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BiH State-related Issue

Council of Ministers shocked with statements of a CRA official on the price of the GSM operator license

In a statement for the press, the Council of Ministers said yesterday that it is surprised with a statement of a CRA (Communications Regulatory Agency) official, James Milne, that the "price of the third GSM license will not be high." Milne said yesterday that practice of selling licenses for huge sums in European countries was shown as false and unfair. "If the representatives of the CRA and the OHR pledge for a transparent tender procedure, whose details should be agreed in cooperation with the Council of Ministers, then it is surprising that someone can know that the price will not be high," said the Council.

The CoM hails the CRA efforts that the matter of issuing a third GSM operator license is beginning to be resolved in cooperation with domestic authorities, but considers as unacceptable that a CRA representative informs the Council via media on starting negotiations on the conditions of a new competition. According to the press release, no negotiations

between the CRA and the CoM have began and the Council believes that such statements do not contribute to the partnership, and additionally confuse the BiH public and potential bidders. "It also further damages the credibility of international community representatives, bringing into question the possibility of a serious agreement with CRA members. The time and conditions to issue the third license should be accorded with total plans and activities in the Sector of Telecommunications, and not separately."

[Council of Ministers asks OHR Stiglmayer to apologize for her statement on GSM](#)

Oslobodjenje, on its front page, reports that the Council of Ministers had asked OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer to apologize for her statement that the "OHR believes it to be catastrophic that the previous tender for the third GSM operator was annulled" and that in the West this move will be labeled as a "Balkan business". "We expect a public apology from Stigmayer. It is unacceptable that an OHR official speaks in such a mocking manner about an attempt of local authorities in this country to take over responsibility for strategic decisions."

The daily notes that this and the statement of a CRA official James Milne about the price of the GSM operator license caused a real storm in the relations between the OHR and the Council of Ministers. The same article also includes excerpts of a letter written by Alexandra Stiglmayer in which she explains that several important statements of Milne and OHR official, Herbert Pribitzer, on the GSM issue were misreported by Oslobodjenje journalist. **SEE CoM Press Release below!**

SDP lodges complaints against the RTV BiH

Senior official of the SDP Nijaz Skenderagic filed on Thursday a formal complaint against the RTV BiH before the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) because of a program in

which a journalist Amerildo Gutic “tendentiously manipulated with incorrect information” thereby causing damage to the SDP and Skenderagic himself. The disputable program was showed on August 6 during the central news program, and allegedly portrayed Skenderagic as a future member of reformed intelligence service and the SDP as a “police party” who want to establish control over this electronic medium.

Federation

A hot summer in the Federation Government – Preparation of arrests for fund misappropriations

The Federation Ministry of Interior, in co-operation with the Financial and Tax Police and the judiciary will launch their first actions of arresting the persons who have gained a considerable profit in the last ten years by means of fund misappropriation, corruption or illegal trade. Muhamed Besic, the Federation Minister of Interior, has officially announced this action, which should bear initial results as soon as mid October.

Vecernji List says the police are serious this time and substantiates it by saying that intensive consultations on ways of conducting the aforesaid action have been ongoing for a few weeks at the Federation Government building. Abundant documentation against senior officials of the former Federation Government structure has already been prepared.

The daily says it is once more reiterated in the last ICG report that BiH still has big problems with corruption, which made the BiH Presidency step up the consultations on the adoption of the anti-corruption strategy.

Persons who were performing the highest political or managerial duties could be brought to justice, says the daily and concludes by saying: “A question remains as to what will

happen to the politicians who were gaining financial profit for ten years but are still holding the highest political posts.”

Slobodna Dalmacija: Sooner implementation of Gornji Vakuf-Uskoplje Agreement?

Signing of the agreement on establishing of the joint Municipality of Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje is just an “act one” in the realization of the obligations defined by the agreement (...) A week after the agreement, that was brokered by the International Community or to be more precise the High Representative’s Special Envoy Ulrich Bucher, was signed, as the former Head of Uskoplje Municipality Nikola Milic says, further talks have resumed and priority tasks have been defined. Firstly, as Milic puts it, they would have to make arrangements on how to allocate departments in the Municipal structure before 23rd of August and regarding this issue they will hold talks at the OSCE’s Office in Bugojno on 13th of August. Apart from that the parties themselves would have to sit down and agree on allocation of departments and work places envisaged by the systematization of the Municipal Administration. The systematization of the Gornji Vakuf – Uskoplje Municipality determines six departments: Urban Planning and Construction; Social Welfare and Refugees; Economy and Finances; Housing and Public Utilities, Reconstruction and Environmental Protection; General Services and Social Activities and the Department of Property-Legal Issues and Land Registry, with a total of 58 employees, 33 Bosniaks and 25 Croats. As Milic points out, the Croats will not have problems with this issue because the current Uskoplje Municipality hires 25 workers on these jobs but the Bosniaks have 20 employees extra in their current administration. After the talks on the systematization, the Municipal Council should be established, so the deadline set for October 1, the date when the Municipal Administration should become operational, should not be questionable. “From our point of view, the

deadline is too elongated, because if we have already signed the agreement, it should be in everyone's interest to have a functional administration as soon as possible. That is why we have suggested to change the deadline to September 1, but the IC cannot accept that due to technical problems", says Nikola Milic adding that they were ready to change the deadline to September 15, Slobodna Dalmacija reports.

Indictments against General Alagic and his associates cause dissatisfaction in many Central Bosnia Croats

Central Bosnia Croats are not satisfied with the ICTY indictment against the three BiH Army officers charged with war crimes against Croat civilians and war prisoners, reads Vecernji List. In the opinion of the Central Association for Protection of Croat National Interests, the most important charge has been omitted and that is the expulsion of Croats from Central Bosnia. Association members think around 50 other BiH Army commanders should be indicted for war crimes. They mention Serif Patkovic, the wartime Commander of the 7th Muslim Brigade, Dzevad Mlaco, the wartime Mayor of Bugojno, and Alija Izetbegovic.

Vecernji List, in addition, reports that Sefer Halilovic, the Federation Minister of Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons, requested the replacement of Serif Patkovic from his current position of Minister of Soldiers in Zenica-Doboj Canton. The daily reports the authorities in Zenica-Doboj Canton have been informed about Halilovic's decision and are now waiting for the OHR and OSCE to make a move. The Croat side holds Sefer Halilovic responsible for the war crime committed in the village of Grabovica, says Vecernji List.

Vecernji List: Interview with Marinko Kelavic, the President of the HDZ Municipal Board in Zepce : Not everyone can be happy

Marinko Kelavic, the President of the HDZ Municipal Board in

Zepce thinks that his party deserves most credit for the passing and implementation of the Zepce Decision.

“It was the HDZ that initiated the process of changing the municipal boundaries and integration of Zepce Municipality into the institutions of Zenica-Doboj canton, as well as its implementation. We accepted the decision and started implementing it from the very first day. Still, we are degraded as a party because according to the number of votes won, i.e. over 80% of the Croat electorate votes, the position of either Chair or Deputy Chair of the Zepce Interim Council, which was assigned to the NHI under the High Representative’s decision, should have been assigned to the HDZ instead. Of course, the conflicts between the HDZ and International Community representatives had an impact on our region, too. That did not stop us from being the main foothold and guarantee of the implementation of the Zepce Decision,” stated Kelavic.

The interviewer remarked that neither Croats nor Bosniaks of the Zepce Municipality borderland are happy with the Zepce Decision, to which Kelavic replied:

“We in the HDZ accepted the compromise solution although not all of our requests were met. We are even more surprised at the fact that individual populated places that have a historic, geographic and economic background, such as Bese, Strupina, Galovac, Mladosevica or the Bosniak-populated village of Vrbica, were not integrated into Zepce Municipality. I personally think that the will of these people must be respected if we want to solve the boundary problem here permanently. Living in this Canton, I think municipal boundaries are just a sort of psychological stability that the people feel now and I hope the democratic authorities will be able to appreciate it and indulge those people by including them in the Municipality that is closer to them. After all, even the High Representative left open the option of an agreement among the three municipalities. The positive

attitudes in Zepce and Zavidovici municipalities and in a part of Maglaj authorities are a reason enough to be optimistic that the requests of those populated places will be met eventually," stated Kelavic in conclusion.

Republika Srpska

NATO troops arrest Serb war crimes indictee Bagojevic

NATO troops on Friday arrested a Bosnian Serb colonel wanted under a secret indictment for war crimes by the UN court in The Hague, the RS Defense ministry official told AFP. Colonel Vidosav Blagovjevic was transferred to the northern Bosnian town of Tuzla from where he was to be taken to The Hague, the SRNA news agency said quoting anonymous sources. The ministry official said Blagovjevic was arrested at 10:40 a.m. (0840 GMT) in Banja Luka. SFOR troops backed by four jeeps and helicopters, arrested Blagojevic who was near a mine-clearing center in Banja Luka, the local radio station Big reported. He was accompanied by a soldier who was later released, the

radio reported. SFOR spokesman Andrew Coxhead told AFP he was "not aware of any arrest." Blagovjevic has not been publicly indicted by the UN war crimes tribunal.

The former head of an engineering unit of the Drina Corps, which led the 1995 assault on Srebrenica, Bagojevic had been asked by the tribunal to testify but he had refused, the defense ministry official said. A government source told AFP Monday that the ICTY had sent to the Bosnian authorities a secret indictment and that it had been forwarded to the Republika Srpska.

[OHR and OSCE condemn irresponsible publication of personal data in Glas Srpski](#)

In a joint statement for the press, the OHR and the OSCE strongly condemned the publication of a list of the alleged

Bosniak war criminals which appeared in Monday's edition of Glas Srpski. "The publication of this list by Glas Srpski represents a grievous contravention of acceptable press practice. It imputes guilt to individuals who have not had the benefit of due process of law," reads the statement. (All media in BiH carry the OHR & OSCE press release – Banja Luka ones on front pages)

UNMIBH Spokesman Comments on RS Documentation Center List

"Nezavisne novine" also quotes UNMIBH Spokesman, Alun Roberts, as saying that it is up to the ICTY to assess authenticity of the evidence forwarded by the RS Government Documentation Center and to decide what will be the next steps in case that the evidence is authentic. "Representatives of the RS Government claim that they forwarded the documentation to the ICTY and if that is true then it is up to the ICTY to decide on future steps. In case that the files, compiled by the Documentation Center, are forwarded to the ICTY, as representatives of the RS Government claim, then it is up to the ICTY to assess validity and legitimacy of these indictments", says Alun Roberts.

How Documentation Center Compiled List of War Crime Suspects

Today's edition of Nezavisne Novine quotes chief of the RS Government Documentation Centre, Pejo Djurasinovic, as saying that the list that was recently published in the RS media is the working material and it did not appear in the media via the Documentation Center. According to him this does not make the list less authentic. "Before the list was compiled the Documentation Center had collected evidence from the Belgrade-based Federal committee for collecting evidence for crimes committed against humanity and international law, the RS Interior Ministry including regional Police stations from all parts of the RS, Public Prosecutor's Office, Military Prosecutor's Office and Commissions on Missing Persons. "Practically the list comprises of excerpts from criminal

reports that were filed against persons accused of war crimes committed against Serbs. The criminal reports were filed before the RS courts”, says Djurasinovic. Asked to comment on does not he find strange that the list first appeared in the media and was not forwarded to the public prosecutor or the ICTY, Djurasinovic says that the ICTY does not have an access to the list since that is not the job of the Documentation Center. “Our job is to collect documents and deliver it to the authorities and they have to forward it to the ICTY. Some documents have already been delivered to the ICTY via RS institutions and we expect indictments to be issued very soon”, says Djurasinovic. Asked to comment on whether the RS judiciary will press charges against certain number of persons whose names are on the list, Djurasinovic says that the RS judiciary have already pressed charges against some persons and certain number of cases has been forwarded to the ICTY in line with “Rules of the Road.

Alexandra Stiglmayer Says Srna and “Glas srpski” Will Be Closely Monitored

“Nezavisne novine” quotes OHR Spokeswoman, Alexandra Stieglmayer, as saying that the OHR and the OSCE Mission to BiH have been concerned about increased political interference with the media by the RS authorities. “Recent events surrounding “Glas srpski” and other media outlets in the RS indicate that their editorial independence has been compromised by political interference. The OHR and the OSCE Mission to BiH will launch an official investigation into this matter and necessary actions will be taken. The working group will especially pay attention to the case of dismissed SRNA general manager, Dragan Davidovic as well as to manipulations with “Glas srpski” which recently published the list of the RS Government Center. As to Srna news agency it is a little bit strange that the RS Government appoints steering boards and general managers. As to the Documentation center list, it is obvious that the freedom of movement of those people whose

names are on the list is being jeopardized”, says Stieglmayer. Asked to comment on OHR future steps in this case Stieglmayer says that the RS Government Documentation Center list should have been forwarded to the ICTY and not to the media, adding that the RS Government and “Glas srpski” should be held accountable for it. In any case, we shall discuss this with the RS Government in the following period. Why did not they forward the list to the ICTY? The RS Government should not have let the list to be published in the media. After all, the ICTY representatives requested meeting with the chief of the Documentation Center but he never responded. “The documentation has to be presented to the ICTY and the ICTY will decide what to do with these cases”, says Stieglmayer.

Former General Manager of Srna Says SDS Applies Pressure on Srna

“Nezavisne novine” quotes former general manager of Srna news agency, Dragan Davidovic, as saying that he was dismissed because of the constant political pressures that SDS and its leading man Dragan Kalinic were applying on him. “SDS and Dragan Kalinic have been constantly applying pressure on Srna to change the editorial policy and the management structure. The political interference in work of the agency started in February this year when the non-partisan Steering Board was dismissed. The New RS Government dismissed the old Steering Board and explained that move with bad management policy. The RS Government appointed new Steering Board and new president of the Board, Milos Solaja (president of the RS Association of Journalists and owner of the International media Center in Banja Luka)”, says Davidovic. According to Davidovic, the RS Government accepted his resignation four months after he offered it in order to influence the work of the agency. He also says that apart from the RS authorities, Milos Solaja is also responsible for this.

Alexandra Stieglmayer Says There Is Corruption in RS Customs Administration

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" quotes OHR Spokeswoman, Alexandra Stieglmayer, as saying that the OHR cannot confirm that Ljuban Ecim's group operates within the RS Customs Administration. What OHR can confirm is that there is corruption within the RS Customs Administration, says Stieglmayer. Commenting on Milorad Dodik's statements that the group called "Typhoon", run by people very close to SDS, operates within the RS Customs Administration, Alexandra Stieglmayer says that the OHR cannot confirm the existence of this group but the OHR will look into Dodik's allegations. Stieglmayer called on the RS Finance Ministry and the Financial Police to tackle the issue of corruption in the RS Customs Administration. "Nezavisne novine" carried press release issued by the SDS which says that Dodik's allegations about existence of "Typhoon" are completely false and that the SDS has no knowledge that such organization exists. However, SDS appeals to the RS government and the RS Interior Ministry to inform public about Dodik's role in "Kristal banka" affair.

International Community

[OHR asks Doboј Municipality to cease all construction in Kotorsko](#)

During yesterday's meeting, representatives of the OHR, Valerie Slujiter (the Deputy High Representative for Return and Reconstruction) and the Council of Ministers, the chairman Zlatko Lagumdžija, agreed that the process of reallocation of land in both the Federation and the RS requires further review in order to ensure that these allocations are transparent, in the best public interests and non-discriminatory. The OHR also decided to request the Doboј municipality to cease all construction on the Kotorsko land plots for a period of 15 days pending the completion of review of new information presented to the OHR by Kotorsko residents. See the attachment! (All Federation media carried the press release

quite prominently)

Hamzalija Becic of the Kotorsko Residents' Board said his association is satisfied with the decision of the OHR, however he expressed doubts that municipal authorities in Doboje will comply with it.

Oslobodjenje carries a shorter editorial which quite harshly describes the efforts of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the OHR to assist Kotorsko residents. "I feel sorry for Kotorsko returnees," writes Azhar Kalamujic, "they knocked at the door of a man who, during his mandate, did everything to kill the last bit of desire for return in 10,000 refugees on whose land, Milorad Dodik and Mladen Ivanic completed the project of ethnic division of BiH."

High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch meets Orthodox Bishop Grigorije in Trebinje

During his short Thursday visit to Trebinje, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met with the Orthodox Bishop of Zahum Herzegovina, Grigorije, and discussed the present situation in BiH. Petritsch stressed after the meeting that there is no BiH without the Serbs and that there is no future in BiH without mutual cooperation among the three constituent peoples in the country. He added that Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks must jointly find solutions in order to secure their place within Europe and the world. "The peoples in BiH must also turn to economic reform, without which there is no future, neither in Trebinje nor in the rest of BiH," said Petritsch. "Petritsch stressed that special attention has to be paid to life together and minority returns, Serbs to Mostar and other towns in BiH as well as Bosniaks to Trebinje", says Petritsch. He also stressed that religious leaderships of all three nations should play a very important role. Asked to comment on whether the places of worship in eastern Herzegovina will be reconstructed soon, Petritsch said he expects positive results, stressing that the people of this

region has to understand that reconstruction of places of worship is to their best interest. The Bishop Grigorije said on his part that the negation of existence of another nation would not preserve anybody's integrity in BiH, and added that all three peoples in the country should be enabled and allowed to live in places of their choice. (RS Radio and RTRS, Nezavine and Glas Srpski prominently covered the story, while SRNA news agency and BiH Radio 1 carried a shorter news bulletin on the visit)

[Principal Deputy High Representative meets with entity Social Security Sector Ministers](#)

On the initiative of BiH Minister for European Integration Dragan Mikerevic, Principal Deputy High Representative to BiH Donald Hays, and French and Yugoslav Co-Chairs of the Stability Pact's Initiative on Social Cohesion Oliver Villey and Jela Bacovic, temporarily representing the FRY, met on Wednesday with the entity and state ministers responsible for health, pensions, welfare system, employment, refugee return and war veterans in Sarajevo. "The participants agreed on the need to be transparent about the content of the reform, which would lead to a more efficient and accountable welfare system," the spokesperson of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), Kevin Sullivan, said on Thursday.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Congressman Hyde and scandals toppling Petritsch (part 2): Arbitrary theory of conspiracy

Written by Avis Benes, spokesperson of the Office of the High Representative in BiH

Finally, there is no "toppling" or vote of non-confidence for the International Community's High Representative in BiH, Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch, by the very same International Community. It is a different story to which extent that would be the desired scenario. (NB: the bolded part was selected as the article's byline)

It is with disappointment that we have read the article by your journalist Marijan Pintaric published in *Slobodna Dalmacija* on 3 August 2001 titled "Congressman Hyde and scandals topple Petritsch". The article is quite tendentious, and is, unfortunately, full of untruths and unverified rumours. Let us only mention the most significant examples:

1. With regard to the distorted interpretations of how congressman Hyde's speech before the American Congress "made the High Representative Petritsch so angry that he decided to immediately visit Washington and to personally talk to congressman Hyde", and that he "urgently flew to Washington but came back with his hands empty", one can only say that Mr. Puntaric is obviously not too familiar with how international diplomacy functions. Ignorance is not a sin, but, however, insisting on ignorance and the lack of the desire for cognition are worrying. The facts are as follows: the

presentations by Cardinal Puljic, Bishop Peric and Mr. Ganic, as well as the speech by Mr. Hyde, were delivered on July 25 in Washington. On the other hand, the visit of Mr. Petritsch to the USA on July 26 and 27 had been planned well beforehand. On July 26, Mr. Petritsch, among others, met in New York with the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and on July 27 he met in Washington with the high officials of the State Department. Following his arrival to Washington, an "ad hoc" opportunity arose for a tentative talk with Mr. Hyde, but the meeting did not take place due to congressman's previously set commitments, which is nothing unusual. Anyone familiar with the way of making appointments for such high-level talks knows that they are planned weeks in advance and that Mr. Petritsch's trip to the USA has really nothing to do with the mentioned speeches. It would be unserious to even think that the High Representative would "urgently fly to Washington" for this mater only.

2. There are no "corruption scandals in which Petritsch's direct involvement has been revealed". There is an ungrounded

media harangue (based on “unnamed sources”) by a Sarajevo magazine which at no moment brings any evidence that would corroborate any link of Mr. Petritsch with any scandals. Unfortunately, like many other papers, *Slobodna Dalmacija* carries these writings without any checking.

3. It will suffice to note the following as a proof of the arbitrary accusations, for instance the one of alleged granting a job for the establishment of the unique register of citizens, issuance of IDs, passports and driving licences and alleged corruption of the OHR clerks and Mr. Petritsch, who have entrusted “Austrian *Siemens*, without a public international tender”, with the task:

The tender and the process of selection have been transparent and were conducted in compliance with all the regulations of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as there is no state law on public purchasing, and the OHR only assisted the BiH Ministry of Public Affairs and Communications with the selection. Only one company, *Siemens*, showed interest in the job and there is no final decision on granting the job, no final contract, and all the negotiations are run by domestic companies and not the OHR.

Let us reveal the theory of conspiracy a little bit more: contrary to some media claims, Mr. Petritsch has no relatives in the Austrian *Siemens*, but the issue is actually irrelevant bearing in mind that Austrian *Siemens* did not put its bid whatsoever. The company in question is *Siemens Business Services GmbH* from Munich. According to quite reliable information, Munich is however located in Germany and not in Austria. Anyhow, Mr. Petritsch does not have any relatives in that company either.

4. The OHR and Mr. Petritsch do not stand behind the charges raised by the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo against Mr. Jelavic and the 6 HDZ members (despite of the fact that the opinion is that any decision which unilaterally violates the Dayton

structure is unconstitutional). That was an autonomous decision of the Court and it is up to the Prosecution to establish and prove the counts of the indictment. The OHR has no wish whatsoever to interfere into the court proceedings and, whatever the outcome, it expects non-partisan and just trial with the respect of the letter of law.

5. Finally, there is no “toppling” or vote of non-confidence for the International Community’s High Representative in BiH, Mr. Wolfgang Petritsch, by the very same International Community. Mr. Puntaric is expected to be aware of the fact that Mr. Petritsch’s mandate on the position of the High Representative has recently been extended for one year by the PIC Steering Board, which would surely not be the case had the International Community had any doubts about Mr. Petritsch’s work. It is a different story to which extent the “toppling” of Mr. Petritsch would be the desired scenario of your or other journalists, but, in any case, the professional journalistic obligation is not to present things on the basis of desired disentanglement of events, but to do it on the basis of actual facts.

NOTE: Croatian media, with a two day delay, widely report on the Wednesday press conference of international organizations in Mostar, in particular on Benes’s statement regarding the speculated US Congress investigation of the work of the High Representative and Johan Verheyden (spokesman of the Provisional Administrator in Hercegovacka Banka) on the auditing process in this bank.

European Commission to aid repair of railway system in BiH

As a part of the effort of reconstruction of the war damaged railway infrastructure in BiH, the European Commission has signed another contract for the rehabilitation of the Sarajevo-Doboj-Bosanski Novi railway line. The railway link between Sarajevo and Doboj is part of the international Corridor V from Budapest via Zagreb to Ploce, which is the

shortest link from Budapest to the Adriatic cost. "This contract worth 1.507,633.60 Euro will provide for the repair of railway trucks and supply of ballast at different locations along the Sarajevo-Doboj-Bosanski Novi railway line. The contract also includes necessary repairs of the Maglaj Railway Bridge," the EC statement read. The contract has been awarded to the BiH company GIK Hidrogradnja, after international call for tender, and the expected duration of works is five months.

Together with the recently signed contracts of 5,6 million Euro for the electrification of the Sarajevo-Zenica-Doboj-Bosanski Novi line, this contract will significantly contribute towards rehabilitation of the railway network of BiH.