

BiH Media Round-up, 17/10/2001

BiH State-related Issues

1. High Representative meets with Presidency members, discusses CIPS project
2. Party for BiH says Constitutional Commissions are at a standstill, while OHR argues that the process is continuing
3. Council of Ministers: No sound evidence that BiH citizens are involved in terrorist organizations
4. Human Rights Chamber: We don't have a mandate to penalize local bodies of authority
5. Fra Petar Andjelovic about the first session of the Civic Forum – We told Petritsch the truth in his face

Federation

1. Federation government accepts draft Law on Federation TV
2. Party for BiH agrees on the new candidate for the Federation Minister of Interior
3. Single Pension Fund in the Federation starting January 1?
4. HDZ: Bosnian nation leads to division of BiH
5. Jozo Krizanovic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency – Let each party defend its own – but in the Parliament!
6. Dnevni List reveals: A bomb detected at Sarajevo Airport

Republika Srpska

1. Corruption Investigation in the RS
2. RS President Mirko Sarovic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic met with Ambassador of Republic of Croatia to BiH
3. RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic Said the RS National Assembly Majority Will Stay to the Next Elections

4. Reactions to CRA's Decision

International Community

1. US, British embassies close in BiH due to "credible threat"
2. Wolfgang Petritsch expresses concern about Bicakcic's position in the SDA leadership
3. Wolfgang Petritsch will not replace Bodo Hombach as Coordinator of the Stability Pact
4. Dnevni Avaz Person of the Day: Wolfgang Petritsch – the authority confirmed!
5. High Representative commends Federation Ministry for Returns on RS Initiative

Editorial

1. Slobodna Dalmacija: Sarajevo has more Arabs than Croats, but Croats have got great newly instated cadres

BiH State-related Issues

High Representative meets with Presidency members, discusses CIPS project

High Representative to BiH Wolfgang Petritsch and the BiH Presidency members agreed on Wednesday to hold regular monthly meetings, similar to the Partnership Forum which has been established for a better discussion between the BiH Council of Ministers and the International Community in BiH. Petritsch told reporters after the meeting that he discussed with Presidency Chairman Jozo Krizanovic and members Beriz Belkic and Zivko Radisic actual political and economic issues in BiH.

Participants also addressed the implementation of a set of popularly known CIPS (Citizens' Identity Protection System) laws. "I have asked for support of the BiH Presidency in the implementation of the CIPS project, because I think the project is a central issues of security in BiH. The project's implementation is a central issue of the fight against terrorism in BiH, and inside the global world fight," the High Representative said.

He informed the Presidency members that he is concerned about the establishment of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) of BiH. "The service must clearly be different from the former system of the BiH public television and no kind of state control should be here," Petritsch stressed. He added that he will inform the political directors of

the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board on the

slow progress in the implementation of the Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of all peoples in the country. "At the next meeting of the Steering Board political directors I will stress that the process is slow and that our re-engagement in the matter should be considered," he said, adding the decision's implementation is a responsibility of local institutions in BiH. "The implementation of elections next year will also be fully an obligation of local authorities."

Party for BiH says Constitutional Commissions are at a standstill, while OHR argues that the process is continuing

Dnevni Avaz quotes the vice president of the Federation and a senior official of the Party for BiH, Safet Halilovic, as saying that the Entity Constitutional Commissions are at a standstill. "The public should be informed about the state of the implementation of this serious business of constitutional reform, and the OHR is silent," said Halilovic. He stressed that the S BiH will insist upon symmetric solutions to constitutional reform in both entities. OHR spokesperson Patrik Volf said, however, that the process is taking place. "The constitutional reform is of key importance and it requires adequate consultations process. Now, it is up to members of both commissions to resume with the process," said Volf.

Council of Ministers: No sound evidence that BiH citizens are involved in terrorist organizations

Deputy BiH Foreign Minister and the head of the Task Force against terrorism, Ivica Misic, said at yesterday's press conference that there is no evidence that any citizen of BiH has ever had an active role in any terrorist organization. He also said that the Council of Ministers is encouraged by the series of positive statements of international officials, including the High Representative, the SFOR commander and the Ambassador of Denmark, all of whom stressed that Mujahedeen in BiH are not a threat to security of the state and that the state itself is not threat to the world. Misic also said that the Task Force has intensified measures for the fight against terrorism.

Human Rights Chamber: We don't have a mandate to penalize local bodies of authority

Therese Nelson, an executive officer of the BiH Human Rights Chamber, told Oslobođenje that the Chamber does not have the executive power, that is, a mandate to enforce the compliance of entity authorities with Chamber decisions. Commenting on famous "Palic case" and "Matanovic case", Nelson said that all responsibility for those cases now rests with RS authorities. She also said that the Chamber can "only follow the implementation of its decisions," adding also that the rate of compliance with decisions in the RS is unacceptable. Nelson noted that the OHR and the OSCE have been informed about all the rulings of the Human Rights Chamber, and noted that both organizations, together with the UN mission to BiH, have been exerting pressure on the local authorities in order to encourage them to comply with Chamber decisions. Oslobođenje asks at the end if the time came that the Council of Ministers take some concrete steps in order to resolve outstanding issues.

Meanwhile, members of the Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic and Beriz Belkic, confirmed that they would address the RS government on this issue even if Zivko Radisic refuses to do so.

Fra Petar Andjelovic about the first session of the Civic Forum -

We told the truth to Petritsch's face

Having organized the Partnership Forum with the current authority representatives, the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch also initiated the Civic Forum and invited prominent individuals of the civil society in BiH to its first session, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Fra Petar Andjelovic, a former Provincial of the Franciscan Province Bosna Srebrena, who participated in the first session of the Forum, told Slobodna Dalmacija that "the point of the Civic Forum is to start public discussions on relevant issues in BiH so that the civil society can speak out their proposals and suggestions related to our future.

In their efforts to find solutions for BiH, the people who come from abroad, are looking for different interlocutors here because in many cases they do not find persons of the state authorities to be proper interlocutors. Therefore, the High Representative wanted to talk to the people of the citizenry, people who are not directly involved in politics and those who neither hold elected offices nor are members of non-governmental organizations.

This time he wanted to hear opinions of the people who observe the developments in BiH, who do care about the state and all the peoples in it and have different national and professional backgrounds," stated Fra Petar Andjelovic.

He said problems in BiH are many, such as a functioning state of law, relationships between the peoples, relations with the neighboring countries, functioning authorities and the media.

"We are all very much preoccupied with these problems, and every person, every intellectual above all, must analyze them seriously and face the truth. That was the course of our discussion at the session with the High Representative.

Every one of us there spoke from his/her own point of view, sincerely and openly, without any intention to be liked or to be installed to a post in the authorities.

As free intellectuals, we only wanted to analyze the problems and come up with the best and most acceptable solutions to those problems," said Fra Petar Andjelovic.

In answer to the question about his own speech and his own suggestions to the High Representative, he said most of his speech was about the media: "Just like the media could, in a way, be held partly responsible for the war and all that the war has brought about, they might as well play a positive and significant role and help us all articulate the realistic problems.

The media should not propagate hatred, they should not obfuscate the truth and views, but instead, they should reveal the actual state of affairs as much as possible and stand for what is good and positive, and that is peace, reconciliation and diligence."

Federation

Federation government accepts draft Law on Federation TV

At Tuesday's session, the Federation government accepted the Draft Law on the Federation Television and sent it further into the Parliamentary procedure. The Draft Law was accepted with a conclusion that the process of transformation of media in both Federation and BiH ought to be entrusted to relevant entity and state institutions. "Because of political relations in the previous years, the issue of transformation of electronic media was transferred from the Parliament to the OHR, however, after the victory of the Alliance, this issue needs to be returned to responsible institutions of legislative and executive authority," said Dubravko Lovrenovic, the deputy minister of sport and culture in the Federation government. He added that the government will also insist that the

transformation of the RTV BiH is put on the agenda of the BiH Council of Ministers.

Asked if this means that the “controversial broadcasting agent of the High Representative, John Shearer, could finally pack his bags and leave,” Lovrenovic said he could not answer on such delicate questions. He stressed, however, that the Federation government considers the decision of the Federation TV Council not to elect Haris Pasovic as the director of the future Fed TV as a big failure.

The Federation government will also ask the Entity Parliament, which has scheduled a session for October 24, to form a working group of experts for electronic media which would as a partner to the OHR directly participate in the transformation process.

All Federation media reported on the conclusions of the Federation government session; only Oslobodjenje carried it as a front page story.

Party for BiH agrees on the new candidate for the Federation Minister of Interior

Late last night, the leadership of the Party for BiH (S BiH) agreed on its new candidate for the post of the Federation Minister of Interior. Beriz Belkic told Oslobodjenje that the candidate has been selected from political, rather than police ranks. Unofficially, media speculate that the party has two potential candidates: Vedran Hadzovic, member of the BiH Parliament, and Ramiz Mehmedagic, the Federation Minister of Urban Planning and Environment. Another potential candidate could be Jusuf Halilagic, a deputy minister of civil affairs and communications in the Council of Ministers, while Dnevni Avaz also mentions the name of Fadil Jaganjac. Oslobodjenje reports that neither of the former three would accept their nomination.

Single Pension Fund in the Federation starting January 1?

At Tuesday's meeting, the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and his Finance Minister, Nikola Grabovac, and the head of the World Bank mission in BiH, Joseph Ingram, discussed the integration of the two existing pension funds (PIO) in the Federation. The three concluded that the new director, vice director, and the Board of Directors of the future single Federation PIO Fund could be named within a few days, and the date for the final integration of the two funds was set for January 1, 2002.

HDZ: Bosnian nation leads to division of BiH

HDZ Vice President Ivo Andric Luzanski held a press conference in Tuzla on Tuesday, on which occasion he said: “HDZ BiH will not accept the creation of a fourth nation (Bosnians) in BiH, which is a plan initiated by the SDA, because it would tear BiH apart and make the status of Croats, as the fewest of the peoples, even worse than it is now. Therefore, the HDZ has already forwarded its proposal of the Law on National Minorities to the parliamentary procedure.”

In Luzanski's words, BiH must remain a community of three peoples and he believes that over 90% of Croats will keep standing by this view.

Commenting on the position of the HDZ BiH in the wake of the party's Congress, Luzanski said all relevant factors, including the International Community personified in the High Representative, must accept and recognize the will of the Croat people who gave their confidence to the HDZ.

“We are aware of the fact that we are strapped for time, but I hope the International Community will have understanding. All that is left for them to do is either accept or ban the HDZ,” said Luzanski.

Ivica Marinovic, a member of the HDZ Presidency, said: “Petritsch will achieve nothing. He will leave BiH in six

months, and the HDZ will persevere until then.”

In answer to the question of whether the HDZ will return to the Parliament, Luzanski said there is a possibility of returning to the Federation House of Representatives, but he is personally against returning to the House of Peoples because delegates in that House were elected in an unconstitutional manner.

Marinovic added that Petritsch and Lagumdžija will have to leave the HDZ out of their job of disintegrating BiH (which, in his opinion, is what is happening in the Federation Parliament).

Both Luzanski and Marinovic said that the HDZ BiH has become even stronger after the Congress and that the processes of internal dissolution (departures of Zubak, Prlic, Tomic...) and the pressures from the outside (Hercegovačka Banka, trials against party officials, Aluminij...) have proved ineffective, to the regret of their opponents, reports Dnevni List.

Jozo Krizanovic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency - Let each party defend its own - but in the Parliament!

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an interview with Jozo Krizanovic, an SDP member who, the daily says, was appointed as the Croat Member of the BiH Presidency after the High Representative removed Ante Jelavic from the post.

Krizanovic first speaks of terrorism and says BiH recognized the threat on time and reacted swiftly and responsibly.

Asked to comment on the results of the most recent talks with a delegation of the NATO pertaining to the admission of BiH to the Partnership for Peace, Krizanovic said the basic point would be that the NATO, like all other international organizations and associations, only establishes relations with sovereign countries.

In answer to the question as to whether the two chief political groups of Croats in BiH could reach a unanimous stand on the crucial issues in BiH, Krizanovic said he can only reiterate that the issue of the status of Croats can only be defined by Constitution and by a continuous and responsible political activity of Croats in the institutions of the system.

“If we are talking about changing the Constitution by amendments, which emanated from the Constitutional Court Decision on the constituency of peoples, then I can certainly express my positive opinion of the views of some political parties that have already been made public in the written form, which, I think, is the right thing to do in what is already an open public discussion before the matter is discussed at the Federation Parliament. (...) I will reiterate that every party, within their programs and political platforms, can present, defend and substantiate their views, but the important thing is that we are parliamentary enough to make sure that the proper solutions are produced at the proper place, i.e. the Parliament, which is the only place for such co-ordination.”

Krizanovic agrees with the idea of keeping the institution of House of Peoples: “Having in mind such a political orientation of Croats from different political parties, I do not see how the House of Peoples could be abolished as Croats in general evidently take it as the only constitutional institution that provides guarantees of vital national interests.”

Speaking of Aluminij, Krizanovic said the company would be respectable and important even to the economies that are much stronger than the BiH economy and he cannot see who would be interested in campaigning for its decline, “or, as suggested, for a deliberate destruction of the economic grounds of the Croat people in BiH as an introduction into a total disappearance of that people in BiH.”

Krizanovic said the State of BiH and the Federation of BiH must ensure all prerequisites for further unobstructed work as well as strengthening of Aluminij.

Dnevni List reveals: A bomb detected at Sarajevo Airport

Dnevni List reports that an explosive device was detected and later defused by the Ordnance Department of the Federation Ministry of Interior at Butmir Airport in Sarajevo yesterday. A well informed source close to the Ministry did not want to go into details of the incident, but it is interesting, says Dnevni List, that the Ministry or its highest official at this time, Deputy Minister Tomislav Limov, has not yet issued a press release about the incident.

Republika Srpska

Corruption Investigation in the RS

Both Banja Luka dailies carry stories on corruption investigation in the RS. Control bodies, who work on the prevention of corruption in the RS are investigating report of the Supreme Auditor on potential misuse and basic corruption in the RS National Assembly, the Government, RS Ministries of Defense, Justice, Interior and Sports, as confirmed by Stjepan Cemazar, the Head of RS Interior Ministry's Anti-fraud department. According to him, out of 31 cases they are currently working on 6 and results of this investigation are expected next week.

RS President Mirko Sarovic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic met with Ambassador of Republic of Croatia to BiH

Glas Srpski and Nezavisne Novine report on the meeting of the RS President and Prime Minister Mirko Sarovic and Mladen Ivanic with Ambassador of Republic of Croatia in BiH Josip Vrbosic, which was held in Banja Luka yesterday.

After the meeting Vrbosic said that opening of border crossing Srbac-Davor was discussed. He also said, answering journalist questions, if Croatia, in order to support process of returns, would review list of around 4000 Serbs accused of war crimes in Croatia, that Croatia was not charging people based on their nationalities but that actions were being taken against all those suspected of war crimes.

In the talks with the RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic Vrbosic was informed about situation of Serb prisoners in Croatia and he said he would inform the Croatian Government about their status.

RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic Said the RS National Assembly Majority Will Stay to the Next Elections

Glas srpski carries experts from the interview of the RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to TV station in Bijeljina BN TV. In the interview Ivanic ruled out all initiatives for change of the Dayton Peace Agreement and abolishment of the RS:

"Those who open the DPA issue always think of unitarization of BiH and keep forgetting that there is another option-referendum and secession. Neither of these two extreme options is good solution. Organization of BiH is a finished business and it is no longer a matter of interest of world's key figures."

When commenting situation in the RS National Assembly majority created of three parties PDP/SDS/SPRS, Ivanic said that "the majority has no alternative but an obligation to stay to the next elections".

Reactions to CRA's Decision

Commenting on the results of the CRA (Communications Regulatory Agency) competition for broadcasters, Nezavisne novine report that long-term license for Prijedor municipality was given only to the private radio "Free" so far.

Mile Mutic, Director of RTV "Kozarski vijesnik" held a press conference yesterday saying that his media outlet was the biggest one in the region and self-funded from 1991. Mutic announced submission of an appeal to the decision and ask for financial support of Prijedor municipality, which established the radio 32 years ago. He stressed that such decision of CRA, to reject them long-term broadcasting license, was unexpected but he said he hoped the station would get a license in the end.

International Community

US, British embassies in Bosnia closed by security threat

The US and British embassies in Bosnia were closed Wednesday due to a "security threat" believed linked with the ongoing US-led military operation in Afghanistan, officials said. The British embassy and its consular offices in Bosnia were temporarily closed Wednesday because of a security threat, embassy spokeswoman Munevera Mahinic told AFP. "The threat appears to be connected to the current military operation in Afghanistan," she said.

The American embassy in Sarajevo, along with its offices in Mostar and Banja Luka and the offices of the US aid agency (USAID) in Bosnia were closed, the US embassy's press office said, adding that the closures were due to a "credible security threat to the US official presence in Bosnia-Herzegovina." The embassy did not elaborate on the nature of the threat. "We are evaluating the situation and we are not going to speculate on the reopening date," the press office said. A spokesman for the 19,300-strong NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR) said they were "aware of the threat," but no special measures were taken, since the security level has been increased ever since the September 11 attacks in the United States.

Bosnian Prime Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija told reporters Wednesday that the country had been informed of the threat and remained "in close contact" with US embassy officials. "We have undertaken additional security measures," he said without elaborating.

Wolfgang Petritsch expresses concern about Bicakcic's position in the SDA leadership

At yesterday's press conference, OHR spokesperson Patrik Volf said that at Monday meeting with former and the present presidents of the SDA, Alija Izetbegovic and Sulejman Tihic, the High Representative, among other things, expressed his concerns regarding the composition of the party's leadership, which includes Edhem Bicakcic, an official previously removed by the High Representative. "The High Representative stated that this may reflect negatively on the future development of the party," said Volf, who refused to confirm or deny that Petritsch may ask for Bicakcic's removal from the party leadership. "The High Representative never announces his moves in advance. I think that our statement is clear enough," Volf stressed.

Wolfgang Petritsch will not replace Bodo Hombach as Coordinator

of the Stability Pact

OHR spokesman Patrik Volf rejected the allegations that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will replace Bodo Hombach at the post of the Stability Pact Coordinator. Volf reminded the press that the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in Stockholm in June this year confirmed the extension of the mandate of Wolfgang Petritsch as the High Representative for another year. "The Steering Board expressed its continued full support for the High Representative and his past and future untiring efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative has no intention to give up the responsibilities for the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and for the people in this country," said Volf.

Dnevni Avaz Person of the Day: Wolfgang Petritsch - the authority confirmed!

Dnevni Avaz also quotes Patrik Volf as confirming that Wolfgang Petritsch will remain in the post of the High Representative in BiH until the end of his mandate and continue working on the implementation of peace in this country. "The High Representative has no intention to give up the responsibilities for the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and for the people in this country." This sentence send a very clear signal to all political factors in and out of BiH who object to Petritsch's engagement in our country and his concrete moves which clearly illustrate his commitment for a single BiH, notes Avaz. "This commitment has been confirmed by his latest media appearances in which he precisely determined the position of BiH in the present happenings in the world, thereby dismissing decisively all the attempts to place BiH among the countries connected with international terrorism," continues Avaz. "It is precisely because of this that Petritsch's opponents are launching lies about his withdrawal...about which he does not even think," concludes the daily.

High Representative commends Federation Ministry for Returns on RS Initiative

At Tuesday's press conference of international organisations in Sarajevo, OHR spokesperson Patrik Volf said that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, highly commends the support for return demonstrated by the Federation government and its Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons. Last Saturday, the Ministry signed contracts for the reconstruction of 752 housing units for returnees to three municipalities in Western Republika Srpska: Prijedor, Bosanski Novi/Novi Grad and Kostajnica.

"By taking such concrete steps the Federation Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons has proved that it has matured, and has set an example for Dayton implementation to other domestic authorities. This is a clear example of how BiH governments can positively support return in BiH," said Volf at the press conference, and quoted Oslobođenje and Dnevni Avaz.

Editorials

Slobodna Dalmacija: Sarajevo has more Arabs than Croats, but Croats have got great newly instated cadres

Written by Milo Jukic

"Croats in BiH are obviously an impudent people. All, starting with the *unbiased* Wolfgang Petritsch, the *honest*

Stipe Mesic, to the *youthfully vigorous* Jozo Krizanovic, are doing their best to improve their general status and are fighting like lions for their rights, and yet, they are not content," reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

"The aforementioned and many other fierce fighters have recently been joined by those who used to be missing the fight, probably for being too busy, because did not want to be much too late.

There have been two statements related to Croats in BiH that have shaken up the BiH public. Gradimir Gojer, the Minister for Education, Science, Culture and Sports in the Sarajevo Canton, expressed his public protest over the fact that the working materials in the cantonal administration are not printed in Croatian, and then Ivo Komsic, the Chairman of the BiH House of Peoples, expressed his concern because most of the Croat territories, for the reason of not being covered with the state television signal, will not have enough information about events in BiH and the world once the HTV programs are taken off the TV screens in BiH, which will happen soon.

Both Komsic and Gojer are senior officials of the SDP BiH, leading party in the Alliance for Changes that holds the greatest share of power. The statements, evidently, were to show that it is not just the HDZ, but also the Croat cadres in the Alliance that are fighting for the rights of Croats in Sarajevo and the rest of BiH.

There used to be 35,000 Croats in Sarajevo before the war. No one knows their current number, but well-informed persons say the percentage of Bosniaks in the BiH capital has long gone over 90% and that Sarajevo has more Arabs than Croats. (...)

A few thousand elderly Croats are still living in Sarajevo, while most of the young people, either during or after the war, left the city that takes pride in its multi-ethnicity. It is not a coincidence that the only state owned company that was run by a Croat, Vlado Raguz, was the Public Company 'Pokop' (Burial).

HDZ BiH leaders often mentioned their care for Croats in Sarajevo, of course while they were still part of the authorities. However, very few people could recall any of their specific actions in this regard. In most cases, HDZ BiH used Croats in Sarajevo for settling their accounts, i.e. whenever they needed their rights as an instrument in achieving effects in some other fields.

Thus, for instance, (non)implementation of the Sarajevo Return Declaration was used as an alibi for a slow rate of property claim settlement in the west part of Mostar, and similar examples are numerous."

Slobodna Dalmacija says that Gradimir Gojer became aware of his Croathood only once his party came to the end of their tether in their efforts to show the party is indeed multi-ethnic, and that Gojer himself does not speak Croatian well.

As for Ivo Komsic, the author sarcastically asserts he has always been a real Croat and goes on to say that Komsic wrote a number of books about socialism and self-management before the war.

"There was a time when both Gojer and Komsic would have reacted with cynicism to the allegations that Croats in Sarajevo or any other place in BiH are endangered, but that was when the HDZ was in power together with the SDA. Sarajevo media would have reacted similarly. However, this issue is obviously a trend nowadays. (...)

Finally, what are Croats in Sarajevo supposed to do? No official of the HDZ (not to mention the International Community or Bosniaks!) has shown a real readiness to support them.

Osama bin Laden will take a walk through New York with his nose pierced and a punk hairstyle, accompanied by ten women wearing miniskirts and see-through shirts sooner than will Sarajevo Croats, and Croats across BiH, become one of the three equal peoples. Until then, their only *option* is Vlado Raguz and the Public Company 'Pokop'," reads Slobodna Dalmacija.