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BiH State-related Issues

Lagumdzija receives delegation of the Croatian Parliament

The BiH Council of Ministers Chairman, Zlatko Lagumdzija, received in Sarajevo on Tuesday a Croatian parliamentary delegation, headed by Croatian Assembly Speaker Zlatko Tomcic. According to Oslobođenje, Lagumdzija told journalists following the meeting that he was satisfied because of the agreement on a number of issues. "We fully agreed that the key issue was the fast implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory," Lagumdzija emphasized. Tomcic said that they had also agreed on the need for an accelerated return of refugees and on drafting a comprehensive inter-state agreement to define all aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries. On Wednesday, during the third and the last day of its official visit to BiH, the Croatian delegation is scheduled to meet with head of the UN Mission to BiH Jacques Paul Klein.

Lagumdzija says BiH again in focus of international interest

All Sarajevo media reported that BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija had held a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday following his return for the official visit to Sweden. He said that, through an active policy of the BiH authorities, the country was being again put in the positive focus of the international interest. "The main aim of this active policy and my frequent trips throughout Europe is to gain support for the upcoming BiH accession to the Council of Europe, explain business establishment that a climate in BiH is being change and that the time has come for their more active presence through the direct foreign investments and the process of privatization, and inform the European political centers about our efforts in combating terrorism," Lagumdzija said.

BiH Council of Ministers makes decision on BiH visa regime

According to Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Council of Ministers made a decision on citizens of which countries did not have to possess visas for entering BiH at its session late in Sarajevo late on Tuesday. BiH Deputy Foreign Minister Milovan Blagojevic told journalists following the session that it was about 38 states, as citizens of all other countries not listed in the decision would have to apply for BiH visas.

Krizanovic takes part in the regional conference on fight against terrorism in Warsaw

Oslobođenje reports that, on behalf of the BiH Presidency, Chairman of the Presidency Jozo Krizanovic took part at a regional summit on the fight against terrorism taking place in Warsaw at the invitation of the President of Poland Alexander Kwasniewski. Krizanovic was scheduled to address the summit during the plenary session. The countries participating in the summit were expected to adopt a joint declaration on the issue at the end of the session. US President George Bush addressed the participants at the summit via satellite.

Federation

Slobodna Dalmacija: Twenty days of FTV

Written by Marijan Sivric (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Most of the Croat-inhabited territories in BiH have been left without HTV reception upon the shutdown of the terrestrial emission of the HTV signal. The article says Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantons, a part of the Canton 10 have been struck by this act most of all.

Those who cannot receive the HTV program hurry to buy digital receivers or get connected to the cable network because they have no other choice. The daily says they are very bitter for not being able to watch HRT and for being forced to watch FTV because both of these are very painful and humiliating since the quality of the FTV is at the lowest level possible.

The article says FTV is only another name for TV BiH and remains an amateur television in the service of a failed political concept. None of the peoples wanted the FTV because Croats wanted HTV and a program in Croatian, Bosniaks wanted to keep BHT and Serbs already have their own television. What all of them had in common was that they all watched HRT because it has the best program and is the most professional of all.

"Federation TV is a deed of the international power-wielders and their vision of how a public television should be organized in accordance with the Dayton Agreement. That is, of course, with all of its deficiencies and illogical characteristics that are now evident in the example of the television.

Like they were left without their entity in Dayton, Croats are now being left without their television. They are referred to the Federation and the Federation Television but they cannot attain their rights and interests there because they are so few and because their partner is so insincere. However, that is not the end of Croats' troubles.

The Federation authorities have announced changes to the Law on the FTV that was drafted and imposed by the OHR, and the changes would go in the direction of formalizing the right of Serbs to the television, equal to the right of Bosniaks and Croats. This, in fact, means that the Federation Television would be a television of the three peoples and the television of the other entity, Republic of Srpska, would belong to one people alone – Serbs.

The only proper solution for public television in BiH is establishment of one television with three national programs, compatible programs, as foreigners would put it. The existing solution is yet another injustice done to Croats. Croats are wondering why the Croatian Government is supporting this injustice by providing the FTV with equipment and other services.

Although the Croatian Government, together with the OHR, promised to secure the alternative program in Croatian for Croats in BiH in case the HTV signal would be shut down, unfortunately for Croats, they have forgotten about it.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Marija Topic-Crnoja, the Editor-in-Chief of the Informative and Political Program on the FTV

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview for Slobodna Dalmacija, Marija Topic-Crnoja, the Editor-in-Chief of the Informative and Political Program on the FTV, stated: "After the first two weeks of FTV broadcasting, as the Editor-in-Chief of the Informative and Political Program, I admit we are half-way to achieving the goals and programs we envisaged."

She said, as far as viewers are concerned, the broadcast 'Federacija Danas' (Federation Today) seems to be the greatest success. She says she has no major problems with the rest of the informative program apart from the pending issue of Croat personnel and journalists on the FTV.

Topic-Crnoja says she has spoken with the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vesna Cvjetkovic-Kurelec, who is on the Croatian parliamentary delegation visiting BiH. They spoke about the Croatian Government's decision to provide the FTV with some of HRT-produced programs and pay for the copyrights. She added once the Government transfers a part of that money to the HRT, they will be able to air those HRT programs on the FTV. One of the topics discussed with the Croatian Deputy Foreign Minister was the status of Croat journalists and the Croatian language

on the FTV.

To the interviewer's remark that comments on the FTV are exceptionally critical, Topic-Crnoja said: "I must admit I completely understand the people who are critical of the FTV. However, the main problem is that they keep comparing us with the HRT and therefore the wrong picture." She said HRT has much more money, a good personnel structure and a tradition, whereas the FTV does not have the necessary network of correspondents. "The reason why we have not been able to do much in the fifteen days of our program broadcasting, is that most of the professionals from the old structure of the TV BiH, were not too eager to get involved of the Federation TV regardless of their nationality. Another cause of difficulties in our work is a weak paying of a TV subscription fee. Bosniaks do not consider us as their TV anymore. (...) The Croats have not accepted us yet. (...) We can only prove ourselves through a high-quality program, and I personally believe that we shall succeed to make it soon.'

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Josip Merdzo, the Prime Minister of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton

Interview conducted by M. Landeka (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Why, according to your opinion Croats have not engaged more in the project of the Federation TV, but they have almost qualified it in advance as 'a non-Croat' project?

As far as the engagement of the Croat cadres within the Fed TV is concerned, I believe that some parties and institutions within the Croat people in BiH, have reacted many times and demanded that the Federation TV is organized in a way that better meets the needs of the Croat people in BiH.

According to the present situation, this Croat national interest will be present through a certain number of journalists, who should do it by using the language or creating the program. It is praiseworthy that the HRT will secure certain number of hours of their TV program per week. Unfortunately until people themselves do not feel direct consequences of some decision, none exerts some special efforts to solve some problem before it arises.

A lot of time and money were spent on the organization of the Federation TV, and it is up to this TV to prove whether it will meet all requests that the Croats in BiH expect to be met. We are not too encouraged by the program that we could see during the first few days.

Also, it is questionable as to why the Federation TV re-broadcast a foreign program early in the morning, while re-broadcasting of the program of a neighboring country is disputable.

People who live in BiH should have a possibility to listen and watch the program in their own language and I sincerely hope that this problem will be solved. It will have to be solved if the Federation TV does not meet the needs and interests of one of the constituent peoples in this country in terms of the program and language.

Dnevni List: Association 'Croat Woman' responded to abolishment of HTV program by petition

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The petition is being signed in front of the Croat Home Herceg Stjepan Kosaca, and as of today, also in front of 'Projektant' in Mostar. Zdenka Tomic, the President of the Association, stated that the Association made this step in order to get back a basic human right on the watching of HTV, and because of significance of Croatian language, culture and the quality of the TV programs. The petition will be sent to the HR, OHR, Government of the BiH Federation, Croatian Government, Federation TV and HRT in order to get at least one channel in Croatian language.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Vinko Zoric, the Governor of West-

Herzegovina Canton says media darkness is even darker

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Governor Zoric stated: 'The Federation TV does not meet the needs of the Croats in any way, and the shutting down of the HRT signal can be only replaced with a TV like Erotel used to be, which would meet our needs. Treating the Croats in this way, the media darkness will be even darker, especially if they shut down the Croat Radio of Herzeg Bosnia and the University in Mostar.'

Sale of satellite cards for watching HRT increases in BiH

Oslobodjenje reports that the sale of the satellite cards for watching HRT programs has been increased by 500 percent in BiH since the launch of the BiH Federation Television and shutting down of the HRT land signal. The Mostar Telesat Company, which is an authorized distributor of the HRT satellite cards in BiH, has sold 200 cards only in the past eight days. Before the cessation of the HRT signal, the Company was selling two to three cards daily.

Dnevni List: Joint Trade Union of Workers of BiH Federation sent an open letter to High Representative and Alliance for Changes

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dissatisfied with the attitude of the current Authority and IC representatives towards the privatization process and material position of workers, the Joint Trade Union of the BiH Federation sent an open letter to the HR and the Alliance for Changes. 'Without any hesitation, they are showing all their arrogance, incapability and moral misery, by which they are causing fear and divisions, and the IC representatives have a benevolent attitude towards it.' The responsible ones will have to suffer consequences for the things they did, while the Union will try to continue with the promotion of a market oriented economy and a stable and prosperous Herzegovina is a good example of it.'

They will also demand publishing of the reports on financial operations of following companies: Steel Zenica, BiH Steel, Polihem, Unis-Holding, Mines of the Central Bosnia, Soda-Sol, UNIS, TAS, Milkos, GRAS, Tobacco Factory and BiH Railways.

'We are shocked by stands and persistence of the leaders of the Party for BiH, who are trying to damage, destabilize and pull down Aluminij Mostar,' the letter says.

Dnevni List: Interview with Vladimir Soljic, President of Croat Community of Herzeg Bosnia

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Interview conducted by Josip Milic

How do you judge the current position of the Croats in BiH?

It has never been worse since the end of the war. A real participation of the Croats in the Legislative Authority at the level of the BiH Federation and BiH insignificant. (...) The Croats do not have a single important media outlet and for this reason they have been isolated for years in terms of media.

What are real chances to stop negative trends like?

Throughout the history, the Croats passed through much bigger temptations, but they have survived. The basic thing is that the Croats do not leave BiH and that displaced Croats are returning. (...) The Croat(ian)s have always

wanted to be in a company of European peoples, naturally as a subject, and this wish will be fulfilled rather soon. By admission of BiH and Croatia to Europe and European-Atlantic Integration, practically, the Croat(ian)s will be together, because there are no borders within the EU. Under a NATO umbrella we shall not be afraid and we shall not be waiting for various aggressors. (...) As far as media is concerned the Croats have been in the media blockade for years because they do not have a single important media outlet. 'Joint media' are joint only on paper because the Croat side has an inferior position, in terms of cadres and everything else. The good example is the so-called Federation TV, which has remained the BiH TV in all its aspects, apart from its name. By an organized work we have to secure the position of a real equality in the so-called the joint media, and also establish our own media that two other parties in BiH have. In order to achieve these goals it is necessary to secure the support of the IC, because we are only demanding the things that the others already have. (...) The Croat side has a unique stand on important issues such as Constitutional changes, and the public cannot be manipulated any longer that these are the stands of the HDZ hard-liners. The unique stand is necessary, however, this prerequisite is not enough to prevent changes that are damaging to the Croats. We should be working in order that the Parliament accepts our stands and that they were adopted as such. If it is not possible, we should ensure a sufficient number of voters in a relevant House of the BiH Federation Parliament and enable passing of constitutional changes that are damaging for vital interests of BiH Croats. Those who would not take part in this extremely important task will bear a historical responsibility.

Dnevni List: HKDU delegation met with Ante Jelavic

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The delegation of the HKDU met with Ante Jelavic, the President of the Croat National Assembly (HNS), in Mostar yesterday. A cause of the meeting was a departure from the project of the Croat self-rule and a new situation in which the HKDU BiH has found itself after the removal of the President of the party. The press release says that the talks were constructive.

'As signatories and active participants of the HNS we want to have an equal status within this body and we would like to take over a role of an active leader in the acting of this political body. We support each form of political organizing whose purpose is the protection of the Croat people's interests on equal basis and which is not against the Constitution of this country.'

Certain activities, that might improve a further cooperation, as well as, a course of activities of the Croat National Assembly, have been agreed upon. Also, the mutual wish to have more transparent and clear relations towards the HNS was expressed.

AFP: Bosnian police search for two more Algerians linked to bin Laden

Bosnian police have issued arrest warrants for another two Algerians believed linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda terrorist network, an official said Wednesday. Tomislav Limov, the deputy interior minister of the BiH Federation, told AFP another 15 Algerians and Egyptians were under police investigation for possible terror links. Last month Bosnian police arrested five Algerians and a naturalized Bosnian citizen of Algerian or Yemeni origin on suspicion of having ties to al-Qaeda and being behind security threats to US interests in the country. "The arrest warrants have been issued for two Algerians believed to be linked with the group of currently detained Algerians," Limov said. The warrants were issued last month. "We don't know for sure if the two are still in Bosnia", he added. Although the group is suspected of being linked with al-Qaeda, Limov said that Bosnian authorities were not excluding possible connections with "other terrorist organisations such as the GIA" or Armed Islamic Group, one of the main extremist movements in Algeria's civil war. The two Algerians were among 17 people put under police investigation last month for possible links with terrorism, Limov said. Nine of the suspects are Egyptians and the rest Algerian. Limov said earlier that police had been informed by the United States and other foreign intelligence services that the suspects had "committed some terrorist act or are planning to carry one out."

Republika Srpska

RS Government accepts amendments to the entity Constitution

According to Oslobođenje, the Republika Srpska Government on Tuesday accepted amendments to the entity Constitution proposed by the RS Constitutional Commission, which were in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory. Head of the Government's Public Affairs Department Cvijeta Kovacevic told journalists following the session that the Commission's proposal included the amendment defining the RS as the entity in which Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks were constituent peoples. This also means imposition of the Serb, Croat and Bosnian language, as the official language will be defined by a separate law.

Cavic meets with RS religious leaders

SRNA reports that the representatives of the three major religious communities in BiH, Bishop Jefrem, Bishop Franjo Komarica and Mufti Edhem Camdzic, agreed that the religious classes should be introduced as an obligatory subject in schools at a meeting with Republika Srpska Vice-president Dragan Cavic, the RS minister of religion, Dusan Antelj, and the mayor of Banjaluka, Dragoljub Davidovic, on Tuesday. The participants at the meeting reached agreement on the inclusion of all religious communities in the RS educational system.

RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic meets with Independent Judicial Commission Director Rakel Surlen

Glas Srpski reports on a meeting of the Republika Srpska National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic with IJC Director Rakel Surlen, which took place in Banja Luka on Tuesday. A strategic plan related to an overall reform of judiciary, which is to be implemented in the RS and BiH Federation next year, was discussed at the meeting.

The daily writes that the Speaker Kalinic supported this plan to promote independent, qualitative and efficient judiciary in the RS.

RS political parties comment on the visit of the High Representative to Banja Luka

Nezavisne Novine carries reactions of the Republika Srpska political parties to the recent visit of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to Banja Luka. SDS's (Serb Democratic Party) Mirko Banjac: "The High Representative is not familiar enough with either positions of the SDS or real situation in the RS. Petritsch is surrounded by primarily Bosniaks, who work in his Office and still try to create a wrong picture about some political parties including SDS and about a general situation in the RS". Banjac stressed he supported OHR positions related to the protection of human rights and implementation of the peace agreement. SNSD's (Party of Independent Social Democrats) Milorad Dodik: "Now we are facing additional crisis in the RS, which influences relations and cooperation with the international institutions. It is clear that the RS relation with the international community is in a permanent crisis from the moment the current Government assumed its duties, regardless of the contrary statements being made by certain politicians that it is about the international support to the RS." Party for BiH's Dzevad Osmancevic: "I doubt that Petritsch criticism will bring many changes. SDS creates a negative climate in the RS. These talks with Petritsch are the last warning to SDS that further obstructions of this party on the political scene will obviously push the RS further and further down the hill." DNS' (Democratic Peoples Alliance) Marko Pavic: "Outcome of these talks of the RS top officials with Petritsch is yet another proof of the RS non-functioning and the problems in the entity."

RS Government supports two proposed solutions of the Srpska Kostajnica/Kostajnica border issue

Glas Srpski writes that the Republika Srpska Government supported both proposals of the group of experts related to the establishment of the border crossing in Srpska Kostajnica/Kostajnica. Milenko Stankovic, the assistant RS Minister for Urban Planning and the chairman of the group, said that the European standards requested building of the terminal only at the location of the untouched plots on the right bank of Una river, towards the channel of the river Uncica in Srpska Kostajnica/Kostajnica.

AFP: Bosniak returnee killed in RS

A 64-year-old Bosniak who returned recently after fleeing during the war was found killed in a northwestern Bosnian Serb-controlled area, police said Wednesday. The returnee's body was found on Tuesday in the village of Hambarine, near Prijedor, a police officer told AFP, adding that according to doctor's report he had been killed three days ago, "very likely with a knife." Police could not give any further detail nor say whether the murder may have been ethnically motivated. The SRNA news agency identified the victim as Ibrahim Ramulic. Since the Dayton peace agreement ended Bosnia's 1992-95 war, nearly 230,000 people have returned to live among former enemies, according to figures of the UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. Among them some 60,000 non-Serbs are estimated to have returned to the Republika Srpska (RS) which along with the Bosniak-Croat Federation makes up post-war Bosnia.

International Community

Petritsch meets with Croatian parliamentary delegation

Sarajevo news agencies and dailies report that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met on Tuesday in Sarajevo with a Croatian parliamentary delegation, headed by Croatian Parliament Speaker Zlatko Tomcic, to discuss bilateral relations between BiH and Croatia, as well as the position of Croats in BiH. "We agree that Croats should be called to return to BiH, and particularly to the Republika Srpska," Petritsch said following the meeting. He emphasized that it was very important to strengthen relations between Sarajevo and Zagreb, as well as between the Parliaments of the two countries. Petritsch particularly underlined that one had to always bear in mind difficulties of Croats as a people, which was smallest in number in BiH. "It is essential that all three constituent peoples have the same rights both in the Federation and the RS," Petritsch said. Tomcic expressed concern over a too slow process of return to the RS, emphasizing that it was necessary to reach the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory.

Petritsch says first results of the Hercegovacka Banka investigation to be announced on Wednesday

According to Oslobođenje, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch said late on Tuesday in an interview with the Mostar Oscar C TV-station that the preliminary results of the investigation into the Hercegovacka Banka financial operations would be announced on Wednesday. Petritsch emphasized the analysis of the investigating team was showing that certain shareholders and politicians had been using the Bank for their own purposes at the cost of the depositors and the people. According to unofficial sources, the founding capital of the Bank amounted 20 million KM, 19 million of which were robbed. What was important, Petritsch said, the depositors having the deposits amounting up to 5,000 KM would soon be able to get their money back. More details on who was robbing the Bank will be presented at the Wednesday press conference and in coming days.

The High Representative amends the BiH Federation Law on Banks

FENA news agency reported on Wednesday that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, had made a decision on Tuesday to amend the BiH federation Law on Banks.

Selection of the third GSM operator trapped in administrative procedure

Amela Odobasic from the Communication Regulatory Agency's (CRA) Public Relations Service told Oslobođenje that the CRA was currently not carrying out activities related to opening the tender for the issuance of the third GSM license. "The CRA is still following developments related to the resolution of the Eronet ownership structure, which is a pre-condition for the publication of the new tender, since the issuance of the license depends on the ownership status," Odobasic said.

PLIP agencies express concern over poor property laws implementation in Foca, Sokolac and Srebrenica

The Agencies involved in the Property Laws Implementation Plan (PLIP) on Tuesday expressed their concern because not even 10 percent of the submitted real-property claims had been resolved in the municipalities of Foca, Sokolac and Srebrenica. (FENA, ONASA, Oslobođenje and Dnevni Avaz reported on the Tuesday press conference at which the latest PLIP data were presented)

New voter registration system being introduced to BiH Municipalities

The OSCE is in the process of introducing a new system of voter registration to representatives of all 145 municipalities nation-wide, the OSCE said in a press release on Tuesday, according to the Sarajevo dailies and news agencies. The process of voter registration is still administered by the OSCE and its hand-over represents one of the crucial areas in the transfer of the electoral machinery to Bosnian institutions. In line with the provisions of the Election law, the new system will enable the Municipal Election Commissions to administer the voter registration process without the need to rely on OSCE financial and logistical resources, and deal directly with the soon-to-be-formed Central Election Commission. The Head of OSCE Mission to BiH, Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, whilst paying a visit to one of the training sessions, stressed the need for the

national authorities to speed up election preparations. "Elections are scheduled for less than one year from now. It is the responsibility of the government to make elections happen and to make them happen in time. They have now seriously to take ownership of the whole process," he added. OSCE staff will continue to train the Municipal Election Commissions and municipal registration officers throughout November. The new system should be fully operational in all BiH municipalities by the beginning of December and will then be handed over to them. This new mechanism will enable the authorities to ensure an efficient voter registration in the elections to come, to the citizens of BiH.

Nicholl says legal regulation of any segment of the Central Bank's work by the Law on Civil Service unconstitutional

BiH Central Bank (CBBH) Governor Peter Nicholl said on Tuesday he would challenge the state Law on Civil Service before the BiH Constitutional Court if any segment of the CBBH's work is defined by the document, according to ONASA. After a visit to the CBBH branch office in Mostar he told reporters that the part of the Law related to the CBBH if adopted in this version would be "unconstitutional." "I still expect the BiH Parliament not to accept such a legal proposal," Nicholl said.

The ICTY indictment against General Dragoljub Milosevic unsealed

Glas Srpski reports that the indictment against General Dragoljub Milosevic was unsealed on Tuesday. According to the daily, Milosevic was accused together with General Stanislav Galic of crimes against humanity in the form of terrorizing Sarajevo citizens, shelling and killing them during the 1992-95 siege of the town. Trial of Dragoljub Milosevic, who is in custody, should start soon, the daily writes.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Petritsch visits Plehan

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, paid a visit to the devastated Franciscan Monastery and the Church of St. Mark in Plehan, reports Slobodna Dalmacija again (see the Cropres Summary of 5 November under Slobodna Dalmacija). The daily quotes the High Representative as saying: "My visit to Plehan is a clear sign and message – I want to see Croats returning to this area. The RS Government must find a way to accelerate returns because what has been done so far – is a scandal."

The High Representative also said: "It has been ten years since the Monastery in Plehan was destroyed and it is high time its reconstruction started."

Dnevni List: Association of Displaced Croats from Posavina reacted to Petritsch's visit to Plehan

(provided by OHR Mostar)

After the HR, during his visit to Plehan, threatened the Authorities of the Serb entity because they are obstructing the return of displaced persons to Bosnian Posavina, displaced Croats from this area sent a message to Petritsch: 'Had more than 5 years had to pass before the real truth about those, who have been obstructing the return of thousands of displaced persons from Posavina, was revealed?

The reaction of the HR was optimistic and gave a hope that the process of return might be accelerated. However, having learnt from dire experience with some IC factors, the displaced Croats from Posavina say that with regard to the HR's visit ' don't count your chickens before they are hatched'.

Slobodna Dalmacija: High Representative paid a private visit to Maglaj together with his family

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija, under the headline above, reports that the High Representative, accompanied by his family, paid a private visit to Maglaj, as a sign of support to the efforts of the municipality to arrange the environment.

Municipal Mayor Mehmed Bradaric informed the High Representative about the citizens' efforts in this regard. He also said there is a forum of municipal mayors at the level of the Zenica-Doboj Canton, and their chief mission is to make sure that the banks of the river of Bosna are clean and well arranged.

The paper reports that the High Representative visited the part of the city designated as a location for a park and a sports and recreational center, since that part, densely inhabited, has never had any green areas. A project in this respect already exists and it would cost 60,000 KM. They asked for support from Petritsch's wife Nora who has already proven to be a good promoter of healthy environment, reads the daily.

Although the visit of private nature, the High Representative was interested to learn about the situation in the Municipality of Maglaj, especially the return to the settlement of Bocinja. The extinguished guests were, at length,

handed honorary membership cards of the association 'Eko Maglaj.'

Editorials:

Oslobodjenje: Petritsch's scorning

By Emir Habul

The results of Petritsch's visit to Banja Luka could be summed up in the following manner: the High Representative scorned the RS leadership and it promised to be better in the future. The president Mirko Sarovic said that his "priority is the building of constructive relations within BiH", and the nominal chief of the SDS, Dragan Kalinic, simply reiterated request for a radical turn in the SDS leadership. Petritsch's statements in Banja Luka appear very mild in comparison with his open threats from the day earlier (including the possibility to ban the work of the SDS), and Sarovic and Kalinic did not give any strong promises.

From the Spring on, the RS has somewhat lingered on the margin of interest of the international civilian governor. That could be explained with the tactic to avoid a simultaneous opening of two fronts, with priority being placed on the alleviation of consequences of the Croat self-rule. In the meantime, the RS leadership has been strengthening the statehood of the RS at an expense of the BiH state. Some twenty laws which are still waiting to be adopted in the BiH Parliament (among those, the laws regulating the road traffic, free tariff zones, public prosecutors, identity documents, copy rights, and industrial property), the partial implementation of Human Rights Chamber decisions and the limitation of autonomy of Serb representatives in the BiH Parliament simply confirm this. The arrest of Karadzic and Mladic was phrased as a rhetorical question in the Banja Luka talks, and no one has any illusions that anything will change in this sphere. It is an illusion that Karadzic could be tried for committed war crimes, and that, at the same time, the ideology and the organization of the SDS, which brought about these crimes, is not put on trial.

It appears that Petritsch's priority is to try to force the RS leadership to take some steps in the spheres where that is possible in order to reconcile two conflicting interests: not to harm the position of the RS leadership at home, and to accelerate the integration of the BiH institutions. An article which recently appeared in Nezavisne Novine and which reports that Petritsch has asked Kalinic to dismiss his uncooperative associates or he himself will be removed, shows that the president of the SDS and the main speaker of the RS National Assembly has been chosen as a target of the pressure. That could prove to be a good choice: Kalinic has a good deal of influence, and he has demonstrated thus far that he would not sacrifice power for ideology, which is Petritsch's strongest argument.

Dnevni Avaz: Democratization of the smaller entity

By Sead Numanovic

Taken in consideration the messages that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, addressed to the RS leadership and the leadership of the SDS, this is the last chance for the smaller BiH entity to get serious and begin working for the wellbeing of all, and not only of a handful of authority figures who use numerous manipulation to stay in power.

The economic situation in the RS is increasingly getting worse, strikes are a common scene on the streets of Banja Luka and other towns, the crime is deeply rooted in the institutions of the system of this creation....

Unfortunately, the High Representative did not say anything new in Banja Luka on Monday. This story is old. It is as old as the Republika Srpska, one could say.

What is the way out of the present situation? In particular, if one takes into consideration the fact that all representatives from the smaller BiH entity are unanimous when it comes to "the vital interests and the sovereignty of the RS." For, it not only the SDS who is blocking the adoption of more then 40 vital laws in the state Parliament, it is not only this party who objects to the cooperation with the ICTY, it is not only the SDS who is

obstructing the common defense structure in BiH.

The High Representative also admits to this. If this was only about the SDS, this problem could be easily resolved.

This way, the only solution is to undertake democratization of the smaller entity step by step, with talks, more decisive actions, with painful compromises, occasional decisive measures and removals – and at the end – with threats of sanctions to the entire entity.

The High Representative, and especially the PIC Steering Board, would like to take a more resolute stand and confront the obstructions. His visit to Banja Luka is indeed a warning, but also an attempt to resolve the whole situation in a peaceful and productive manner.

Petritsch, taken all into consideration, is more sympathetic to the idea of a revolution from inside. That is why he would like the people in the RS to understand that it is in their interests to live in a better BiH state, the country whose citizens will have higher standards, travel freely, and not have fears of poverty, the lack of perspective and insecurity.