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BiH State-related Issue

BiH Council of Ministers proposes how to spend money obtained from succession to former Yugoslavia

Oslobodjenje reports that, at its session held on Thursday in Sarajevo, the BiH Council of Ministers proposed that the money BiH had obtained from the process of succession to former Yugoslavia's property should be spend in stimulating further development of the economy. The Council also accepted a report made by the Ministry for the European Integration on fulfilling the Road Map directions, which were crucial for the BiH accession to the European institutions. According to the report, BiH has so far completely fulfilled six out of 18 directions.

Federation

Majority of Croats supports even more active role of Catholic Church in resolving the Croat national issue

Slobodna Dalmacija reads that the Mostar-based HTV Oscar-C conducted an opinion poll following the last week's interview with Cardinal Puljic in their program. The citizens of Mostar calling in were supposed to express their opinion as to whether the Catholic Church in BiH should take an even more active role in the resolving of the Croat national issue in BiH. Of 267 polled persons, 85% replied positively, 14% of them replied the Church should not have a more active engagement, and 1% had no opinion on the matter.

Gilja is still the manager of HPT Mostar

According to ONASA, the Service for Information and Public Relations of the HPT d.o.o Mostar rejected in a press release on Thursday the reasons because of which President of the newly-appointed HPT Steering Board Slavo Kukic has announced criminal charges against the former manager of the HPT d.o.o Mostar, Marinko Gilja. Speaking on pressing criminal charges, Kukic said in an interview published in the Split daily Slobodna Dalmacija on Thursday that he would "press charges because Gilja, regardless of the decision of the HPT Steering Board to dismiss him from the position of the general manager, still performs the duty and represents the company." The Steering Board, appointed by the BiH Federation Ministry of Traffic and Communications, has dismissed Gilja from the function of the general manager and appointed Stipo Prlic at the position of the acting general manager. After this, the former Steering Board and HPT management announced that they do not recognize the newly-appointed Steering Board and its decisions. According to the release, "Marinko Gilja is registered in the Cantonal Court Mostar, in the department for registry, as an authorized person, and on this basis, he is the only person responsible for the work, business operations, protection and functioning of the HPT d.o.o Mostar." The Mostar's department for registry within the Cantonal Court of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton has rejected two times the request for the registration of Prlic as the HPT general manager.

SDA not satisfied with the work of the High Representative

The BiH Democratic Action Party (SDA) will not vote in the BiH Parliament for the election law if the entity Constitutions are not amended in compliance with the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of all three peoples in the entire country's territory, the Habena news agency quoted SDS spokesman Sefik Dzaferovic as saying at a press conference on Friday in Sarajevo. The SDA will not, according to Dzaferovic, accept establishment of the different institutional instruments for the protection of vital national interests in the BiH Federation and Republika Srpska, which is a resolution openly supported by the OHR. Dzaferovic said that this was not the only reason why the party was not satisfied with the two-year work of the OHR. The other reasons include a tolerant attitude towards a poor implementation of the property laws in the RS, obstructions to the work of the BiH state institutions, illegal use of the construction land, as well as rejection to the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal.

Republika Srpska

Kotorko Serbs to hold protest rally on Saturday

In regard of a recent OHR decision to temporary stop construction of houses on the disputed land in Kotorsko claimed by Bosniaks, the Serbs affected by the decision announced they would hold a protest rally on Saturday, Oslobođenje reported. On the other side, according to Dnevni Avaz, representatives of the pre-war Kotorsko residents of the Bosniak nationality met on Thursday with the OHR officials to discuss the continuation of the construction works in spite of the OHR decision. Zijad Zecevic, the president of the board for the return to Kotorsko, said following the meeting that they had been told the OHR needed seven more days to collect additional and review available documentation on the dispute.

RS and FRY Defense Ministries representatives meet with OHR officials to discuss disputed military agreement

The delegations of the Defense Ministries and the Armies of the Republika Srpska and Yugoslavia explained to the OHR representatives on Thursday in Banja Luka parts of the agreement on military cooperation, which had been suspended by the High Representative. According to a press release from the office of RS Vice-president Dragan Cavic, it was agreed that a final version of the military agreement is prepared in accordance to the agreement on special relations between the entity and Yugoslavia, which would be discussed at the next meeting. The OHR representatives noted the explanations, particularly concerning the disputed financing of the 30 military training centers, and said they would inform the international community officials about them.

Public discussion on the RS draft law on cooperation with the Hague Tribunal to be held on Friday in Banja Luka

A public discussion on the draft law on the Republika Srpska cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, prepared by the entity Government, will be held on Friday in Banja Luka. Prominent judges, prosecutors, university professors, and representatives of the international organizations are expected to present their views on the issue.

RS Socialist Party says Bosniaks obstruct adoption of the election law

The Vice-president of the Republika Srpska Socialist Party, Miroslav Mikes accused on Thursday in Banja Luka Bosniak political representatives of obstructing the adoption of the permanent election law. Mikes told journalists that, six years after signing of the Dayton agreement, BiH had to pass the second most important legal document showing that its politicians were prepared to take over the responsibility for the future of the country.

RS Radio-Television achieves poor results in collecting subscription fee

Glas Srpski, on its cover page, writes that Radio-Television of Republika Srpska is not achieving planned results in terms of collection of subscription fees, which seriously jeopardizes its role of a public service to the RS citizens. The newspaper carries a statement of the RT RS General Manager Jelena Davidovic, who says that the amount of collected subscription fees, in the last three months, was hardly one third of the planned. She therefore called on citizens to regularly pay for their subscription.

International Community

Petritsch marks second anniversary of his mandate in BiH

All BiH media prominently report that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, held a press conference on Thursday in Sarajevo to mark the second anniversary of his mandate in BiH. Petritsch emphasized that, in the future, he would insist on establishing a partnership relation with the BiH authorities, further returning of refugees and displaced persons, restructuring of the economy and building of the state institutions. ([see transcript from the press conference](#))

Petritsch says there is a lack of vision how the southeast Europe should look

According to Oslobodjenje, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said in an interview with the Vienna newspaper Kurir that there was a lack of vision how the Balkans, or better to say the southeast Europe including the successful countries such as Greece should look like. Petritsch warned that the international approach to the Balkans was burdened by a too expressed western point of view, with a too little taking into account the local needs, tradition and emotions.

Petritsch meets with representatives of the BiH Republican Party

Oslobodjenje reported that High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch had met on Wednesday with President of the BiH Republican Party Stjepan Kljucic and the party's general secretary, Nedim Sarija, to discuss a need that the domestic politicians adopt the election law, and not that it is imposed by the international community. The officials also discussed the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire country's territory and the work of the Alliance for Changes, particularly its approach towards the Croat people in BiH.

Political calculations: Petritsch to be the next Austrian President?

The Sarajevo daily Jutarnje Novine carries a SENSE news agency report, according to which, the current High Representative of the international community in BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, could have serious chances to as a more liberal candidate of the socialists be elected next Austrian President in 2004. According to a Sueddeutsche Zeitung's report, Petritsch's chances are related to his possible ability to establish a necessary balance between the different political parties in the country.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

Altijana Maric wrote in the Oslobodjenje In Focus column about the upcoming Sarajevo Film Festival, as Hamza Baksic commented on a August's political silence in BiH. In the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day, Edina Sidran wrote about an initiative for amending the law on legal possession of firearms.

Nezavisne Novine: Fishers in troubled waters

Author Radomir Neskovic is criticizing the RS Government for not admitting publicly that it had received the sealed indictment from the ICTY against Dragan Jokic and suggesting that it would be more fair if the public is aware of such things.

Vjesnik: Is the circle around Izetbegovic tightening?

Written by Mario Marusic (provided by OHR Mostar)

By all accounts, Alija Izetbegovic, whom his former colleagues from the state leadership, who want to release themselves of any responsibility, are indirectly accusing that he usurped all political and military power in the middle of the war, and that he was an absolute BiH leader on the territory which was under the control of the BiH Army remains at The Hague exposed position.

Rasim Kadic, the leader of the Liberal party believes that it is very likely that possible Izetbegovic's responsibility is a subject of an investigation, especially since three officers of the BiH Army, who are charged with the war crimes committed over Croats in the Central Bosnia, have been extradited to The Hague recently. The former Commander of the 7th Muslim Brigade, whose honorary Commander was Alija Izetbegovic, is also among them.