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BiH State-related Issues

Sejfudin Tokic Comments on BiH Accession to Council of Europe -

Better Cooperation With the ICTY Necessary

BiH media quote the Deputy Chairman of the House of Peoples, Sejfudin Tokic, as saying that the Council of Europe will not expand the list of prerequisites that BiH has to meet in order to gain accession to the CoE. "After the CoE adopted the report, submitted by the CoE Rapporteur for BiH Lazslo Surjan, it has become quite obvious that BiH will become a member of the CoE. BiH will have to improve the cooperation with the ICTY and to ensure extradition of war crime indictees. From the CoE's point of view, the eventual postponement of arrests and especially the arrests of Karadzic and Mladic, will no longer be tolerated", says Tokic.

At a plenary session today, both chambers of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly to discuss measures against terrorism

At a plenary session which is scheduled for later today (Tuesday), deputies in both chambers of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly will discuss the CoM (Council of Ministers) proposed plan of activities related to the fight against terrorism. The plan will be presented by the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, while participants will also consider measures aimed at strengthening the coordination and communication between the BiH Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

BiH Parliament's House of Peoples passes in the first reading the five CIPS laws

After a lengthy discussion, deputies in the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples passed, in the first reading, the set of five laws, better known as the CIPS (Citizen Identity Protection System) laws, which are to bring BiH closer to European integrations. These laws include the draft Law on Identity Card, the Law on Central Database, the Law on Protection of Personal Data and the Draft Law on Identity Number of BiH citizens. Oslobodjenje report that a number of Serb deputies objected to this set of laws claiming that they are not grounded in the BiH Constitution. Nikola Spiric, a Serb deputy, said that such laws would give too much power to the state at the detriment of the entities.

The BiH minister of civil affairs, Svetozar Mihajlovic, said that it is in the interests of all the people in BiH to have the area of personal identification regulated at the state level. Addressing the BiH House of Peoples on the need to pass the CIPS, Mihajlovic said the events in the US demand the urgent adoption of these laws.

State border between BiH and Yugoslavia will be defined: 6 border crossings between BiH and Yugoslavia

Zeljko Obradovic, the President of the Inter-State Diplomatic Commission for the State Border between BiH and Yugoslavia and a member of the Presidency of the State Commission for BiH Borders stated for Dnevni List that border lines between BiH and Yugoslavia should be agreed upon until the end of this year. At the moment, the Inter-State Border Service is mostly preoccupied with works on the identification and defining of the state border between Yugoslavia and BiH. As far as Croatia is concerned, activities still stagnate, however, as Mr. Obradovic himself stated, a new Commission for Borders has finally been appointed, and the continuation of activities on the works regarding a further defining of the state border between two states is being expected.

Federation

One additional backlog pension to be paid in November

Oslobodjenje reports that the Federation government and the PIO BiH (Pension Fund) may pay one additional backlog pension in November. This means, the daily writes, that pensioners in this entity will receive two pensions in that month – one backlog and the regular pension for October. Oslobodjenje sources in the PIO say that the amount of regular pensions will not be reduced in the next two months.

Federation government leaders say 150,000 new jobs to be created by 2005

The Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the entity Finance Minister, Nikola Grabovac, announced on Monday in Mostar that 150,000 new jobs should be created by the year 2005. They stressed that this number could be secured by an annual investment of \$800 million into BiH economy. Behmen and Grabovac were presenting yesterday their macroeconomic plan for the Federation for the next few years.

In a short interview with Dnevni List, Grabovac said he would like to have 25 Aluminij Company-likes in the Federation as this Factory makes 50% of import in this entity. He stressed, however, that the principle of employment of only one ethnic group should be changed.

New courts summons for the Zepce 15

A Judge in the Cantonal Court in Zenica, Hilmo Ahmetovic, told Radio Zenica that new summons will be sent to the so-called Zepce Group of indicted war criminals because no-one from this group has appeared at a scheduled hearing. The group includes 15 prominent Croat officials who are charged with setting up and running prison camps for non-Croat civilians in Zepce area.

Siroki Brijeg: Lijanovics form a new political party

“We are informing the whole of public that the Peoples Party Working for Progress has been established in Siroki Brijeg on Monday, October 1, 2001, and that a version of the party’s name that can be used in the future is the Party for Progress”, says a press release from the inaugural session of the party. “President of the party is Mladen Ivankovic, its Vice President – Jerko Ivankovic and spokesperson – Dragan Marijanovic. Mladen Ivankovic said the main reason for the founding of the party is the need to protect economic interests of all citizens in the country, foremost the Croat voters who were previously voting “for the party which betrayed their interests in order to protect interests of individuals.”

First newspaper in Croatian language appears on news-stands

The first issue of Dnevni List, the first daily in Croatian in BiH, appeared on newsstands on Monday morning. Dnevni List is published by National Holding Ltd in Mostar, and its managing director is Mladen Zulj. The daily has 40 pages and will cover political, economic, cultural, sports and entertainment events.

Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje: Inaugural session of Interim Municipal Council

In accordance with the decision of the High Representative in BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, an inaugural session of the Interim Municipal Council of the Municipality of Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje was held within the deadline set. Before the session got under way, Bernd Burwitz, supervisor for this municipality, addressed the councillors and wished them a successful work and added that they would have to show more patience in order to overcome problems (...) During the official part of the session, the councillors mandates were verified, the councillors took a solemn oath

and the committees of the Council got elected. After short consultations between the caucuses, Nikola Milic was elected to the post of the President of the Municipal Council and Nedžad Kicin as his Deputy. The new Head of Municipality is Dzevad Agic and his Deputy is Zrinko Tokic, and the secretary of the Council is Senad Prijic. Head of the Municipality nominated Heads of Departments who were later confirmed by the Council. Head of Finance and Economy Department is Anto Alvir, Branko Sain is Head of Urban Planning and Constructions, Branko Matijanic is Head of Administration Department, Senada Ljubuncic is Head of Property-Legal and Cadastre Department, Ekrem Polic is Head of Social Welfare and Refugees Department and Amir Zekotic is Head of Housing-Public Utilities Department, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Republika Srpska

RS National Assembly to Resume Session, discuss the draft Law on Cooperation with the ICTY

The RS National Assembly is expected to resume its session later today (Tuesday) after a break which began on September 27th. The agenda with items remained to be discussed include the draft Law on cooperation between the RS and the ICTY. The MPs are also to discuss the report of the Parliament Commission for monitoring and controlling the bodies of defense and interior affairs.

Radical party say Mujahedeen camp operating in central village

The secretary-general of the Serb Radical Party (SRS), Ognjen Tadic, said on Monday that a Mujahedeen training center was located in the village of Mitrovici near Zavidovici in central Bosnia, and called on the joint institutions in BiH to investigate the issue. "Around 400 Mujahedeen are being trained in the center at any given moment, and then leave for Chechnya from Sarajevo airport to carry out terrorist actions," Tadic said. He added that international officials in BiH knew about the center, but "tend to turn a blind eye because the terrorists actions are aimed against Russia".

SNS Top Official Says the Ruling RS Coalition Is Falling Apart

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" quotes SNS top official, Jezdimir Spasojevic, as saying that the RS ruling coalition is falling apart. "With Democratic National Alliance (DNS), who walked out, and Socialist Party of the RS (SPRS) who announced it would do the same, the ruling coalition in the RS (SDS-PDP-SPRS) is practically falling apart because everybody wants to leave a sinking ship. Spasojevic thinks that only mutual blackmails keep the coalition partners together. Spasojevic also confirmed the story that appeared in the press over the weekend that the SDS is blackmailing the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic with the adoption of the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY and appointment of the SDS candidates to the Modrica Oil Refinery Steering Board. He also says that Zivko Radisic is also involved in the blackmails. Radisic had to appoint three ambassadors, SDS members, and in return the SDS will not raise the issue of the document titled "BiH Defense Policy".

RS Government Discussed Law on RTRS

Both Banja Luka dailies report that at yesterday's session, the RS Government did not adopt the Law on RTRS. The Government formed a working group, comprised of RS Government's member, which is going to discuss all objections that the Government had on working version of the Law. Chief of the RS Government Bureau for Public Relations, Cvijeta Kovacevic says that the most important objections pertain to the Founder. "The RS Government is of view that the Law should define the founder of the RTRS and it should be the RS National Assembly. The Government also had objections to the RTRS Interim Arrangements", says Kovacevic.

General Manager of the Modrica Oil Refinery Is Not Dismissed

“Nezavisne novine” reports that the Steering Board of the RS Oil Industry decided not to remove general manager of the Modrica Oil Refinery, Milan Jelic. The paper also reports that the Oil Refinery Trade Union also decided to call off the rally in front of the RS National Assembly building, which was scheduled for today.

International Community

Petritsch and Racan Discussed Fate of HDZ BiH

Nezavisne Novine quotes an anonymous source close to the Office of the High Representative, as saying that with regard to the seventh extraordinary congress of the HDZ BiH, which is to take place on next Saturday, the IC is facing a potentially high-risk situation whose culmination might cause serious trouble in the state and thus create a new crisis region in the heart of Europe. The source told the daily that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met with the Croatian Prime Minister, Ivica Racan, in Zagreb on Saturday and discussed the forthcoming HDZ BiH Congress. OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic confirmed that the meeting took place and said the main topic of the discussion between the two was the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords with special emphasis on position of BiH Croats.

OHR and the Ministries of Urban Planning to discuss the instruction for implementation of laws on privatization of apartments

Dnevni Avaz reports that representatives of the OHR will meet today (Tuesday) with representatives of the entity Ministries for Urban Planning and Development to discuss the draft instructions for the implementation of the most recent decision imposed by the High Representative pertaining to privatization of apartments in the Federation and the RS. OHR spokesperson, Alexandra Stiglmayer, expressed hope that the instructions will be agreed upon in the near future so as to ensure easier and faster purchase of apartments in both entities.

German soldier in BiH dies of gunshot wounds

A German soldier serving with the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina died of gunshot wounds on Monday, but foul play was not suspected, the German SFOR command said. A statement released at the German contingent's base in the town of Rajlovac said a 23-year-old non-commissioned officer died in a barracks at

Butmir, near Sarajevo. “There are no indications that the death was caused by a third party,” the statement said, without saying whether the soldier died in an accident, or committed suicide.

EDITORIALS

Slobodna Dalmacija: Tighten the control at borders to BiH

Editorial by Stjepan Kljujic

In an editorial about the state of the police force in BiH, Stjepan Kljujic writes that the police in BiH played a big

role in political events during and especially after the war. When the Alliance for changes came into power, it had appeared that this was not to be the case any more but, as Ključić puts it, two of the strongest political parties (SDP and Party for BiH) took over the control of the police structures in the Federation and biggest cantons. It turned out that there are still forces that want to gain the personal and supremacy within the party through police, without caring for damages inflicted to the state. Ključić then writes about the topical issues, illegal citizenship, BiH IDs, buying of real estate by foreigners etc. and therefore creating a spy centre in BiH. Instead of serious actions now we see that some officials bodies are linked to immigrants. Is it possible to lose traces of 120.000 people who enter BiH every year, asks Ključić. That sort of situation, together with drugs, white slavery, prostitution, resulted in a great interest of foreign intelligence services in BiH. Latest news from Zagreb suggest that the traditionally soft border to Croatia will be stricter in the future because of Croatia's membership in the Partnership for peace. Ključić then writes about personal weaknesses in the federation of BiH Ministry of Interior and misunderstandings between Minister of Interior Besic and the acting director Dragan Lukac that paralysed the police. Papers are full of sensational news, stories and accusations exchanged between the MoI principles. Instead of earlier announced measures that were going to sweep up the problems, the Alliance for changes did very little. News that Minister Besic is a member of a single-party (and single-nation) privatisation fund gave more motives for further speculations. The national balance at the senior posts, especially in the MoI in the Canton Sarajevo, has been jeopardised and the Alliance, despite efforts within it, did not correct the situation. That sort of police cannot deal with the problems, says Ključić. Only the free-of-politics police force, that observes national representation, supervised by the parliament can be the solution to the problem. That would eliminate the efforts of those who want to control the police because of their private and narrow-minded interests and stop the democratisation process in BiH. Efforts to join the civilised does not have an alternative, concludes Stjepan Ključić, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Vecernji List: It is still unknown if ICTY put Zenica Court in charge of Zepce case

Written by B. Janko

The trial against a group of Croats that had political and army duties in Zepce during the war has been condemned by all Croat political parties and Homeland War associations in Zepce, reads Vecernji List.

Cantonal Board of the HDZ and the Municipal Board of the NHI in Zepce warned the High Representative of non-objectivity and bias of the Cantonal Court in Zenica where no trial has been either conducted or announced against the perpetrators of crimes against Croats. The objectivity of the Cantonal Court is questionable also because the person put in charge of the trial used to be a court marshal judge in the BiH Army, say the HDZ and the NHI.

Such trials remind Croats of Zepce of mujahedeens' attempts of entering the town from the direction of Zenica. One of those attempts resulted in the killings of a number of Croat civilians, women and children in Kiseljak near Zepce but no one has been convicted for that yet, Zepce Croats point out. They wonder how it is possible that 20,000 Croats could be a threat to over 500,000 Bosniaks.

The rumors as to whether the ICTY approved the trial to the Zepce Group add to the suspicions of Zepce Croats. Judicial sources claim the ICTY did authorize the Court in Zenica to conduct this trial, but others think that it was all staged and that such a document does not exist.

If lies get to be published, Zepce Croats wonder why a possible ICTY approval for each individual person on trial would not be published in the media as well. They hope to get an answer soon, otherwise it will turn out that this is a rigged trial against Zepce Croats, reads Vecernji List.

Petritsch: Judiciary must be independent

The Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anić asked the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to make sure that the Croats of Zepce are not judged by those who were on the other side of the front line. Here is how Petritsch commented on this request for Vecernji List: "I have a high opinion of Minister Anić and he belongs to a small group of outstanding politicians in this country. He is also a big Croat patriot. I will examine his request carefully and see what decision could be made in this regard. However, I wish to stress that the judiciary must be

independent.”

Jutarnji List: Alliance takes over the power in Mostar via Orucevic

Written by G. K.

A conflict between the Alliance for Changes and the Regional Offices of the OHR and the OSCE over the offered Action Plan for the Continuation of the Reintegration of Mostar has been topical over the last few days.

While the Alliance claims that the City Council adopted the document and is asking the OHR for the support in its adoption, which would even entail dismissals of the city and municipal officials that are refusing to implement it, the Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic says the document was not adopted at all.

The Head of the Regional Office of the High Representative in Mostar, Colin Munro, also claims that the Action Plan was not adopted in a democratic manner.

The Coalition for a Single and Democratic BiH, which is sharing the power in Mostar with the HDZ BiH, disintegrated after the SDP BiH and the Party for BiH walked out of it. The long-standing Mayor of Mostar Safet Orucevic left this duty a year ago and, with the appearance of the Alliance for Changes, became close to the Party for BiH.

The Action Plan for the Continuation of the Reintegration of Mostar was offered to the City Council as a motive for the Bosniak officials to declare themselves as to their commitment to either the Alliance for Changes or the Coalition.