

OHR Local News Issues, 20 June 1997

Sarajevo - The Quick Start Package has finally been endorsed by the BiH CoM and both Houses of the BiH Parliament, announced the media.

The report carried a statement by Deputy HR Michael Steiner who expressed his satisfaction that the first legislative act of BiH has been endorsed. Both Co-chairs of the CoM commented on today's session of this body in the same vein, assessing that the endorsement of the Package was of utmost importance for the entire BiH.

As to the most disputed law on custom tariffs, a temporary solution has been found until a unique tariff system is devised by the end of this year to correspond to BiH economic situation.

Following the CoM session, the BiH House of Representatives chaired by Ivo Lozancic held a session at the National Museum. Sejfidin Tokic, UBSD Vice President requested that the platform on foreign politics be included in the agenda, while Zlatko Lagumdzija proposed that the Parliament take a stand on the law on election of deputies, i.e. on the procedure to sanction war criminals. It was decided that these issues would be discussed at the next session.

After Deputy Co-chair of the CoM Neven Tomic briefed deputies on the Quick Start Package, it was put to the vote. With a majority of votes in favour and two against, the set of laws was endorsed.

The BiH House of Peoples has also endorsed the package by a majority vote. Deputies agreed on the formation of a tariff commission and an accord between the WB and BiH.

6'50

Chaired by PM Edhem Bicakcic, the Coordination Board of the FBiH Government held a meeting today to review preparations for a Donors Conference in Brussels. The Board has assessed that another postponement of a Donors Conference would have inconceivable consequences and appealed to the WB and the EC to exert efforts to arrange holding of the conference as scheduled.

1'50

Lukavica- A meeting of the BiH Joint Military Committee attended by members of the BH Presidency and military officials from the FBiH and RS, was held today. The participants failed to agree on the Rules and Procedures.

1'50

The date for the long-awaited meeting Izetbegovic-Tudjman has been set at last. The office of the Croatian President announced that the meeting would take place on 30 June in Split. The Council for Cooperation between BiH and Croatia is to convene a meeting on the same day. The agenda of these two meetings will comprise issues related to the DPA and its implementation and the FBiH.

1'50

Sarajevo - At its session today, the FBiH House of Representatives once again failed to agree on a draft on split municipalities and formation of new ones. A long and heated debate seemed to have caused even more confusion. The report spoke critically about proceedings at the session, qualifying the event as a grotesque.

4'00

Summary SRT News

Banja Luka - RS President Plavsic met the Russian Foreign Ministry Special Representative, Aksenak. They talked about the relations between the RS and Russia, implementation of the DPA, and QSP Laws. Commenting on the postponement of the donors' conference, Russian diplomat said that he was not informed about the details of the postponement, but the Russian position is that the economic aid should be equally divided between the RS and the Muslim-Croat Federation. Plavsic also met the US Embassy Charge D'Affaires, Beecroft and discussed the adoption of the QSP laws and

breaking of the economic blockade that the RS is facing. Beecroft announced the postponement of the donors' conference, mentioning two conditions – the adoption of the QSP laws and IMF agreement. They also talked about the project of open cities for the return of refugees.

5:00

Lukavica - Presidents of the BiH Presidency, Defence Ministers, and Army HQ commanders of all three armies discussed the Rules of Procedure of the Standing Committee on Military Matters which were not adopted at the meeting. According to the RS President in the BiH Presidency Krajisnik, it is not possible to have a united military force since the Rules of Procedure alone foresee two armies – the RS Army and the Federation Army. The appointment of the members and a chairman of the Committee was the most disputable issue. However, Krajisnik said that they eventually agreed on Committee tasks, although the Federation representatives attempted to change them and violate the DPA. The HR Deputy Steiner also attended the session.

3:00

Sarajevo - The CoM, BiH HoR and HoP urgently adopted the QSP laws and removed the last obstacle for holding of the donors' conference. The CoM Co-chair Bosic said that they found a solution regarding the problems that stood in the way of holding of the sessions of both Chambers. The CoM also discussed the opening of civilian airlines between Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Mostar and Tuzla, and this issue will be dealt with in detail at the next session. HoR MP's sent a request to HR Deputy Steiner to present a report with regard to HR Bildt's results and the future tasks of his successor. MP's also ratified an agreement between BiH and International Bank for Development.

4:00

Belgrade - Representatives of the countries of former Yugoslavia attended a session of the Vance Commission for Missing Persons. The RS delegation headed by Assembly Speaker Kalinic also attended the session. Kalinic said that the representatives discussed two issues – missing persons in Croatia and Yugoslavia, and POW's, missing persons and exhumations in BiH. All the POW's who are not on the list for the Hague and who are in Croatian, BiH or FRY prisons must be immediately and unconditionally released. The Croatian representatives promised to immediately release seven out of 16 Serbs in their prisons. The RS is ready to co-operate and allow multi-national teams to carry out exhumations at all locations which are considered to be mass graves. However, the RS expects the same from Muslims and Croats.

4:00

Flash news:

Reporting on the hand-over of duties between Bildt and Westendorp, Sie Deutsche Zeitung quoted Bildt who said that his successor's task will be to put the DPA firmly on its feet. Westendorp said that he will fully comply with the DPA, which will also be expected from all the relevant elements in the RS and the Federation. Helsinki Citizens' Society is preparing massive and provocative waves of return of refugees to the RS with the aim of catching the RS leadership by surprise and creating a negative climate during the pre-election campaign. The SRT source said that the Secretary of the Inter-church Peace Council visited Sarajevo and Tuzla, as well as the OHR prior to the mass return. The source also said that the Secretary closely co-operates with Steiner's Coalition for Return, whose aim is to organise refugees who will cross into the RS in large groups.

4:00

Brcko - Late this evening, the newly appointed HR Westendorp visited Brcko and the OHR Office, hosted by Supervisor Farrand who introduced him to the current situation in the town. Westendorp will tour the town tomorrow and probably meet the local leadership and some of the centres for voters' registration. Tomorrow late afternoon, HR Westendorp will hold a press conference.

3:00