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BiH State-related Issues

BiH House of Peoples postpones vote on CIPS laws, adopts draft law on competition

Oslobodjenje and ONASA reports that the BiH Parliament House of Peoples on Tuesday passed the draft law on competition, which is one of the key laws from the field of economy necessary for BiH's integration into structures of the European Union. The House failed to pass the draft laws on judiciary and validity of IDs as well as the draft law on changes and addenda to the law on refugees from BiH displaced persons in BiH. The House also ratified changes to two agreements on grants between BiH and the U.S. and approved the ratification of the agreement on succession and the Agreement between BiH and Turkey on reciprocal development and protection of investments. The vote on five laws from the project of Citizens' Identity Protection System (CIPS) was postponed for two days, in order that the Council of Ministers is given time to discuss and make its stand on several amendments submitted by the delegates from the House of Peoples.

Lagumdžija briefs international officials on work of the Coordination Board for Economic Development and European Integration

According to Oslobodjenje, at a meeting held on Tuesday in Sarajevo, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Zlatko Lagumdžija informed Head of the World bank's Mission to BiH Joseph Ingram, Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays and Charge d' Affairs of the European Commission's Delegation to BiH Renzo Davidi on the work of the Coordination Board for the Economic Development and European Integration, which had been established on October 11 this year in Sarajevo. Lagumdžija presented activities currently underway in BiH in the sectors of economic transition, improvement of the investment climate, reform of public finances and social welfare. The meeting held at the Lagumdžija's initiative was also attended by BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Azra Hadžiahmetović and BiH Treasury Minister Anto Domazet.

Beecroft meets with BiH Presidency members

OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft met on Tuesday in Sarajevo with the BiH Presidency members to discuss the implementation of the election law and problems in connection to the organization of the next elections in BiH. According to Oslobodjenje, the officials also discussed the role of the OSCE in the future, reduction of the military expenditures, strengthening of the economy and the process of return, as well as the creation of the conditions for a normal life of the returnees.

SBS deploys its advance teams at Mostar and Banja Luka Airports

Oslobodjenje quoted UNMIBH Spokesman Stefo Lehmann as saying that, "as part of the ongoing efforts by State and Entity level authorities to take precautionary measures to combat the possible threat of terrorism, the BiH State Border Service has entered into agreement with the Ministries of Interior of Republika Srpska and of the

Herzegovina-Neretva Canton to deploy advance teams of State Border Service officers to the Mostar and Banja Luka Airports." He told journalist on Tuesday in Sarajevo that, on Monday, "three SBS officers were deployed to the Mostar airport and today three will be deployed to the Banja Luka airport."

Fight against Terrorism

Dnevni List: Americans requested closing of Arab humanitarian organizations in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The US Embassy in Sarajevo has sent a vigorous request to BiH authorities on Friday asking them to ban four foreign humanitarian organizations registered in Sarajevo with an immediate effect because of their link to the terrorist network "Al-Qaida", learns Dnevni List. The most famous of them all, according to American intelligence, are infamous TWRA, High Saudi Committee, Dnevni List learns from a well-informed source from the Federation Mol. Americans also included in the list, apart from these four organizations which are from the Middle East, few other organizations including Igasa and Merhamet. The paper also learns that the Americans want the BiH authorities to ban the Active Muslim Youth (AMY) organization. It was established that some senior officials of the High Saudi Committee are in the same time members of the AMY, the organization which pro-Islamic appearances often wind up on the verge of incident (...), reads Dnevni List.

Nacional: Bin Laden's moves in BiH - Al Qaeda threatens with terror on the railway line between Mostar and Ploce

Written by Zeljko Rogosic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Two Algerians, members of the radical Islamic group 'Group Islamic Arme' (GIA), who addressed telephone threats to the US and Great Britain Embassies in Sarajevo and announced attacks on the embassy buildings and officials, were arrested near Sarajevo. However, contrary to the statements from the official sources, the threatening calls made by Saber Lahmar and Mustafa al Kadir, former members of 'El Mudzahid' were not the only reason behind the closure of the two embassies in Sarajevo.

As of lately, Sarajevo and BiH have been facing an entire network of organized actions that bear out the claim that bin Laden's Al Qaeda is present in BiH and that the insecurity rate for the citizens of the USA, Great Britain and other Western countries, as well as SFOR members in BiH, has risen drastically, says Nacional.

The threatening calls were preceded by six armed incidents that occurred in a wider area of Sarajevo and Central Bosnia in which SFOR members were shot at from automatic weapons.

The weekly says while the UN Mission in Sarajevo openly pointed to the actions that the Active Islamic Youth is undertaking all over BiH as a sign of support to the Taliban in Afghanistan and bin Laden, the Croat Member of the BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic, received two threatening letters. One of the letters, signed by an Al Qaeda branch and mailed in Berlin, is especially intriguing. The letter says that the trains and the railway between Sarajevo and Ploce will soon become subject to terrorist attacks. If trains keep going to Croatia, Mostar will be in flames, reads the letter, threatening with new explosions and terrorist attacks. Mostar and Ploce may be potential targets, as well as a few SFOR bases stationed along the railway. State security services in BiH realized that these threats were not necessarily nadve. Around 50 kilometers north of Mostar, there used to be a railway station Diva Grabovica, which, meanwhile, has been turned into a sawmill that now employs an unknown number of former 'El Mudzahid' members. Diva Grabovica could be an ideal place for intercepting trains traveling from Sarajevo to Ploce and for planting explosive devices into those trains to be activated later on their way through Mostar, Capljina and other

areas farther to the south. Because the security situation deteriorated and due to the threatening letters, Jozo Krizanovic postponed his visit to Algeria, says Nacional.

The weekly reads that a connection between mujahedeens and the Active Islamic Youth was established in the past years during investigations into the explosions and the murders of nine returnees and Croat police officers in Central Bosnia. A number of Active Islamic Youth members were among the mujahedeens detained, whom the Cantonal Court in Travnik later released for "insufficient evidence." The best known of them is Muris Ljubuncic, an editor of the "Saff," a paper established by the Active Islamic Youth.

It is all happening now that the Federation of BiH has been left without the Minister of the Interior. Muhamed Besic, all of a sudden, resigned. That was a result of his lasting conflicts with the Minister's Assistant for Crime Service, Faik Lusija, who, in fact, is the most powerful person in the Federation Ministry of the Interior. A while ago, Besic signed a decision relieving Lusija of his duty for overstepping his authorities and for abuses and problematic running of the investigation in the case of the assassination of the late Deputy Minister of the Interior, Jozo Leutar. Lusija did not fail to answer back. A few scandals discrediting Besic leaked to the public and made him resign, says Nacional.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Ejup Ganic got an Algerian terrorist and criminal out of the prison!

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Saber Lahmar was sentenced to 5 years and eight months imprisonment because of robbery, however, Ejup Ganic granted him with an amnesty three years later. Stefo Lehmann, a UN Spokesperson, confirmed on Tuesday that all six arrested persons are Algerian citizens, however, some of them have a BiH citizenship. He said: ' All of them have been detained for 30 days, and the Supreme Court of the BiH Federation is conducting an investigation against them.' Tomislav Limov, a Deputy Minister of Interior, who has been performing the duty of the Minister of Interior since Muhamed Besic resigned, stated that original Bosniaks are also among the persons suspected of being related with terrorist actions, however, he stressed that their number is small.

Vecernji List: BiH establishes prevention headquarters due to fear of biological terrorism

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The Coordination for Defense from Terrorism established a special expert headquarters that is in charge of undertaking preventive measures against a possible use of biochemical weapons. The headquarters has already had an emergency meeting and established a plan of activities.

A source from the Coordination for Defense from Terrorism told Vecernji List that the international services involved in the work of this body, established that BiH does not have a single plant where such weapons could be produced. There was a similar factory in Potoci near Mostar, but the former JNA disassembled it, said this source.

Federation

Approximately 250 citizens blocked Zepce Police Station in protest against the attempt to arrest two Zepce Group members

All media report that approximately 250 citizens blocked Zepce Police Station protesting the Tuesday morning attempt to arrest two out of 14 Zepce Croats accused of war crimes committed in the area during the war. The order for arrest of perica Jukic and Ivo Lozancic was issued by the Zenica Cantonal Court since not a single Zepce Group member had appeared before the Court for a hearing. In regard of the event, NHI issued a press release in which it reiterated that the proceedings against the Zepce Croats should be transferred to some other court in the Federation because of a mono-ethnic (Bosniak) character of the Zenica Cantonal Court. On the other side, the HDZ BiH, in its press release, described the proceedings as an attempt of the Zenica-Doboj cantonal and BiH Federation authorities to, in an institutional way, collectively indicted Zepce Croats war alleged war crimes.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Zenica-Doboj Canton Minister of Interior says in regard of Zepce protests that his Ministry will fully perform its duties

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

By the blockade of the streets in Zepce, a group of the Croats from this city expressed their dissatisfaction over the announcement that 15 Croats from Zepce, suspected of committing war crimes during the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks, will be arrested. Minister Saranovic claims that most of the Croats from Zepce did not approve this incident as well. He stressed that the Cantonal Mol will certainly carry out its duty and bring suspected Croats from Zepce before the Cantonal Court in Zenica. Mugdim Herceg, the Governor of the Zenica-Doboj Canton, responding to the request of the Coordination Board for the Protection of the Croats from this area, that called on the Croats to stop performing their duties at all Authority levels and to resort to civil disobedience stated, among the other things, that Ivica Ramljak is the President of the Zepce Interim Council at the moment, and he has to advocate the implementation of the High Representative's decisions, and he should not not join those who are obstructing such decisions.

Both BiH Federation Parliament Houses to hold special session on Wednesday in Sarajevo and discuss draft law on BiH Federation TV

Oslobodjenje reports that both Houses of the BiH Federation Parliament are expected to hold a special session in Sarajevo on Wednesday and, among other things, discuss the draft law on the BiH Federation TV in the version as it was imposed by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch yet in 1999.

A round table on the constitutional reforms takes place in Sarajevo

A round table discussion on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory took place on Tuesday in Sarajevo. The event, organized by the BiH Federation House of Peoples, was attended by the domestic and international legal experts and politicians. According to Oslobodjenje, majority of the participants emphasized that the protection of the vital national interests in BiH could be achieved only through the institution of the Houses of Peoples.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Federation Minister of Defense Mijo Anic denied claims of the Brcko Deputy Mayor

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Namely, it is correct that I told Ivan Krndelj in Brcko that he is scum of the former Yugoslavian Secret Service, provoked by his constant and well-known methods of accusations and dirty imputations directed against me, which were especially observable in the period from 1999 up to now. I have never in any occasion, including Brcko on Saturday, stated so insulting thought about Croats from Herzegovina. As an NHI Vice President I believe that Ivan Krndelj is the most responsible for an endangered position of the Croats in the Brcko District and I do not see anything non-democratic in the way that he was removed and his removal has nothing to do with his origin.

Dnevni List: Mayor Tomic to resign?

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic could leave his post soon, learns ONASA agency from a source close to the City Administration, reads Dnevni List. The source says that Tomic is pondering about the move because of the lack of support from the OHR to him as the Mayor and his projects on unification of the City. His office did not want to deny or confirm the information.

Oslobodjenje: Robbery of Mostar Hotel Ero in sight

The Steering Board of the Sarajevo Social Fund of the Pension-Disability Insurance rejected to pay a deposit-guarantee of 2,5 million KM for postponing of the executing procedure of the sale of the Mostar Hotel Ero. The guarantee in this amount was set by the authorized Municipal Court in Mostar with the payment deadline expiring on Wednesday at noon. If the Fund fails to pay the amount by the deadline, the Court will not make the decision to delay procedure of the Hotel's sale, which, according to the newspaper, might mean a final robbery of the some one else's property. Oslobodjenje reiterates that the Hotel was by 1998 registered as the property of the pre-war Sarajevo-based Working Organization for the Standard of Pensioners, whose legal successor was the current Sarajevo Pension Fund. However, in 1998, the Hotel was pre-registered in favor of the pension Fund of the Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna. Since the Herceg-Bosna was not officially recognized, in 1999, the Hotel was registered as the property of the Mostar-based Pension Fund (MIO Mostar). The MIO Mostar then put the Hotel under the mortgage as a guarantee for the 3.4 million KM loan provided by the TUH-INVEST Company. Since the loan was not paid back, the executing procedure was started for the sale of the Hotel. The Sarajevo Pension Fund then launched a legal procedure before the authorized court in Mostar to challenge the ownership over the Hotel. Together with the decision not to pay guarantees for delaying of this procedure, the Fund's Steering Board decided to resume with the proceeding before the Mostar Court.

Slobodna Dalmacija and Dnevni List: Interviews with Mijo Brajkovic, the General Manager of Aluminij

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Conducted by Miroslav Landeka

'Everything I know about the account blockade is what we have learnt from the press. We do not have any information. However, I know that the accounts of the companies, which do not meet their obligations and which do not operate in a correct way are being closed. This cannot be ascribed to Aluminij. It is an instrument of

pressure that will not bring any results because by closing of the account you will not close the account of Aluminij but the accounts of 30 000 people who live on Aluminij. It can be very dangerous and it is truly a destructive move. (...) We have allowed the OHR arbitrators to make an audit. They have shown that Aluminij is right. However, the report obviously did not suit the Federation Authorities, and for this reason they send an inspection and Police, which come with already ordered result that something is wrong in Aluminij. These are the things that Aluminij cannot tolerate. (...) We should be also aware that the Financial Police cannot control the structure of the capital. It is nonsense.

Why was the OHR audit, whose final report has not been made yet, left aside?

We shall not allow that the OHR audit is pushed aside. (...) We are satisfied with that report, although we have sent some objections. (...) If we push that report aside then we shall make a negative failure for the whole Aluminij factory.

Why do exactly those structures, that were supporting a concept 'if we do not reach an agreement let the International Community to make a conclusion' do not recognize conclusions of the IC representatives?

The fact is that they need the IC only when it suits them. I am sure that the IC has strength and correctness to protect something that these people live on. If the IC does not support those who develop the BiH economy then BiH does not have any perspective. (...) These are great political games.

Perhaps Aluminij has become an issue because it is a successful company?

You are right. Aluminij is becoming the issue because it is successful. (...)

It has been openly speculated lately that the Party for BiH is exerting the greatest pressure against the BiH Federation because of the commissions that some people from this party should receive if the Arab capital enters Aluminij. Do you have any information about this?

I have heard it quite often, however, I do not have any information. The fact is that these people are persisting in an idea to do something with Aluminij. Probably, something was promised to them. I feel sorry for the former Aluminij workers, who are living in Mostar East and who were involved in political games and became instruments in the hands of politicians, who need them for the elections. (...) We have already put in function ten new electrolytic cells. (...) Why have not we split Aluminij in pieces, sold it and bought it off for certificates? If we had done it, perhaps they would have appreciated us more.

Very often you are being objected because, allegedly, there is a mono-ethnic composition of Aluminij workers?

It is the greatest nonsense. The workers of all nationalities work in Aluminij. Before the war, there used to be a rule that a Serb, Muslim and Croat have to be members of a Steering Board. It was the greatest nonsense at that time because the most important thing is whether you know how to work or not. However, the war was on, and we have the same situation in the whole BiH. (...)

Dnevni List also carries an interview with Mijo Brajkovic. These are excerpts from this interview, which were not covered in the one published in Slobodna Dalmacija. The interview was conducted by Milan Sutalo:

Political scientists say that the political domination over one people cannot be achieved and that it is nil if the economic domination has not been achieved, if someone does not rule the economic resources. Is not it a case here? Has the visit of Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Alliance leader, paid to Germany been motivated by this reason?

(...) None of these caretakers was interested in Aluminij in 1994 and 1995. Now, someone would like to get Aluminij. I do not know who it is. (...) I cannot accuse the Prime Minister because he is also exposed to certain pressures. I believe that there are certain speculators in a background and their players who are being exposed and who serve their interests.

However, behavior of representatives of the Croat people is strange to me. I am grateful to them because they are praising me, however, that attitude should be concretized through certain decisions and they should agree stands with a Bosniak side. However, if they have decided to attack Aluminij and for this reason they go to Germany to visit our partners they are wrong if they believe that we do not have strong relations with them because we have brought them here and not them. (...) It is wrong to think: 'We shall seize Aluminij now'. I am sending a message to

them: 'You will seize the company but you do not know how to run it! They have many companies from Zenica, Tuzla to Mostar East, where the companies that have 6000 workers are being sold for 1 Mark. (...)I do not know what will happen if someone tries to do something illegal here. I am not threatening anyone, however, I want that we abide by Law and abandon petty politics. Politics should stay away from successful companies. Politicians should pass laws that will make possible a better functioning of successful companies and this way guarantee welfare of all peoples on this territory.

Behmen and Lagumdžija were talking with Glencore representatives last night. Do you know as to what the representatives of this company will demand from these two leaders?

They have invested a lot of money in this company. If it is being mentioned all the time that Aluminij will be blocked, it is clear that they will be protecting their interests and their capital. They are interested to know what is the purpose of a new Steering Board. They are interested in the future of their further investments and you cannot do as you please with these people, because a lot of money and a big company, that you cannot play with, are in question.

Why are not you a member of a new HDZ BiH leadership?

Well, you have to understand that I am an elderly person, tired and with many commitments. (...) The truth is that quite often I did not agree with the HDZ with regard to many issues and I was talking about it openly. I have my opinion and it should be respected because I have deep roots. I want to tell you that I cannot run Aluminij and sit six or seven hours at the party meetings. (...) I have not, as some others did, created an empire for myself that I have to defend by political instruments, but we were helping the University, theater... (...)

Vecernji List: War for Aluminij goes on

Written by Zoran Kresic (Partial translation provided by OHR Mostar)

The meeting between the BiH Foreign Minister and Chair of the BiH Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, and the Daimler Chrysler managers during his visit to Germany, did not go in a much too cordial atmosphere, says Vecernji List.

They discussed Daimler's plans of investing in Aluminij Mostar and the Federation Government's schemes in relation to the most successful export company in BiH.

Well informed sources claim Lagumdžija encountered objections and was told that the German-American partner of Aluminij's does not consider the attempts of closing Aluminij down by force and freezing of its accounts to be well-intended.

That would certainly not be taken with a positive attitude in our company, and the messages that have come through so far, are disappointing, claims a source whose company is a part of the concern Daimler Chrysler, whose turnover is larger than that of the Southeast Europe altogether. According to him, the authorities and Aluminij will reach an agreement soon. However, he did not want to disclose what sort of agreement this would be.

The Monday meeting between the representatives of the Swiss Glencore AG and the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen and his governor for Aluminij, Hasan Becirevic, the Minister for Energy, Mining and Industry, could not be called cordial, either.

Leaders of the Glencore, which is Aluminij's supplier of hydrated alumina, were disappointed about the meeting with the Federation officials because Behmen and Becirevic announced to be persistent in exploring facts about the company.

Vecernji List claims to have found out that the Swiss, on Monday afternoon, met with the High Representative who made them cheer up a bit. (...)

Alija Behmen's persistence in dealing with Aluminij suggests a few conclusions. It seems that the entire Federation Government has become a hostage of the policy of the pro-Bosniak Party for BiH that Prime Minister Behmen and

Minister Becirovic have been conducting, as instructed by Haris Silajdzic (who has been in Turkey for some time) and Safet Orucevic, thus terrorizing both Aluminij and Croats that live off the company. The scenario is simple, Aluminij should be taken away from its real, legal owners and given over to the Arabian capital, the Kuwaiti KIA, which owns the successful BH Steel in Zenica where around 3,000 employees are waiting to be either sacked or placed on the waiting list.

Aluminij's greatest asset at this time are the internationals who seem to be determined to show that they will not that easily give up on either their Mostar partner or the new project that envisages a new electrolysis plant. There will certainly be more talk about it tomorrow when representatives of Daimler Chrysler, Glencore, Venco, VaW and other reputable companies are coming to Mostar.

Republika Srpska

Ivanic says property laws must not be politicized

Oslobodjenje quoted Republika Srpska Prime Minister as saying on Tuesday that the harmonization of property laws in the both BiH entities was one of the crucial pre-conditions for the resolution of the problems of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. However, Ivanic, who took part in the work of a two-day conference in Teslic on the position of the refugees and displaced persons and the implementation of property laws. Emphasized that the issue had not to be politicized.

RS political leadership meets with the top RS Army's officials

"The Republika Srpska will join European integration with its own Army and Defense Ministry. Any kind of joint army within BiH is out of question since such thing has no grounds in the Dayton Peace Agreement," said RS President Mirko Sarovic after meeting with RS Army's Chef of Staff General Novica Simic. The meeting, at which transformation of the RS Army to year 2005 and financial status of the Army were discussed, was also attended by the RS prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, and Defense Minister Slobodan Bilic.

Delegation of the RS National Assembly visits FRY

Both Banja Luka dailies report on the visit of Republika Srpska National Assembly's Delegation, lead by the Speaker Dragan Kalinic, to FRY, during which it met with FRY Council of Citizens delegation, led by the President Dragoljub Micunovic, the delegation of the Council of Republics, led by the President Srdja Bozovic, and with President of the Federal Government, Dragisa Pesic. FRY Prime Minister Dragisa Pesic stated that stabile political situation in FRY and the region was one of pre-conditions for good economic relations between the RS, BiH and FRY as well as with other neighboring countries and EU member states.

RS President Mirko Sarovic comments on Kostajnica border issue

Glas Srpski, on the cover page, carries a statement of the Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic in which he comments on the situation related to border dispute between the RS and Republic of Croatia in Kostajnica/Srpska Kostajnica. "Current status of a part of territory surrounding Kostajnica, which still represents an inter-state dispute between the RS and Republic of Croatia, should remain as such all until this issue is finally resolved at the BiH Parliamentary Assembly's session", said Sarovic and concluded that representatives of the RS institutions should remain in Kostajnica all until then.

RS and BiH Federation Finance Ministers met in Pale

Glas Srpski reports that the Republika Srpska and the BiH Federation Finance Ministers, Milenko Vracar and Nikola Grabovac, met in Pale, near Sarajevo, on Tuesday to discuss ways of tax collection. The daily reports that the two did not agree on the place where the taxes should be collected: either in place where goods are imported or in the place of their sale. This issue will be resolved by a special commission to comprise BiH Council of Ministers Chair Zlatko Lagumdžija, entity's Prime Ministers, Ivanic and Behmen, as well as both Finance Ministers. After the meeting Vracar stated that basic conditions for extension of stand-by arrangement with the International Monetary Fund were agreed at the meeting, the daily carries.

International Community

OHR says HRT 1 broadcasting to be canceled on Saturday

According to Oslobođenje and ONASA, broadcasting of the first channel of Croatian Radio Television (HRT) in BiH will be canceled on Saturday when the Federation Television (FTV) should start its broadcasting, OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer said on Tuesday. She referred at a press conference in Sarajevo on an earlier agreement on canceling the HRT broadcast after FTV starts its program. "When ERONET was canceled, an agreement was made that HRT will continue its program until FTV starts work. This was scheduled for Saturday and there will be no HRT1 except in some regions because, its technical complications, the exchange of programs will take some time. But it is for sure that HRT1 will disappear. Last year, we asked CRA to allow HRT1 broadcasting although it broadcast illegally in Bosnia and Herzegovina as at that time Federal TV was not ready. We did everything in cooperation with the Croatian authorities and there are no political problems about it," Stiglmayer said.

Vecernji List: After the OHR confirmed shutting of the HRT signal in BiH

Written by Zdenko Jurilj

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List quotes the OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer as saying that the HTV signal will be completely shut down across BiH as of Saturday, 27 October.

The news about cancellation of the HTV signal had the most dramatic echo among the Croat population in BiH who have been watching that program for years, says Vecernji List. Although the number of reports from BiH has been reduced in the HTV news broadcasts, Croats saw the most recent TV transformation as yet another form of political pressure. Shutting of the HTV signal is the most disappointing for Croats in Herzegovina, who, according to the announcements, will be left without the three HRT programs as of Saturday.

Vecernji List tried to get an answer to this question from Kresimir Macan, the HTV Spokeperson, but received no reply by the conclusion of the text. It is unknown what the HTV management is going to do when it comes to the "spillover" of their signal to the border areas of BiH. According to an unofficial option, the HRT transmitters on the mountain of Biokovo will be directed to the Adriatic islands. OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer thinks that the HRT signal will have to spill over to the border areas between BiH and Croatia to an extent, says Vecernji List.

Petritsch meets with FIPA Director and visits Visoko-based Prevent Company

High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch on Tuesday visited the offices of the BiH Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA), where he discussed the current investment climate with the agency's Director Mirza Hajric, according to a press release from the OHR. Petritsch and Hajric traveled on to Visoko where they visited the premises of Prevent Sarajevo Ltd. (All electronic and print media covered the events prominently)

PLIP Agencies emphasize need for checks on revalidation of apartments use contracts

The agencies engaged in Property Legislation Implementation (PLIP) have emphasized the need for checks on revalidation of contracts of use of apartments by temporary users throughout BiH, estimating that there are thousands of cases of illegal revalidation and that unclaimed apartments are illegally privatized. OSCE Mission Head to BiH Spokesperson Urdur Gunnarsdottir said at a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday that competent authorities have failed to apply the criteria for allocation of housing space set out in the High Representative's October 1999 amendments, and that it is vital that Public Defenders review the process to ensure the protection of public interests. (All media report on the issue, Dnevni Avaz on its front page) Commenting on the results in the property law implementation, Alexandra Stiglmeier, the Head of the OHR Press Office, said that, over the last several months, "property law implementation has stalled at roughly less than 2 percentage points increase in implementation per month." She added that, "for example, from January until September of this year, the overall implementation rate rose only from 21% to 32% in Bosnia and Herzegovina (29% to 42% in the Federation and 13% to 22% in the Republika Srpska)." Stiglmeier emphasized that, "at this rate, the full implementation of the property laws would take at least another five years, which is nearly ten years after Dayton." She concluded that "the new amendments will further restrict the right to alternative accommodation and tighten a few other provisions, which will contribute to a faster implementation of the property laws."

Three Bosnian Croats freed in UN war crimes appeal

All media report that three Bosnian Croats convicted by The Hague war crimes tribunal of taking part in an ethnic purge in a central Bosnian village more than eight years ago had their sentences quashed by a UN appeals court on Tuesday. Zoran, Mirjan and Vlatko Kupreskic were found not guilty of crimes against humanity for the killings of more than 100 Bosniaks by five judges in the UN tribunal's appeals chamber, and were to be released immediately from detention in The Hague. All the men had been convicted for crimes related to the April 16, 1993 massacre of more than 100 Bosniak civilians in the village of Ahmici, which marked the start of the Croat-Bosniak war in Bosnia.

OHR dissatisfied with decision of Bijeljina authorities not to allow reconstruction of five mosques

Both Banja Luka dailies report on a press conference of the international organizations in Banja Luka held on Tuesday, at which OHR's Spokesperson Sonja Pastuovic stated that the OHR was not satisfied with the decision of the Bijeljina authorities and the Republika Srpska Urban Planning Ministry not to issue a permit for reconstruction of five mosques in Bijeljina. Pastuovic added that the decision of Human Right Chamber according to which these mosques are to be reconstructed was final and binding.

Austrian Government appoints Wolfgang Petritsch to the position of Austrian Ambassador at the UN in Geneva

Nezavisne Novine reports on a decision of Austrian Government to appoint 19 new Ambassadors, which includes the appointment of Wolfgang Petritsch to the post of the country's Ambassador at the UN in Geneva. The daily adds that the High Representative would take over his new post only after expiration of his mandate in BiH in August next year.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Emir Habul wrote about the Monday's evening public discussion on the issue of coexistence in the Stolac-like communities, which took place in the popular HRT 1 program titled Latinica. Emphasizing that a scale of various opinions could be heard in the show, Habul concludes that the key issue here is whether the state will ensure legal protection without any ethnic discrimination to all of its citizens regardless of whether they are Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs. Slavo Kukic wrote in the Oslobodjenje Personal Opinion editorial that no one could any more say that the world of politics is not unpredictable also in BiH referring to certain statements recently made by BiH politicians, which had not been even imaginable before. In this way, according to Kukic, the SDP Vice-president warns public that there are silent disagreements inside the party leadership, as Ante Jelavic publicly admits that the self-rule project failed. In the Avaz Commentary of the Day, Indira Catic wrote that the Bijeljina municipal authorities would face sanctions if they do not approve rebuilding of the five mosques in the town. However, Catic wonders whether the Republika Srpska and Bijeljina bodies' rejection to give the necessary approvals might mean that they are not at all for the option of the return of Bosniaks and reconstruction of their religious facilities. However, Catic concludes, that, fortunately, this time they are requested to give the approvals no matter whether they agree with that. The only question is how long will it take until they fulfill the request?