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BiH state-related Issues

Petritsch reiterates call for BiH accession to the Council of Europe

In a letter to General Secretary of the Council of Europe Walter Schwimmer, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch expressed his hope that since Bosnia and Herzegovina has now fulfilled a significant portion of Council of Europe membership criteria, including the passage of the Election Law, its application for membership will be considered quickly and it will soon be invited to join the organization. (Sunday's Avaz carried PR very prominently – front and the second page, Sunday's Oslobodjenje published PR almost in full but on the ninth page, Monday's Jutarnje Novine carried PR on the second page, both Banja Luka dailies and Split Slobodna Dalmacija also carried the PR)

Tokic says there will be no additional conditions for BiH's accession to the Council of Europe

The principal deputy speaker of the BiH House of Peoples, Sejfidin Tokic, told journalists on Friday in Sarajevo that there would be no additional conditions for the BiH's accession to the Council of Europe apart from the procedural ones such as a statement on the acceptance of all conventions adopted by the Council. According to the Saturday's Oslobodjenje, Tokic said that the apprehension of the most wanted war crime suspects Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic "has never been among the conditions." Of course, he added, BiH would have to fulfill some conditions even after the accession to the Council, including those related to the apprehension of war crime suspects, and the Republika Srpska was primarily expected to make progress in this area. Tokic cautiously announced that the final vote on the BiH admission into the Council of Europe would take place at the end of this month in Strasbourg.

Jutarnji List: BiH will not be a member of Council of Europe this year

Political Committee of the Council of Europe, at its session in Georgia, did not discuss the accession of BiH to this organization. The meeting was not attended by Laszlo Surjan, a special reporting official of the CE for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Committee on Legal Issues and Human Rights will discuss the Surjan's report on BiH in The Hague today, but it will not declare itself whether BiH has met pre-conditions to join the Council before the Political Committee does it. Accession of BiH will not be on the agenda of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly at the end of September, reads Jutarnji List.

Radisic reiterates there will be no joint army in BiH

According to the weekend edition of Jutarnje Novine, Serb member of the BiH Presidency Zivko Radisic once again made it clear that there would be no "joint army, joint army headquarters and joint ministry of defense in BiH." Radisic emphasized that whole Republika Srpska administration had been working on formulation of the BiH defense policy, which fully respected the constitutional position of the RS and its army, ONASA correspondent reported. According to the weekend edition of Glas Srpski, Radisic made this statement during his visit to Zvornik three days ago.

Lagumdzija, Ivanic, and Behmen discuss participation of BiH delegation at upcoming PIC session in Brussels

BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija, Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen, BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet and BiH Minister for European Integration Dragan Mikerevic met late on Friday in Sarajevo to discuss strategy for the BiH delegation's participation at the upcoming Peace Implementation Council's session in Brussels. According to the

Sunday's Oslobodjenje, the officials also considered process of Road Map conditions fulfilling and agreed concrete steps to be taken by the state and the entities' parliaments in order that BiH joins European integration.

Lagumdzija meets with World Banks Director in BiH

In the framework of the preparations for the upcoming session of the Peace Implementation Council in Brussels, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Zlatko Lagumdzija met on Friday with World Bank's Director in BiH Joseph Ingram to discuss a difficult economic situation in the country. According to the Saturday's Oslobodjenje, the two officials emphasized that an ambient had to be created to attract foreign investments, which was a priority of the current BiH authorities.

Entities' Constitutional Commissions hold consultative meeting in Banja Luka

Dnevni Avaz reports on Saturday that the members of the BiH federation and Republika Srpska Constitutional Commissions held a consultative meeting on Friday in Banja Luka behind close door. The meeting was also attended by the OHR Legal Department's official, Peter Neussl, and RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic. RS Constitutional Commission President Miroslav Mikes said following the meeting that such talks were being held in order to find solutions which would clearly show that it was about one state of BiH.

Formation proposed of a court in BiH to process war criminals

In a document delivered to BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija last Wednesday, the Hague Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte proposed formation of a single BiH court, which would exclusively deal with processing war crimes committed in the country. According to the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, the court would open its offices in all major BiH towns and it would engage both foreign and domestic legal experts selected under very strict criteria. Lagumdzija told Del Ponte

that the BiH authorities would consider the proposal. About possible establishment of a “mini tribunal,” Del Ponte also informed High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, who, according to Dnevni Avaz, absolutely supported the idea.

Vecernji List: A Mini-Hague in Sarajevo

Written by Jozo Pavkovic (provided by OHR Mostar)

A secret document titled ‘Non Paper’ that the ICTY Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte handed to the BiH authorities last week, reads it is necessary to form a single court in BiH that would only deal with war crimes cases at the “lower and medium” levels.

That court will, reportedly, open its affiliates in the major cities in BiH. It would include the best international and domestic legal experts from both entities. Establishment of the court will be supervised by The Hague, the OHR and domestic authorities.

What motivated Carla Del Ponte to make this move is probably the fact that the ICTY has huge problems with having too many cases and too few judges and courtrooms. Therefore, they would only deal with around 200 cases of persons suspected of commanding, i.e. objective responsibility by the year of 2004.

Even stronger motives for the establishing of a “mini-Hague” in Sarajevo are most certainly the poor results of the courts in BiH. In accordance with the Rome Agreement, the Hague Tribunal has been transferring less interesting cases of war crime and genocide to Cantonal courts. However, of 236 cases, only a few have been resolved. It is a public secret that the judiciary in BiH is corrupted and subject to political influence. No one trusts a judge of a nationality other than his/her own. When a Bosniak is the judge in a case against a Bosniak, Serbs and Croats doubt the objectivity of such a trial, and vice versa.

Almost every trial is labeled as a rigged one and claimed to be a showdown with persons of different political views. Three peoples in BiH have different and opposite truths when it comes to the aggressor and the victim. It is dangerous that neither prosecutors nor judges are able to rise above this cesspool of mutual accusations. Moreover, those are often used as an instrument in the hands of the political power-wielders in proving such "truth." Having in mind the fact that the ICTY is viewed as a political court in BiH, was it perhaps too early for Carla Del Ponte's proposal of establishing an objective court in BiH where those charged by the others will be standing trials? In such an atmosphere, the situation would even gain on tension instead of the tension being reduced.

This is why the International Community should secure a maximally objective trial in The Hague for all suspects regardless of their respective nationalities. It would be a contribution to BiH becoming a normal state of law in which all the three peoples would be equal. Only when this happens will it be possible to take over the hot potato from The Hague. Otherwise, proving the truth in national courts could result in new crimes in the future.

House of Peoples agreed on the BiH Law on Holidays

Weekend editions of both Banja Luka dailies report that the Collegiate Body of the BiH PA House of Peoples agreed on the proposed law on state holidays according to which the New Year's Day, the 1st of May (Labour Day) and the 25th of November (the Day of ZAVNOBiH) would be the state holidays. The proposed Law will be forwarded to the House of Representatives and if passed will become valid.

Vecernji List: BiH Presidency Member Jozo Krizanovic sends 42 senior Croat officers to retirement (provided by OHR Mostar)

Following a proposal from the Federation Ministry of Defense, BiH Presidency Member Jozo Krizanovic retired 42 senior

officers of the Croat component of the Federation Army, reads Vecernji List. Some of those are Major-General Zlatan Mijo Jelic, Brigadier-General Mario Bradara, Lieutenant-General Dragan Curcic, Major-General Ilija Nakic, Lieutenant-General Nedjeljko Obradovic, etc.

These decisions were made in accordance with a decree that was annulled in April, they were made retroactively based on Article 3, Paragraph 2 of the Decree on the conditions for retirement pension for military insurance beneficiaries in the Federation Army. Under this Article, the conditions for pension include 20 years of service and 10 years of being a military insurance beneficiary. Thus, 9 of the officers on the list do not meet those criteria and would have perhaps 10 years of service at the most.

The paper's source in the HVO claims that the Federation Ministry of Defense did not study the decree which served as a basis for the proposal put forward to Jozo Krizanovic to retire the officers, and claims that it was planted to Krizanovic, deliberately or not. It is interesting that, as far as the wartime commanding structure is concerned, none of the Brigadier-Generals renewed their contracts with the Ministry. This anonymous source says that the Defense Ministry is engaged in selective punishment and that only some of the officers are prosecuted for the mistakes made. Only three of the wartime Colonels remain in the Ministry of Defense – Ivica Zeko, Ante Jozinovic and Zivko Totic.

The financial service of the Croat component in Mostar received on the last day the lists of employees that renewed their contracts but were removed from the payroll for July because of "anti-Dayton activities," although the incrimination was neither explained or proved to any of them. Those include single mothers who did not attend either the protest line-up or the rally in Kiseljak. Also, there are around 220 "anti-Dayton activists" in the First Guard's Division.

The paper's source in the HVO also claims that the Federation Defense Ministry employs people by nepotism and that Federation Minister of Defense Mijo Anic has allegedly rewarded 12 officers by sending them to a vacation in Greece at the expense of the Ministry.

Federation

Dnevni Avaz: German Government and Bicakcic helped robbery of Mostar Aluminium

In an exclusive article on the financial transactions related to the Mostar Aluminum Company, Dnevni Avaz journalist Armin Zeba claims that the German Government and former BiH Federation Prime Minister Edhem Bicakcic supported the existence of a business arrangement between the Aluminium, BiH Elektroprivreda, Debis, VAW and Sibenik-based TLM. According to Zeba, former BiH Federation Finance Minister Dragan Covic assessed this arrangement in one of his scientific works as an informal business system. Zeba concludes that the whole concept was aimed at a robbery of Aluminium by members of one ethnic group. This just continued wartime ethnic cleansing in an economic way.

Some HDZ hard-liners recommend Neven Tomic to challenge decision on his exclusion from the party

According to the Saturday's Oslobodjenje, certain members of the HDZ radical wing recommended Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic to lodge complaint against a decision on his exclusion from the party made by the HDZ Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Board. A source of the ONASA news agency from the HDZ said that such a recommendation had been made in order to reduce political damage made to the party by Tomic's exclusion. The aforementioned HDZ hard-liners promised that Tomic's complaint would be accepted by a higher party's body, which means that he would in that case remain the HDZ member. However, Tomic

claimed earlier he had no intention to lodge any complaint against the decision on his exclusion from the BiH HDZ.

Alternative cantonal government established in Livno

According to Monday's Dnevni Avaz, an announced agreement on the establishment of the alternative cantonal government was signed late on Saturday in Livno at an initiative of the Alliance for Changes. All opposition political parties having seats in the Livno Canton Parliament signed the agreement together with the members of the Alliance.

BiH Federation Deputy Finance Minister rejected to approve payment of a backlog pension

Sarajevo dailies reported on Saturday that the payment of the first of five backlog pensions would not start although the funds had been provided and order signed by BiH Federation Finance Minister Nikola Grabovac since his deputy Sefika Hafizovic had rejected to approve the payment. "My refusal to sign the order has no any political background," Hafizovic said. She added that she had not wanted to approve the transaction because only 39 out of 42 million KM needed for the payment of the 2000 August's pension were ensured, which meant that the paid pension would be reduced by seven percent. "I will sign the order as soon as all necessary funds are provided for payment of the pension in full amount," Hafizovic emphasized.

BiH Federation Refugee Ministry initiates unconditional vacating of someone else's properties in eight months

According to Sunday's Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Federation Ministry for Social Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons will early next week send an initiative to High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to make a decision obligating all those occupying someone else's property to vacate it in eight months, regardless of whether they have accommodation or not. Deputy Federation Minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons Mijat

Tuka told the newspaper that such the initiative would be made due to a slow resolution of property claims in the entire BiH and particularly in the Republika Srpska. The second reason for the initiative is, according to Tuka, a large number of double occupants, meaning persons who do not have right for an alternative accommodation but who still illegally occupy someone else's property. However, OHR Spokesman Patrik Volf told Dnevni Avaz it was impossible for the High Representative to make such a decision since a list of illegal occupants did not exist. This means, according to Volf, that it cannot be determined whether one's property is illegally occupied without proper investigation.

Zenica BH Steel Company's Trade Union sends open letter to Petritsch and Lagumdzija

The Trade Union of the Zenica-based BH Steel Company sent an open letter to High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch and BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija in which it warned on a difficult position of the workers and a current problem of technological surplus (workers not engaged in the production process). The Union emphasized that much larger number of workers could be hired through a better organization inside the company, as well as stimulating measures to be urgently taken by the state authorities.

Refugee representatives meet with international and BiH Federation officials in Gorazde

According to the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, representatives of the Southeastern Bosnia Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons met on Friday in Gorazde with a delegation comprising officials of the OHR, UNHCR, OSCE and the BiH Federation Ministry for Refugees. It was agreed that the meeting took place during the last week's peaceful demonstrations in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo organized by the returnees to the area. Around 2.500 returnees face first autumn rains accommodated either in tents or devastated houses. The OHR

representatives, Richard Ots and Bishnu Bhandari, said that the returnees would receive an answer concerning the reconstruction of houses in seven days. Mehmed Teljigovic, the advisor for the BiH federation refugee Minister, promised that the Ministry would ensure construction material for all returnees living in the tents.

Vecernji List: Municipal Organization of the SDP established in Grude

The President of the Municipal Organization of the SDP in Grude is Mario Pezer, a 24-year-old resident of this “most Croat” town according to the last Census in BiH. Grude is the third town in the Western Herzegovina Canton with an office of the SDP. According to Pezer, soon there will be one in Siroki Brijeg as well. Pezer says the same people have been in power for the last 20 years and are unable to respond to the challenges of time.

The inaugural session of the SDP in Grude was held in the presence of Karlo Filipovic, Zora Marjanovic and Tomislav Limov, members of the SDP Presidency and Central Board.

Republika Srpska

RS Prime Minister comments on possible government reshuffle

Weekend editions of both Banja Luka dailies quote the Republika Srpska Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic as saying that the postponement of the RS National Assembly session has nothing to do with rumours that there is no parliamentary majority for adoption of the RS Law on Co-operation with the Hague Tribunal (ICTY). “It is only a rumour and the truth is that the RS National Assembly session has been postponed because of the visit of a RS parliamentary delegation to The Hague and because I am going to participate in the work of the upcoming Peace Implementation Council session”, says Ivanic.

Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that the set of tax laws and the RS Law on Co-operation with the ICTY are the main stumbling blocks in SDS-PDP relations. According to the paper, the RS Law on ICTY caused a serious conflict between the coalition partners. This means that the ruling coalition is buying time and trying to reach a compromise. The Nezavisne also reports that since the coalition partners failed to agree on government reshuffle at a secret meeting held recently in Mrakovica, they have to make things up between them. Asked to comment on why none of the RS representatives met with Biljana Plavsic at the Belgrade Airport, Ivanic says that he was not informed about the date of her arrival and that he was very busy on Thursday. "I can say that I am very glad that Ms. Plavsic was temporarily released because she deserved it", says Ivanic. Commenting on possible Government reshuffle, Ivanic says that it is a question that he has to decide on and that he has no intention to change anything in the RS Government in the next 20 days.

Why Biljana Plavsic is not in the RS?

Weekend edition of Glas Srpski quotes the Republika Srpska Prime Minister's Advisor for Co-operation with the Hague Tribunal (ICTY), Sinisa Djordjevic, as saying that the former RS President, Biljana Plavsic, will stay in Belgrade because she asked for it. Djordjevic says that the RS Interior Ministry could have provided security for Biljana Plavsic either in Banja Luka or in any other town in the RS. He also says that the RS Government and the Government of Serbia provided the same guarantees for Plavsic. "It is also true that the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, thought before that the RS authorities are not capable to meet all necessary requirements in the case of Biljana Plavsic. Carla Del Ponte was also suspicious about guarantees offered by the Serbian Government and she was announcing that Plavsic would be temporarily released only if she stays in the Netherlands. The changes in Serbia and the extradition of Slobodan

Milosevic certainly had a great impact on Carla Del Ponte and made her accept the guarantees offered by the Serbian Government", says Djodjevic.

RS Commodity Reserves filed lawsuits against 175 enterprises

Weekend edition of Glas Srpski quotes General manager of the RS Commodity Reserves Directorate that the RS Commodity Reserves sued 175 enterprises who owe more than 23 million KM.

Srebrenica Mayor will request OHR to appoint special envoy for Srebrenica

Both Banja Luka dailies report that Srebrenica Mayor Sefket Hafizovic will request the OHR to appoint special envoy for Srebrenica who would mediate between the state, entity and local authorities in Srebrenica. Hafizovic says he is not satisfied with the attitude of the Republika Srpska Government and the IC representatives towards Srebrenica. "The people in this municipality have been waiting for years to resolve their problems such as accommodation, water supply, etc.", says Hafizovic. He also emphasises that he will request the privatisation of the state-owned enterprises in Srebrenica to be annulled. President of the Srebrenica Municipal Council Desnica Radivojevic says that the RS Government, SDS and PDP work together against the multiethnic government concept.

PDP's office broken into for the second time

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the office of the PDP Executive Board was broken into again in the night between 7 and 8 September this year. "In the second attack on the PDP office for less than three months, minor material damage was caused and two PCs were stolen, containing data of great importance to the party," the PDP said in a statement issued two days ago. The party said that the attack demonstrated the readiness of certain criminal circles to fiercely counter the drive against corruption and crime. The statement said that such actions were aimed at sowing fear among all those who had

joined the fight against crime and those who intended to join the struggle. "The raid on our office will not make the PDP waver in its difficult and dangerous struggle against crime and corruption and the nature of our activities in the coming days will be even more resolute and concrete," the statement said.

Grenade hurled at a Bosniak house in Prijedor

Srna News Agency reports that a hand grenade was hurled into the back yard of Vahid Imsirevic's house in Prijedor on Saturday night. No one was injured in the explosion. Vahid's wife Samira said that some other provocation "have also been taking place in this part of the Prijedor municipality" and that the local police have not taken adequate steps to protect the returnees. A team from the Prijedor public security centre has launched an investigation into the bomb attack.

International Community

New SFOR Commander assumes duty

The Sarajevo dailies reports on Saturday that US General John Sylvester on Friday in Sarajevo took over the office of the SFOR Commander in BiH from his colleague Michael Dodson. At the ceremony, NATO south wing commander, Admiral James Ellis, said that the most important task in the coming period would be work on the unification of armies in BiH. "An unified military structure is an important principle, crucial for the national reconciliation, and this will therefore be one of the main challenges of the general Sylvester in the coming period," Ellis emphasized.

Petritsch meets with Mostar Aluminum General Director

Oslobodjenje reports on Saturday that High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch had met on Thursday with Mijo Brajkovic, the director of the Mostar Aluminium. According to the

newspaper, officially, Petritsch recommended Brajkovic to meet with the officials of the BiH Federation Government and resolve a dispute concerning the ownership over the Aluminium shares. But, *Oslobodjenje* reads that "certain well-informed sources" claim that Petritsch's support to the current company's management is actually standing behind this meeting. The newspaper quoted OHR Spokesperson Oleg Milisic as saying that Petritsch had recommended Brajkovic to take certain steps, talk to the officials of the BiH Federation Government in order that those problems are finally resolved. Following the meeting, Brajkovic according to *Oslobodjenje* was claiming that he had gained support of the High Representative (not specifying for what?). Milisic denied that the issue of support had been a subject of discussion at the meeting.

Oslobodjenje: Robinson checks on legal foundation of HPT Mostar claim for Eronet's shares

According to Monday's *Oslobodjenje*, the Hercegovacka Banka will not easily give up Eronet's shares bought by its companies Hercegovina Osiguranje and Cro-Herc more than a year ago. The transaction was declared illegal by the BiH Federation Agency for Privatization. The Bank's Provisional Administrator, Toby Robinson, has requested experts to check on legal foundation of the Agency's decision to annul the transaction and of a claim of HPT Mostar for Eronet's shares.

The Yugoslav Parliament's House of Republics supports establishment of the BiH-FRY Interstate Cooperation Council

Oslobodjenje reports on Saturday that the Yugoslav Parliament's Council of Republics on Thursday ratified the BiH-FRY agreement on the establishment of the interstate cooperation council signed on May 22 this year in Belgrade. According to the newspaper, another Yugoslav parliamentary house, the Council of Citizens, was expected to do the same on Friday. The interstate cooperation council comprising the President of FRY and members of the BiH Presidency is designed

to deal with the determination of the interstate border-line and definition of the visa regime between the two countries.

Serb Patriarch Pavle and Greek Orthodox Archbishop Hristodulu to visit Bijeljina

Weekend edition of Glas Srpski reports that Serb Patriarch Pavle and the Archbishop of the Athens and Hellada, Hristodulu will visit Bijeljina next Thursday. The two religious leaders will hold memorial service for soldiers killed in the recent war. According to the paper the Republika Srpska leadership is expected to attend the memorial service in Bijeljina.

ICTY Spokeswoman says there are no journalists on the ICTY list

Today's edition of Glas Srpski quotes the Hague Tribunal (ICTY) spokeswoman, Florence Hartman, as saying that the ICTY Prosecutor's Office has not prepared indictment against any journalist from the former Yugoslavia, because "we do not have findings that any of journalists called for murders." Hartman did not dismiss the possibility that legal proceedings against journalists can be commenced. "It can happen if we find out about it", says Hartman.

Vecernji List: Trial of Mladen Naletilic and Vinko Martinovic to start today

(provided by OHR Mostar)

The trial of Mladen Naletilic Tuta and Vinko Martinovic Stela will start today before the three-member panel of judges of the ICTY which will be chaired by the Chinese Judge Liu Daqun.

The prosecution has 82 witnesses and delivered 19 boxes with over 5,000 documents prior to the trial. Some of them are supposed to point to a link of the Croatian political and intelligence leaderships with what was happening in Herzegovina, and these include copies of newspaper photographs

of Tuta in the company of Miroslav Tudjman. Stela's attorneys Branko Seric and Zelimir Par refused to comment on the contents of those documents and only said that some of them are in favour of the defense.

Slobodna Dalmacija, in an article written by Ivica Mlivoncic, says that Tuta and Stela will also be charged with "imposing the Croatian language and education in the Herzegovinian municipalities of Stolac, Capljina and Mostar." The daily says it is bizarre that Tuta and Stela, in the bill of indictment, are qualified as "Bosnian Croats," although the former was born in Siroki Brijeg and the latter in Mostar and both can only be Herzegovinian Croats. The author next recalls that a journalist from Zagreb once called Bishop Ratko Peric a "Bosnian bishop," to which Bishop Peric reacted by saying that he read more than once in the international press "the distasteful journalistic construction that 'the Bosnian city of Mostar' is one of the most destroyed ones in Herzegovina."

"However, this nomenclature derives from the national ideology that sees only one 'Bosnian people' in BiH with three tribes – Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks-Muslims. It is an attempt of creating a super-nation in BiH, which is a Sisyphean task as the history has shown. It is also an attempt of assimilating Herzegovina in Bosnia, and three peoples into one 'Bosnian people' (...)," says Mlivoncic.

The language in which the indictment against Tuta and Stela was written is not the Croatian standard language, reads the article, and is an example pointing to the tendency of assimilating the Croatian language in BiH into some sort of "Bosnian language." While Tuta and Stela are suspected of ethnic cleaning, Muslim generals Hadzihasanovic and Alagic evaded this incrimination and no one knows why. According to Mlivoncic's research results, 100,300 Croats either were expelled or fled from the municipalities of Bugojno, Busovaca, Kakanj, Maglaj, Novi Travnik, Travnik, Vares, Vitez, Zavidovici, Zenica and Zepce, and the number of Muslims that

experienced the same during the conflict between the HVO and the Army of BiH is 50,000.

Editorial:

Feral Tribune: Tensions between 'foreign' and 'domestic' ones are mounting

Written by Ivan Lovrenovic (provided by OHR Mostar)

The curve that reflects a development of relations between the International Administration (a sort of Super-Government in BiH) on one side and domestic public and political factors on the other side, has been nervously trembling lately, marking bigger and more frequent quakes. The autumn, for which big events such as the HDZ referendum for 'the Constitution of the Croat people' and 'the third entity' or an Emergency SDA Congress have been announced might be stormy first of all because the status and position that the OHR and Wolfgang Petritsch, its Head, as well as all other relevant instances and representatives of the International Civil Administration used to have in the public has changed.

People from the Sarajevo diplomatic circles wonder very often maliciously but not completely without grounds who the real HR is: the gentleman who has this mandate or the current American Ambassador in BiH.

The real impact on the relations between 'the domestic' and 'foreign ones' took place after the summer, when one affair followed another. The first scandal broke out with regard to the third GSM operator. Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, as well as all prominent Alliance leaders, and the whole public strongly reacted against it. Under this great pressure the decision was withdrawn, although in public Wolfgang Petritsch was defending it frantically.

A similar scandal broke out with regard to the CIPS project. This decision was also strongly objected because the way by which Siemens was selected was not transparent. It has been suspended for a while as well.

The OHR and Petritsch has been strongly disputed because of the disastrously bad way that the transformation of the BiH RTV into the Federation TV and PBS, the process that European experts selected by the OHR have been running for a few years, is being conducted. The general judgment is that the results of the alleged transformation are a complete disaster of the Sarajevo TV outlet which used to be so big and powerful.

However, obviously, the case of the Mostar Aluminij will be the most dramatic test for the relations between new partners. The way that the privatization of this profitable Company will be completed and legalized will definitely show whether with the IC blessing the principle of robbery and ethnic discrimination will triumph over the principle of justice. For the time being the first principle has better chances, wrapped up in a sweet formulation: the OHR experts say that principle of reality and usefulness should be respected. Only those who are the most deprived of their rights advocate the second principle, and their voice is the weakest one.

These affairs have shown an interesting thing: reactions against criticism coming from the OHR and other structures have revealed that that they are not much different from the domestic political factors when their 'own skin' is in question. Their attitude in any of these cases was also frantically defensive and quarreling, with a striking animosity against critics and criticism. For the Bosnian public it was especially unpleasant to reveal that in every moment they are ready to swoop down on media and journalists as the main initiators of a misunderstanding.

Pressed by successive affairs in which all of a sudden many weak and suspicious sides within the International

Administration reached the public, Petritsch reacted proclaiming establishing of two forums at the same time: the Partners' Forum, within which a political cooperation between 'domestic' and 'foreign' authorities would be developed and the Civic Forum, that would serve him for the accepting of individual intellectuals' opinions, public workers etc...

The idea has not been realized yet, and you do not have to be a too big skeptic to envisage its failure: namely, if such forms of cooperation are desirable, it is unclear as to how they were not desirable before. Still if they seriously want to find some modus of articulation of their own responsibility, any forums of this sort cannot be used to reach this end.

A bitter and increasingly disturbing realization about a deep paradox of the role of the International Civil Establishment in BiH in the ruling over BiH remains; it is here in a proclaimed service of the democracy promotion, and it has been appointed in a way that in its behavior it suspends basic democratic forms and rules.

We shall see very soon whether an increased critical sensibility of the BiH media and political public will bring to an end 'a golden time' of great authorities of this establishment without any clearly defined responsibility.