected in these two cantons. Of the Public Companies, it is the HPT and Elektroprivreda that are supposed to finance the University. Elektroprivreda pays a share of the amount agreed, while the HPT are not meeting their obligation. Dnevni List says it is interesting that Dr. Slavo Kukic, who is the Chair of the HPT Steering Board, receives three salaries from the Mostar University, and yet, a closure of the University seems to be in his interest. The daily says that the Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje was saved owing to a "financial injection" from Kukic. Should the Mostar University and the University "Dzemal Bijedic" come to be integrated, Dr. Kukic will probably appear as the chief financier of that University, concludes Dnevni List.

Zdenko Antunovic, the Prime Minister of the Central Bosnia Canton, stated that the Canton was not in a position to contribute to the University financing, but they will pay the overdue liabilities.

Ivo Vincetic, the Prime Minister of the Posavina Canton, said that the Canton allocated 360,000 KM to the University last year.

Dragan Vrankic, the Governor of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, said that the Canton regularly allocates 5% of the Cantonal Budget for the University, which amounts to 200,000 KM a month.

Republika Srpska

Reactions to the Ivanic's statement that he does not mind establishment of the third entity in BiH

Commenting on the (Republika Srpska Prime Minister) Mladen Ivanic's statement with Vecernji List in which he said that he would not mind the establishment of the third entity in BiH as long as the action does not have negative consequences for the RS, Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer said that the statement should be realized as an expression of opinion. "Mladen Ivanic is neither the first nor the last politician in BiH mentioning the third entity. In the same way, you have BiH politicians mentioning the abolishment of the entities. However, both the establishment of the third entity and the abolishment of the current entities are actions against the Constitution," Stiglmayer said. BiH Federation President and the Party for BiH leader Safet Halilovic said that the Ivanic's statement reflects the opinion of a majority in the RS. But, Halilovic adds that what BiH currently need is the implementation of the Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent peoples rather than discussions on the third entity. Chairman of the BiH Presidency Jozo Krizanovic believes that it would be much more rational for BiH to abolish entities and organize the country on the basis of cantons than to establish new entities.

The Banja Luka Islamic Community objects to the regulatory plan "South 7"

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that the Medzlis Executive Board with the Banja Luka Islamic Community proposes relocation of the building of the School of Electrical Engineering in Banja Luka because it will, as the Medzlis Executive Board claims, ruin the view on reconstructed Ferhadija mosque. The Medzlis Executive Board proposed to Banja Luka Mayor, Dragoljub Davidovic that the building of the Electrical Engineering School, which has been at its current location for decades, should be relocated to the right bank of the river Vrbas. The Regulatory Plan includes the area between the Tzar Dusan Boulevard and the following streets: Radoja Domanovica Street, Omladinska Street, Branka Morace Street, Patra Street, Teodor Kolokotronis Street and the left bank of the river Vrbas. According to the plan this is the area where three mosques (Ferhadija, Arnaudija and Seferbegova mosque) should be reconstructed. The Medzlis Executive Board is against the Regulatory Plan because the Plan envisages construction of multi-story buildings in that area and then "the places of worship could not be seen from all sides". The Medzlis Executive Board assesses that the Regulatory Plan jeopardizes human rights and brings places of worship in a very bad position, which finally makes the Islamic Community in BiH feel insulted. President of the Medzlis Executive Board, Resad Salihovic says that this part of Banja Luka should be built in accordance with the "Stara carsija" Plan whose author is Sead Zahirovic. The Executive Board further claims that the new regulatory plan would lead to further ruination of Bosniak tradition. On the other hand, town planners claim something completely opposite: The regulatory plan "South 7" includes a huge space in the center of the town that has to be used in the best possible way to benefit citizens of Banja Luka, with full respect for monuments of cultural and historical importance.

Banja Luka Basic Court - Trial of Kragulj and Nozica starts on February 13

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that trials of former head of the RS Commodity Reserves Directorate, Mirko Nozica and Deputy Minister of foreign economic relations, Nikola Kragulj will start on February 13th. Both officials have been accused of misusing official position. The paper also learns from the Banja Luka Basic Court that trials of general manager of "Drina" enterprise from, Dusan Ilic and general manager of "Velting" enterprise, Nedjo Djokic are scheduled for February 23rd. Both Ilic and Djokic are from Bijeljina.

RTRS Trade Union meeting

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that at yesterday's session the RTRS Trade Union decided to request the RS Government to forward the Law on RTRS to the parliamentary procedure until March 1st. The RTRS Trade Union requests the RTRS management to draft a plan that would improve financial situation in which the RTRS has been for some time due to unresolved problems pertaining to payment of TV subscription. The Trade Union also requests the RS Government to comply with the Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the OHR and the Government. According to the Memorandum, the RS Government has to allocate to the RTRS the money that the RTRS could not collect from the subscription fee.

SDS preparing to politically destroy Banjac

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Nezavisne Novine reports that one of the SDS top officials, Mirko Banjac accuses the SDS leadership of preparing his political liquidation. Banjac claims that at the election assembly of the SDS municipal board, local SDS officials were pressurized and told not to vote for Banjac. Banjac also claims that he is not a type of person who will stir up discontent in the SDS and that is why he decided to find the solution "somewhere else" unless the SDS gets rid of the people who play dirty games.

International Community

Petritsch informs Ashdown on the OHR's work

Dnevni Avaz reports that lord Paddy Ashdown, the leader of the British liberal-democrats who is most likely to succeed Wolfgang Petritsch in the Office of the High Representative, is visiting Sarajevo. Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer told the newspaper that Ashdown had arrived in BiH at the invitation of the High Representative. On Monday, Ashdown met with senior OHR officials to discuss the current political situation in the country. Stiglmayer says that Ambassador Petritsch wanted to inform Ashdown about the work of the OHR and the situation in the country since he believes that he is most likely to be appointed his successor in the Office. In the course of the day, Ashdown also met with Head of the UN Mission to BiH Jacques Paul Klein, OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft, and SFOR Commander John Sylvester. According to the newspaper, Ashdown did not meet any of the BiH politicians.

Turkish Foreign Minister to visit BiH on Tuesday

Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem is to meet Tuesday with his BiH counterpart Zlatko Lagumdžija during a one-day visit here, BiH's Foreign Ministry announced Monday. The two ministers are expected to sign an agreement on bilateral cooperation in the fields of culture, education, science and sport for the years 2002-2004, the ministry said. Cem is also scheduled to briefly visit Turkish troops serving with the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), stationed in the central town of Zenica.

ICTY spokeswoman says Karadzic still in Bosnia, Mladic in

Belgrade

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The Hague International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) prosecution spokeswoman Florence Hartmann said on Monday that RS Army former Commander Ratko Mladic was still in Belgrade and that RS former President Radovan Karadzic was at a known location in the RS. Hartmann told German Radio Deutsche Welle that there were no obstacles to their capture and pointed out that international warrants for their arrests had been issued more than six years ago. She said local authorities were primarily obliged to arrest them, but that they could also request assistance in the event that they did not have sufficient or adequate forces for such an action. ICTY chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte told the United Nations Security Council in late November that she had information that Mladic was living in Belgrade with full security .

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus editorial, Mirko Sagolj wrote that BiH had come into a phase of a full disorientation. "In this state everything is possible, even that the chairman of the BiH Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights, Osman Brka, requests the atheism to be expelled from the country," Sagolj emphasized, comparing this request with the political philosophy of the former Soviet Union communist dictator, Stalin. Oslobodjenje Editor-in Chief Senka Kurtovic criticized in another editorial the representatives in the BiH Federation and BiH state parliaments for their already highly-paid inactivity. Almasa Bajric concluded in the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day that, thanks to the disputed Croatian Government's decision on the oil transit, the BiH refinery in Bosanski Brod might be re-activated.

Dnevni List: On Tuesdays from the right

Written by Marko Tokic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

"Why is it good that Neven (Tomic, the Mayor of Mostar) declared himself in favor of BiH either without entities or with three entities. It speaks of the two things: the political pressure from the HDZ BiH and the HNS parties is so huge that the 'favorites' are allowed to enter their space; and secondly, that their mentors have realized that the disposition among the people is such that this political space must be covered if those intend to survive in the Croat politics in BiH.

This maturation of the political circumstances is what I really enjoy because I am not preoccupied with who will realize what the Croat people need as long as their rights are indeed realized. If this statement was a step forward in that direction, then welcome back, Neven."

Tokic says the first part of Tomic's statement matches the informal view (private one and perhaps one for a single use) of Mijo Anic, who stood for BiH without entities and without cantons, but with the principles of parity, rotation, consensus and two chambers of parliament at the state level. "When we look at this from the position of the equality of peoples, it is 'difficult' to reproach it, but when it is put in the political context of the Dayton BiH and its post-Dayton shaping, I am afraid it is just another hope, not to say an illusion which will serve as the basis for carrying out only the things that do not suit Croats," says Tokic.

Vecernji List: Rename Bosnia and Herzegovina into Herba

Written by Radoslav Dodig (Provided by OHR Mostar)

An English edition of the book 'Inner Country' written by Ivan Lovrenovic, was presented in Sarajevo late last week. All speakers were talking about Bosnia, the adjective 'Bosnian' was echoing all over the room, and the discussion on this book was organized by the International Forum Bosnia. In the Sunday edition of Oslobođenje, Zlatko Dizdarevic, the BiH Ambassador to Croatia, wrote an article. He repeated many times the things about the state called Bosnia and its citizens Bosnians. Where is Herzegovina and where have Herzegovinians disappeared? To put it simply, the 'singularization' of BiH to the advantage of Bosnia is becoming quite frequent. As if it is a political and linguistic ballast to mention the noun Herzegovina and the adjective Herzegovinian?

In short, Herzegovinians get angry when the term Bosnia and the epithet Bosnian are used to refer to them, and this has become a quite frequent trend at many levels. Then how to call BiH, a state of unfortunate geography and permanent obstruction? Herceg Bosna? Perhaps it is better to use an acronym: HERBA. Long live Herbals!

Headlines

Oslobođenje

- Hunger strike in Zenica state prison continues
- BiH and Italy together in fight against crime

Dnevni Avaz

- A forged Lagumdžija's letter on Internet: SDP attacked by forgers
- Exclusively: Petritsch informs Lord Ashdown on the OHR's work

Jutarnje Novine

- Prisoners do not believe Minister, continue strike

Glas Srpski

- Building of the Electrical engineering School clogs the mosque;
- Banja Luka Basic Court – Nozica and Kragulj on trial;

Nezavisne Novine

- 600 people dies in Nigeria;
- Florence Hartman – Karadzic at a known location in the RS;

Dnevni List

- Armed robbery of the Reiffeisen Bank branch office in Jelah near Tesanj – **Robbers take 750,000 Marks from the Bank**
- Dramatic warning from Dr. Franjo Ljubic, Mostar University Rector – **Mostar University is facing closure!**

Vecernji List

- The destiny of the greatest Herzegovinian financial institution is being resolved: '**Lijanovici**' **are purchasing Hercegovacka Bank**
- 'The Oil War' between BiH and Croatia continues: **Cisterns are still waiting to enter BiH**