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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Council Of Ministers Negotiates with World Bank

Nezavisne novine report the BiH Council of Ministers accepted the initiative to commence talks with World Bank in order to finalize contract on loan for private sector in Republika Srpska, worth 9 million KM. The loan should be approved inline with standards of the International Association for Developments. As BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Azra Hadziahmetovic explained, the aim of this project is to enable approach of private sector to financing and support its development, as well as to support development of private banking sector, thus creating competition of banking market in the RS.

Federation

International Principals advise against Halilovic' re-assuming ministerial post; Alliance to decide today

At their regular weekly meeting, which took place on Wednesday, the Principals of the five main international organizations in BiH – Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative, General John Sylvester, the SFOR Commander, Jacques Paul Klein, the Special Representative of the U.N. Secretary General and Co-ordinator of U.N. Operations in BiH, Robert Beecroft, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Werner Blatter, Chief of the UNHCR Mission to BiH – agreed that it would be advisable for Sefer Halilovic not to re-assume his former position as Minister for Social

Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons in the Federation Government, before his trial in the Hague takes place and his role in the 1992-1995 war in BiH is clarified.

“While there are no legal obstacles to such a move and Mr Halilovic, by all accounts, carried out his tasks as minister to everybody’s satisfaction, it would not be in accordance with European standards if a person indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal in the Hague held a ministerial position. This might decrease the respect that the Federation Government enjoys and put in question the attempts to exclude indicted war criminals from public life,” the principals said in a [press release](#). See below. (Most media carried the item: One of the leading headlines in most electronic media in the Federation, Osloobdjenje on page 3; however, Avaz on page 5, and Jutarnje did not carry the press release at all. Split’s Slobodna Dalmacija and both Banja Luka dailies quoted the text of the press release)

In the mean time, the Alliance is to hold a key meeting today, during which its senior representatives and leaders will decide whether Halilovic will return to the post and rule on several other outstanding issues plaguing the coalition. Most hope that the dispute will be resolved in a satisfactory manner for all sides, or the Alliance will face a serious crisis, in particular if the BPS (Halilovic’s Bosnian Patriotic Party) deliver on its threat to leave the coalition if its demands are not met.

Alliance – a Cover for the Croat financial lobby?

In a front page story, Osloobdjenje reports that certain financial lobbies are using the ruling Alliance as a cover up for their financial operations. The daily quotes Rasim Kadic, the president of the LDS (Liberal Democratic Party) as saying that most such activities take place via the NHI (New Croatian Initiative) and its president, Kresimir Zubak, “whose most

recent task was to secure the virtual control over the privatization sector and the Tax Management in the Federation.” Vice President of the Federation, Safet Halilovic, told the daily that there have been numerous complaints about the predominate position of the Croat personnel in the entity’s financial institutions, but stressed that such national division of important post was inherited from the previous authority and has become virtually static. “Alliance managed to abolish parallel institutions, but did not rotate some of the leading posts,” Halilovic said.

Government moves to merge Croat, Bosniak security service

The Federation government at its Thursday [10 January] session in Mostar passed a draft Federation law on intelligence and security service, which will be forwarded to the Parliament, the Federation government’s press office announced in a statement carried by most media in the entity. Under the proposal, the existing two services in the Federation – the Agency for Research and Documentation (Bosniak AID) and the National Security Service (Croat SNS) – will merge into one and the existing national ones will stop working 90 days after the law takes effect, and those who continue to do parallel intelligence work will face imprisonment between six months and five years. (This item was carried by all media in the Federation)

Party for BiH: Our party slogan is not an original idea; Wolfgang Petritsch came up with the same idea

Commenting for Dnevni Avaz the last year’s election slogan of the Party for BiH (SbiH), – BiH without entities – Safet Halilovic said that his party meant to say that it will insist on the rationalisation of certain posts in BiH. “Party for BiH accepts all forms of rationalisation, however, that has to be

done symmetrically in both entities,” Halilovic said, adding that this is not an original idea of one party. “That is an idea which was recently also put forth, among others, by the High Representative,” he stressed at the end. (note: the article is as vague in the original. It is not clear whether Halilovic is referring to the slogan or to the “rationalisation” as to the idea of the HR. It is also not clear what the rationalisation means – possibly – the reorganisation of seats with significant reduction in their number)

Investigation into assassination of Jozo Leutar takes a new turn

Dnevni List writes that, although it was as far back as September 2000 that the then Federation Deputy Minister of the Interior Bacak and ten to fifteen other officials walked out of the Ministry, only now is this action interpreted as a resistance to the SRSJ Jacques Klein and as the only way of warning the public that the investigation into the assassination of the late Deputy Minister Leutar is going in a wrong direction.

The daily learned from sources close to the Federation Ministry of the Interior that more than ten mujahedeens (most of them coming from Egypt) were arrested a while ago and transferred to the SFOR base in Butmir. After the arrest, the Federation Deputy Minister of the Interior Tomislav Limov, the Federation Police Commissioner Dragan Lukac and the Federation Prosecutor started receiving threats that the destiny of Jozo Leutar awaited them as well. This made Deputy Minister Limov request the SNS (National Security Service) to provide him with all they have on the Leutar case so that he can start another investigation into the assassination, but this time looking only for the masterminds behind it.

According to Dnevni List, the President of the New Croat

Initiative, Kresimir Zubak, has recently requested “Jaganjac and some old Bosniak vassals,” to finally disclose the real truth about both the masterminds and the direct perpetrators of the assassination.

Republika Srpska

Major fruit and vegetable company in the RS sold to a Swiss buyer

The RS government sold on Thursday a 66.35-percent stake in fruit and vegetable processing company Vitaminka to Swiss trading company, KREIS. Although valued at more than 16 million convertible marks , the stake was sold to Basel-based KREIS for only 250,000 marks. However, according to a purchasing contract, KREIS was obliged to invest 10.15 million marks into Vitaminka over the next three years. KREIS head, Ilija Sirovina, said that there would be no job cuts and the company’s production would be increased. Vitaminka is the third company of strategic importance to be sold in the privatization process in the RS. This story was one of the top business stories in the electronic media across BiH.

RS Tax Administration Started Working

Glas srpski (the leading title on the cover: REGISTER AND PAY) reports that the RS Tax administration started working as of January 1st 2002. Head of RS Tax Administration Milica Bisic said that “tax payers, from now on, fill in tax forms and are responsible for the contents of them. Everybody is responsible to submit tax form, regardless of whether they would or would not pay the tax. Department for investigation and information would check on the information presented in the form”, said Bisic.

RS Treasury In Function

Glas srpski writes that the RS prime Minister Mladen Ivanic, by payment of 300 000 KM from the account of the RS Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons, officially marked the beginning of work of the RS Treasury. The amount paid from the account of the RS Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons is a first payment from 1,2 million KM worth contract signed by this Ministry with Croatian Government and the UN Mission for returns to Posavina.

Introduction of Treasury is one of phases of reform of stated administration, prior to which the RS National Assembly passed set of Law on tax administration, GS writes.

International Community

BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights: High Representatives decision should be a subject to review

In a letter to the dismissed HDZ leader, Ante Jelavic, the president of the BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Srdjan Dizdarevic, notes that he has not discovered any form of systematic discrimination of the Croat people in BiH or any elements of discrimination in Jelavic's removal from the post by the High Representative. Dizdarevic, however, stresses that, despite clear provisions in the Annex 10 of the DPA and the Bonn powers, decisions of the High Representative should be a subject to review. In addition, Dizdarevic argues that the transfer of Jelavic's case from the Cantonal Court in Mostar to the one in Sarajevo is also questionable.

Dnevni Avaz awards its Persons of the Year: Peter Nicholl, Manfred Dauster and Danis Tanovic

Dnevni Avaz reports prominently about the last night's awards

ceremony to the Avaz Personalities of the Year contest. Peter Nicholl, the governor of the BiH Central Bank, Manfred Dauster, the head of the OHR Anti-Fraud Department, Danis Tanovic, young Bosnian film director and Emir Kabil, a cardio-surgeon from Sarajevo were the recipients of the award. During the ceremony, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, addressed the recipients and the audience, saying that their success is the best indicator that BiH is heading in a better future. "The four "Persons of the Year" stand for a Bosnia and Herzegovina that is evolving across a broad spectrum – in science, in the arts, in economics, in the field of justice. This shows that the country is no longer defined by politics alone," said Petritsch during the last night's ceremony.

EU Ambassadors in an official visit to Mostar – Mostar needs an independent budget

Dnevni List reports on the EU Ambassadors' visit to Mostar yesterday and quotes the Spanish Ambassador Rafael Vale Garagorri as saying that their talks with the city officials were constructive and that they delivered a strong message with their visit. Ambassador Garagorri said that a considerable progress was made in terms of reintegration of Mostar, which is evident in the realization of the "One City – One Police" project. It is particularly important to work on three elements: the City must have an independent budget in order to maintain the existing resources, the provisions of the Interim Statute of Mostar should be translated into the Federation Law, if possible through the Local Self-Government Law, and the third element would be establishing of the Tax Administration Office as a city office.

Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic and his Deputy Hamdija Jahic expressed their satisfaction about the Ambassadors' visit as well as about their support to the joint plan of city integration. Tomic said Mostar cannot make it on its own and added: "I am really happy that the EU member states are still standing by the City. We are glad they realize that Mostar can

be a successful and normal city.”

Slobodna Dalmacija and Vecernji List also have also carried reports on the EU Ambassadors’ visit to Mostar.

Editorials

Dnevni List: Ambassadors in Mostar

By Miso Roleta

The newly appointed Head of the Office of the High Representative in Mostar, Jean-Pierre Bercot and the European Union Ambassadors who were on an official visit to Mostar yesterday, sent out a clear and explicit message that further progress in Mostar will be encouraging for the whole of BiH, reads Dnevni List in a commentary which does not contain much commenting on the visit but is, for the most part, a factual account of the event and statements.

The EU Ambassador expressed their interest in Mostar, which is prepared to develop to the modern European standards and which plays the main role in the process of BiH joining the European Union. The EU commended the local authorities in their efforts at the integration of Mostar. One of the primary results of their efforts is the “One City – One Police” project.

Mostar has a specific status and the EU Ambassadors expressed their reservations about the idea of extending the financial facility created for Mostar to municipalities in the Federation. The proposal of establishment the Tax Administration Office as a City office is an especially interesting one.

The EU Ambassadors said they recognized the progress that had been made so far. In order not to keep the whole event in the idyllic tone, it was said that there are still some things that need to be done for Mostar to become a tolerant and

multiethnic city again. Continuation of the refugee return process and the process is necessary, as well as property repossession, which will be a core priority of all EU member states.

Dnevni List: Lists

By Ante Markotic

Dnevni List commentary reads that the “Croatocide” is being erased under “Wolf-gang’s direction”: implementation of the historic Constitutional Court decision (that Croat and Serb judges were against) of all people and in all territories will bring equality to everyone, including Croats, in the territories where they already do not exist or are close to non-existence (RS), whereas the Croats in the Federation will be awarded with the additional Cyrillic script.

“What would our history be like if (God forbid!) Slobodan, Radovan, Ratko, Milan... or Gavrillo (?!) were Croats. (What would Petritsch know about Zrinski-Frankopani or Andrijica Simic...?!) Lists of everything and nothing, intended for mass use, are (probably) behind us, and census is certainly ahead of us. That will be some event, if it ever takes place. No one (except WP) knows why it was not conducted when many expected it to happen (2001). A hundred and more years ago, his fellow countrymen did it right after coming here. He obviously has other things to do: to play the music and to conduct it, to elect and to parade, to save and to lend, to be number one, and his deputy has to ‘strip and enjoy’,” says Markotic, inter alia, in his commentary.

Main Headlines

Headlines in Sarajevo dailies:

Oslobodjenje: Alliance – a cover for the Croat financial lobby

(also Topic of the Day: Status of the City of Sarajevo and its relations with the Canton)

Dnevni Avaz: Federation Ombudsmen: Suspicions about Trade with Children

Jutarnje Novine: Alliance to decide about its unity at today's session

Headlines in the Mostar daily:

Dnevni List: "Investigation in assassination of Jozo Leutar takes a new turn"

"Srdjan Dizdarevic to Jelavic – Dismissed officials must be entitled to appeal"

Headlines in Banja Luka dailies

Glas srpski:

-RS Tax Administration Started Working – REGISTER AND PAY

-International Principals on Sefer Halilovic – FROM THE HAGUE BACK TO THE ARMCHAIR

Nezavisne novine:

-Huge photo from Sarajevo Tobacco factory – Financial police established 100% ownership rate of state in Sarajevo Tobacco Factory WORKERS RAN OUT OF FILTERS EVEN

– Alliance for Changes today to decide on requests of BPS – HALILOVIC AND THE PARTY REMAIN "SHORT SLEEVED"