

Bi H Media Round-up: 25/7/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- Deputies in the House of Peoples fail to agree on all proposed laws
- Council of Ministers and International Community agree on the text of the Law on Civil Service
- Third GSM operator on hold
- US donates \$4.5 million police in the RS and the Federation
- Cardinal Puljic and Bishop Peric to speak before the US Congress Foreign Policy Committee today – Croat Catholics endangered in BiH
- Vecernji List: Interview with Slavo Kukic, President of Federation TV Council: HDZ persuades journalists to stop working for RTV BiH

Federation

- Hercegovina-Neretva Canton officials refuse to meet with Federation President and Vice President

Republika Srpska

- RS National Assembly includes Law on Cooperation with the ICTY on agenda for the ongoing session
- Federation Minister of Interior Says Karadzic and Mladic Will Be Arrested Soon
- RS Ministry of Justice forwards documentation incriminating Alija Izetbegovic to The Hague

International Community

- OHR and UN criticize RS authorities for charging Srebrenica associations a fee for security

- OHR, OSCE, UN, CRPC: Returnees have to vacate abandoned property before privatizing their apartments
- The High Representative appoints new Special Envoy to Trebinje
- OHR welcomes the Agreement on Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje

Editorials

- Oslobodjenje: Who is ruling in Bosnia?

BiH State-related Issues

Deputies in the House of Peoples fail to agree on all proposed laws

At a regular session held yesterday in Sarajevo, deputies in the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples formally agreed to amend the Law on the Council of Ministers thereby abolishing the rotation principle governing the mandate of the CoM chair. The proposed amendment would harmonize the mandate of the chair with that of all other ministers in the Council. Although the proposal introduced by the SDP's Sejfudin Tokic did get the majority support, it did not secure the Entity majority. Media report that CoM Collegium will attempt to harmonize the proposed amendment within the next three days.

Other proposed laws, including the Law on State Holidays, the Law on Associations and Foundations, Law on Foreign Trade Chamber, and others were of similar fate. Most won the overall, but never, the Entity majority. In nearly all cases, Serb delegates voted against the proposed laws.

Council of Ministers and International Community agree on the text of the Law on Civil Service

Representatives of the BiH Council of Ministers and the International Community agreed on the text of the Law on Civil Service, which is to ensure that officials in state institutions are employed according to their qualifications and not party membership. The text was agreed upon during a

meeting which was attended by the Chair of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, and ministers, Kresimir Zubak and Svetozar Mihajlović on one, and the US Ambassador to BiH, Thomas Miller, the Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, and the Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, on the other side. The proposed law stipulates, among other things, that all qualified civil servants will be selected by a special agency, whose director for the first two years will be appointed by the High Representative.

Third GSM operator on hold

Oslobodjenje reports that the process of selection of the third GSM operator in BiH is still on hold. According to the daily, representatives of the International Community and the Council of Ministers will discuss this controversial issue at one of the next joint sessions. "We reiterated that the CRA decision on this issue is unacceptable for the Council of Ministers. If the winner of the tender is indeed announced on July 31, it should be clear that it (winner) will not be acceptable for the Council," said Zlatko Lagumdžija, the chair of the CoM. He added, however, that speculations about the possible announcement could be false, since the Council of Ministers was informed that the process was put on hold.

US donates \$4.5 million police in the RS and the Federation

The BiH minister of civil affairs, Svetozar Mihajlović, and the US ambassador to BiH, Thomas Miller signed a \$ 4.5 million agreement on the US financial assistance for police forces in RS and Federation. "This money is intended for training and assistance for the internal affairs ministries in BiH in their fight against all forms of crime, management of police operations, reform of education in the area of human rights and for the establishment of judicial associations," said Miller after the signing.

Cardinal Puljic and Bishop Peric to speak before the US Congress Foreign Policy Committee today – Croat Catholics endangered in BiH

Cardinal Puljic, the Vrhbosna Archbishop, and Mostar-Duvno Bishop Ratko Peric are speaking today before the US Congress Foreign Policy Committee about an endangered status of human and religious rights and freedoms of Croat Catholics. Cardinal Puljic and Bishop Peric went to Washington following an invitation from the Chairman of the US Congress International Relations Committee, Henry Hyde. They will be testifying about causes and consequences of the actions taken by the international administration in BiH, says Vecernji List.

It has been observed that some actions taken by the international administration in BiH have been directed strictly against Croats, and especially against "little people," which was also noted by the former Head of the OSCE Regional Centre in Mostar, Daniel Simpson, who condemned the raid into the Hercegovacka Bank, reads Vecernji List.

During their one-week visit to the USA, Cardinal Puljic and Bishop Peric will attend the Bishop's Congress organised by the US Catholic Church and meet with numerous representatives of religious communities and Croat(ian) Diaspora.

Vecernji List: Interview with Slavo Kukic, President of Federation TV Council: HDZ persuades journalists to stop working for RTV BiH (provided by the OHR Mostar)

In an interview with Vecernji List, Professor Slavo Kukic, President of the Federation TV Council, talking about the state of the RTV BiH, said that the system is very big with 1,200 full-time employees.

"That is why there are no bigger changes but some initial steps are visible. For example, Newscast III (late night around 22:30) is edited by two persons, one them is a Croat woman who uses pure Croatian and promotes Croat editorial policy. But the changes in the editorial policy are not sufficient to satisfy the Croats, and the reason behind this is the transformation of the Public TV and this process has not been completed yet. The transformation implies liquidation of the RTV BiH and formation of two new subjects – one of them being the PBS – the State television for the whole of BiH, and

the other Federation TV with two channels. If everything goes according to plan those two subjects should start working in September. The problem now is that we have not covered Western Herzegovina and a part of southwestern Bosnia with our signal", stated Kukic.

What about the editorial problems and problems with the staff on television?

Kukic: "It is a bigger problem. The Constitution of the Federation and the HR's decision that regulate the system of public broadcasting in BiH talk about national equality and balance when it comes to the staff issues and those documents are not debatable. But we have some realistic problems. I would never support a journalist who is not able to perform the job professionally. The truth is that we do not have many good journalists and the other problem is that those good journalists are being pressured by the leading structures of the HDZ who persuade them not to work on BiH TV although we had arranged everything. At the same time the same structures are presenting their thesis to the BiH and world public that the Croats in BiH do not have an equal status in the media and that they do not have their television or their newspaper, either... I think tackling that standpoint is a greater problem than the technical ones."

Will the future Federation TV with two channels have separate editorial offices (one Croat and one Bosniak), editorial policies, languages...?

Kukic: "There are no separate national channels and I would not take part in projects with national ghettos, such an orientation would not help BiH as a state. So there will be two channels and both of them will be balanced with regards to the staff, editorial policy and the language. But now we have a new situation in the Federation: not only the Croats and Bosniaks are constituent peoples but the Serbs are too and we have to take care of that. The counter-question is: what about the RS Radio and Television? But if we in the Federation carry out our job properly we will have a moral right to pressure the RS to fulfill its constitutional obligations."

Will the same people work on all three televisions and will journalists of the former "Erotel" be hired?

Kukic: "More or less the same people will stay because we do not need to double our capacities and I have previously said that we are in negotiations with Croat journalists from the former "Erotel". I know that the Editor of the News-Political program of the RTV BiH Marija Topic Crnoja is talking to a number of Croat journalists and that the talks with Anja Grujic and Ivan Pavkovic are being finalized... Our plan is to give support to the Mostar studio in staff and equipment and it makes sense that journalists from the area work for the studio."

After the announcement of the strike of the Federation RTV employees, President of the Council Dr. Slavo Kukic withdrew the job applications explaining that from the legal point of view the applications are not questionable but from the moral point of view they are because it would not make sense for the employees with 20 or more years of experience to be put on probation like amateurs.

Dr. Kukic reiterated that he as the President of the RTV Council would not sign the authorization for the work of the Federation TV and the PBS unless the program can be seen in the whole of BiH and unless the main news summary is given the prime time between 19:00-20:00 hrs for the whole of BiH. What proves that the restructuring of RTV BiH is a hot issue is the fact that the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen yesterday invited Dr. Kukic to an urgent meeting and he probably invited other members of the RTV's Council as well, reads Vecernji List.

Federation

Hercegovina-Neretva Canton officials refuse to meet with Federation President and Vice President

Josip Merdzo, the Herzegovina-Neretva Cantonal Prime Minister,

and Vice Governor Dragan Vrankic on Friday refused to meet with the BiH Federation President Karlo Filipovic and his Deputy Safet Halilovic, who were elected to those duties as candidates of the Alliance for Changes, reports Slobodna Dalmacija.

On Tuesday, Filipovic and Halilovic paid their first official visit to Mostar where they met with the local Bosniak officials and the Head of the Regional Office of the High Representative, Colin Munro.

Merdzo and Vrankic said the reason behind the boycott of the meeting with the Federation officials was their alleged biased attitude in favor of the Bosniak structures in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. They claim the Federation Government provided the Bosniak part of the HNC with 1.8 million KM of assistance, but at the same time refused to provide assistance to the Croat part of the Canton.

Filipovic said Merdzo and Vrankic's failure to attend the meeting was incorrect. He thinks the two of them yielded to pressures from the HDZ BiH leadership, reads the daily. Filipovic also met with the Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic, whom he considers a moderate official of the HDZ.

Filipovic and Halilovic appealed to the HNC authorities to abolish the parallel institutions and establish a joint cantonal budget.

HDZ BiH President Ante Jelavic has recently opposed the integration of the budgets in the HNC, reads Slobodna Dalmacija in conclusion.

Republika Srpska

RS National Assembly includes Law on Cooperation with the ICTY on agenda for the ongoing session

After five hour discussion, deputies in the RS National Assembly agreed to put the proposed Law on Cooperation with the ICTY on the agenda for the ongoing session. The proposed law will be the ninth item, despite the objection of the House

deputy speaker, Sulejman Tihic that the RS has no right to discuss this issue, saying that it is strictly under jurisdiction of state institutions.

Federation Minister of Interior Says Karadzic and Mladic Will Be Arrested Soon

Glas Srpski carries excerpts from the interview given by the Federation Minister of Interior, Muhamed Besic to Ljubljana-based daily Delo. Besic said that the operation of Radovan Karadzic's arrest will start in the near future. Delo writes that the High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch also confirmed the information that Karadzic will soon be arrested. The papers quote its correspondent from Sarajevo as saying that he was told by NATO officials that they did not know where Karadzic was hiding and that he will probably try to flee to Greece.

RS Ministry of Justice forwards documentation incriminating Alija Izetbegovic to The Hague

In a statement, the RS Ministry of Justice said that the documentation on the crimes allegedly committed by Alija Izetbegovic has been forwarded to the Hague Tribunal. The Ministry said that the ICTY is expected, in accordance with the rules of the road, to say that trials in the jurisdiction of the Tribunal can not be conducted by domestic courts without a prior approval. "So far, we have received no communication to the effect that this case is being taken over by the Tribunal, nor have we being given approval to take up the matter ourselves," said the Ministry in a statement.

International Community

OHR and UN criticize RS authorities for charging Srebrenica associations a fee for security

At yesterday's press conference, both OHR and UN stressed that they do not condone the RS Ministry of Interior's attempt to get the organizers of the July 11th Potocari memorial ceremony

to pay for the police protection and security that was made available to them.

“The freedom of assembly is a basic human right. Citizens’ do not have to pay for it. This is obviously something that some RS politicians appear to be unaware of,” said OHR spokesman Patrik Volf. OHR’s attitude was fully supported by the UN mission to BiH. (All Federation and RS media carry Volf’s statement on prominent pages)

[OHR, OSCE, UN, CRPC: Returnees have to vacate abandoned property before privatizing their apartments](#)

In a joint statement for the press, OHR, UN, OSCE and CRPC welcomed the decision of the High Representative to harmonize the Entity laws on privatization of apartments, and announced that all returnees in the future will have to show evidence that they have vacated the abandoned property before being able to privatize their apartments. All Federation media carried the press release – not very prominently)

The High Representative appoints new Special Envoy to Trebinje

At yesterday’s press conference, OHR spokesman Patrik Volf said that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, appointed Ambassador Istvan Oszai as his Special Envoy in Trebinje. Ambassador Oszai was the Hungarian deputy Foreign Minister and has most recently served as the Special Envoy in Bihac. Volf said that the High Representative feels that Oszai’s seniority and his experience in high profile positions in BiH make him an ideal candidate for this position. (All Federation media quoted Volf)

[OHR welcomes the Agreement on Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje](#)

(Slobodna Dalmacija carries the press release on page 19 with paragraphs 2 and 4 omitted)

Editorials

Oslobodjenje: Who is ruling in Bosnia?

Editorial by Slavo Kukic

In discussions about BiH reality, one often resorts to arguments about the post-war period. It is said that the "post-wardom" in itself creates an ambiance which characterizes this country. Are such generalizations well grounded? In my opinion, they are not. Well, they are not to a great extent. For, they suggest similarities where there are none. For example, similarities between the present time and the period in the beginning of the fifties. In fact, we are talking about two profoundly different situations, although, both are post war situations.

The fifties in BiH were marked by the authority of victors, which could have been in itself the very force of integration. There are no winners in the war of the nineties. All are defeated. However, all continue influencing, in a manner of victors, the present social reality, thereby, admittedly or not, fostering the disintegration. They are simply postponing indefinitely the process of social disintegration. That is why the analysts and even common folk today wonder about hundreds of issues. For example, "Who is today ruling in Bosnia anyway?"

Really, who is ruling in Bosnia today? Is it a government, however it is called? Obviously not. It does not even exist here in a form in which it exists elsewhere. Just as all other pillars of system do not exist here. According the constitutional solutions, an important part of the tripartite division of authority is not organized. The judicial authority reaches only as far as the boundaries of the entities. However, there is no single prerequisite for the efficient executive authority. There is no police. The entity is the final point of its vertical organization. And, it is one of the instruments of executing authority.

In the fifties, we did not have institutions of the

International Community, which we did not need at the time. The authority is organized by the war's victor. Its position was not assumed by the International Community. On the contrary. For the half of the century, the authority had been trying to cooperate with war-time rivals, which proved to be an absurd task. That is why, it had to be one of the main pillars of authority. Perhaps, the most important one.

Today, we at least have some prerequisites for different logic. It is difficult to say that we still have a new authority. On the contrary. This is still the authority comprised of the warlords. It is true, however, that for the first time since the war, the forces of integration got stronger. That should provide a partial relief to International Community, which appears not to welcome it wholeheartedly. On the contrary, the initiative on the creation of the Partnership Forum could be understood differently. One could even recognize some elements of request for power-sharing, and also, the attempt to keep the possibility of influence over the ways of privatization of key social resources. For example, those in the field of telecommunications. However, if we think in abstract terms, about the International Community, the dilemma "Who is ruling in Bosnia" is still here. Then, one could ask a question – where are the strings of the real social power? Are they with worldly leaders? Is BiH truly, or just in appearance, a layman state? The need for such an analysis is supported by some details of the most recent date. Let's recall the cornerstone laying ceremony for the reconstruction of Ferhadija in Banja Luka, whose rebuilding is of extraordinary importance, and whose reconstruction is morbid to question if we want a multiethnic state. Or, for example, the marking of the Srebrenica tragedy, which should be a warning and a message that similar tragedies should never happen again.

All this is not disputable. What makes these events analytically interesting is the fact that they are used for the purposes of manifesting the supremacy of religious leaders. In both instances, the Reisu-l -ulema emphasized his

role as a religious leaders to a lesser extent. On the contrary. In both cases, one could clearly see the desire to demonstrate the social power. The authority which is not formal, but is real.

Something similar happened when, a week earlier, the Cardinal Puljic, gathered political leaders in Zenica, instead of his flock...

However, all this is not as important. What is important is that the religious leader by gathering those individuals showed who is who in Croat people. He showed that he is the emperor, and all others are just the "small boys"...

So, how is it possible to answer to the question: "Who is ruling in Bosnia?" God would only know. Just about everyone has, except for those who should have – the carriers of the formal government.