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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Council of Ministers to request investigation into the last year's operations of the BiH refugee and Human Rights Ministry

According to Oslobodjenje, The BiH Council of Ministers will request the authorized prosecution office to investigate into the last year's operations of the state Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees. The Audit Office tasked to investigate into the work of the BiH state institutions has found out that the Ministry had illegally spent 1.8 million KM in the period.

BiH House of Representatives supports BiH foreign policy priorities

According to Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives supported the document entitled: "General Directions and Priorities of the BiH Foreign Policy" at its session held on Thursday in Sarajevo. The deputies requested

the House's Foreign Affairs Commission and the Collegium to improve text of the proposed conclusions related to the document initially drafted and adopted by the BiH Presidency.

Reuters: BiH and FRY sign free trade agreement

BiH and FRY signed a free trade agreement in Belgrade on Thursday in a step towards reviving economic relations and liberalising the flow of goods in a region devastated by a decade of wars. The two countries are reforging ties to help repair their own shattered economies and also to prepare the ground for their goal of eventual European Union membership, which would require them to open up their markets. "Expert groups have harmonised the final text of the agreement and in the next month it has to be ratified by the two parliaments before it enters into effect," Beta news agency quoted Dejan Jovovic, Yugoslav assistant minister for foreign economic relations, as saying after the signing. BiH's economy was closely linked to that of the rest of Yugoslavia before it seceded along with Croatia, Slovenia and Macedonia amid the Balkan wars of the early 1990s. Only in the past year were full diplomatic relations re-established between Bosnia and post-war Yugoslavia, which now comprises just Serbia and the small coastal republic of Montenegro. Restoring healthy trade is the next step. Jovovic said Yugoslavia would immediately abolishing all customs duties except for oil and used tyres, while Bosnia would phase out duties on Yugoslav goods by 2004. Saedeta Ceric, BiH's Assistant Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Minister, said the two countries expected their annual trade to almost double from \$400 million at present to some \$700 million in 2004.

Spiric says BiH facing bankruptcy

Both Banja Luka dailies quote Deputy Speaker of the BiH House of Peoples Nikola Spiric as saying that BiH was totally insolvent "thanks" to the "successful" government of the Alliance for Change. "Nobody has the courage to say that BiH

has bankrupted,” Spiric told a news conference, adding that the work of the BiH institutions is jeopardised. Recalling that the rebalance of the 2001 state budget had provided an additional 54.8m convertible marks, Spiric said that nothing “would be contentious if the rebalance had been done in the first nine months. “To go ahead with the budget rebalance at the end of December in order to cover all foolish actions of the executive authorities is a practice being applied nowhere else in the world,” Spiric said, adding that the BiH Council of Ministers “has no arguments to illustrate the inaptitude of the previous authorities”. In addition, Spiric said,” the Alliance for Change wants to spend 50 per cent of the former Yugoslavia succession money to pay out social welfare benefits and show how successful it is,” Spiric said, adding that “this was not being done even during the notorious regime of Slobodan Milosevic.”

Federation

BiH Federation Government approves privatization of PBS bank

Oslobodjenje reports that, at its session held late on Thursday in Sarajevo, the BiH Federation Government approved signing of the two contracts related to the privatization of three banks belonging to the PBS system (PBS Sarajevo, Central Profit Bank Sarajevo and Travnik Bank). According to the Government’s Information Office, it is about a contract on purchase of shares to be concluded between the BiH Federation Finance Ministry and the Sarajevo Privatization Venture (SPV), and about a contract on the registration of shares and shareholders.

BiH Federation House of Representatives adopts

draft Law on Roads

Oslobodjenje reports that, the BiH Federation House of Representatives adopted the entity Law on the Roads at its session held on Thursday in Sarajevo. According to the Federation Transport and Communication Minister Besim Mehmedic, the Law defines that the entity Directorate for Roads will have its own budget and revenues and will therefore be excluded from the Federation Budget.

Filipovic and Halilovic visit Stolac

Oslobodjenje reports that BiH Federation President Karlo Filipovic and Vice-president Safet Halilovic visited Stolac on Thursday to meet with the municipal leadership headed by Mayor Zeljko Obradovic and discuss the current political and security situation in the area following the recent incidents. "Together with municipal and cantonal institutions, we will do our best to stabilize the situation and ensure the relation of mutual confidence between the people of all religions and nations living here," Filipovic said following the meeting.

HDZ BiH leadership decides that the party will be officially represented by Merdzo and not Jelavic

According to Dnevni Avaz, the HDZ BiH leadership has recently decided that, in the upcoming period, the party would be officially represented by General Secretary Josip Merdzo and not any more by Ante Jelavic, who had been removed from the office of the HDZ President by High representative Wolfgang Petritsch on March 7 this year. The decision was made in order to make the party's court registration and participation in the next elections possible.

Glas Srpski: Anic to be removed?

Glas Srpski reports that Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic will be removed when he returns from 7-day visit to Israel. According to Tanjug news agency, one of the main reasons for

Anic's removal is his decision to visit Israel and discuss the cooperation in field of arms and military equipment production with the Israeli representatives. BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija also said, upon his return from Moscow, that Anic will be removed. "I think that the Defense Ministry has chosen the worst moment to visit Israel. It would be better for Minister Anic if he was not there. That is the last thing he needed", said Lagumdžija and added that he was informed about the visit only after the details of the visit had been arranged. The Party of Democratic Action (SDA) also requested removal of Anic, explaining that the visit will cause negative reactions in Islamic countries, which are sympathetic towards BiH.

Dnevni List: Mossad wants Anic to prevent delivery of weapons from BiH to Hamas

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List says that the Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic has recently been a target to attacks from the Bosniak leaders in the Alliance, opposition and a part of the Sarajevo press for his unexpected visit to Israel.

The daily says that the Israeli intelligence service Mossad informed the Federation Ministry of Defense of an unbelievable scandal. The Federation Army was procuring military equipment and weapons via the MPRI, the American company authorized by the US Government for this sort of supply. According to Mossad agents, individual power wielders from the former composition of the Ministry were selling those weapons and equipment to the Palestinian militant organization Hamas. The case is, reportedly, directly connected with the investigation into the smuggling of weapons to Kosovo.

Dnevni List: Owners of the Hercegovacka Banka ready to sell stocks to have the Bank re-opened

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries a lengthy piece about the Hercegovacka Banka in light of the appearance of the two lists of people that cannot withdraw the money from the bank and an alleged ultimatum to the bank's stockholders, given by the Provisional Administrator Toby Robinson, according to which they had to sell their stocks and, with regards to the ultimatum, declare themselves by December 20. The papers contacted the spokesperson of the Federation Banking Agency, Ibrahim Polimac, asking him to comment the lists and whether the lists could be considered as something normal in terms of normal banking standards in the world. Polimac said that banks throughout the world pay special attention when doing business with linked persons. "In that sense, the Basel-based Board for super-auditing produced basic principles that BiH is trying to comply with. Taking into account all the relevant experience in the world, the HR amended the Law on Banks of the FBiH, according to which this procedure is being carried out", said Polimac. When asked to comment an alleged ultimatum to the HB stockholders, given by Ms. Toby Robinson (see yesterday's Cropress summary and today's Vecernji List), Polimac said that the Federation Banking Agency was not aware of this information adding that the Provisional Administration of the HB has an authority to suggest the stockholders to sell their shares but cannot give ultimatums. Dnevni List tried to get hold of Johan Verheyden to comment the existence of such an ultimatum but was unable to contact him because they were told that he was busy. The papers also carries reactions to the lists of people that cannot withdraw money from the HB. One of the reactions came from the HDZ BiH's Board for Economy which is of opinion that the whole scheme violates fundamental human rights including the right to private property and that it discriminates and discredits people for no cause (...), reads Dnevni List.

Dnevni List: Statement of the Day: Toby Robinson,

the Provisional Administrator of Hercegovacka Banka

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List, in their Statement of the Day section, quote Toby Robinson as saying: "Still, it should be stressed that the fact that someone's name appeared on the list does NOT imply that they are guilty or that they, deliberately or not, violated their duties, but it is so stipulated by the Law."

Vecernji List: Interview with Ivica Karlovic, former CEO of Hercegovacka Banka

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries an interview with the former CEO of the Hercegovacka Banka, Ivica Karlovic, in which said that he was surprised to hear that some loans would be written off especially bearing in mind that they were secured with mortgages. "Nobody was gifted by the bank. All the loans are clear and nobody has the right to write the loans off. I can now say that the raid in the HB was economically motivated because the bank is worth a fortune. Somebody wants to take control of the bank", says Karlovic. When asked whether he thought the bank would be liquidated, Karlovic said that he did not believe that the bank would be liquidated from day one because it is hard to liquidate something which is worth that much adding that he believed that the bank would re-open again. "I do not know if it's going to happen under the name "Hercegovacka Banka" because there are a lot of banks that are interested in buying it including some Austrian banks", said Karlovic. Ivica Karlovic also commented Verheyden's claims that the Monitor Company got a loan worth half the bank's assets and that the whole of operation was illegal: "When I took over the bank, the debt of the Monitor Company was already there but it was there on the basis of guarantees and credits for the machinery received from Germany and the debt

itself amounted to some 13 million KMs. But the Monitor was returning the credit to Germany. Hercegovacka Banka opened that letter of credit and the super-warrantor was the Privredna Banka Zagreb (PBZ). We had the mortgage on the Monitor's machinery and other property registered, and the same was done by the PBZ in order to be safe in case of arrears. There were problems with the return of the credit. But the credit was partially paid back, I do not have exact figures, but I know that the debt is not big any more. It is true that when the bank started to work, a letter of credit was opened but it does not mean that the Monitor Company was given money. Monitor were given a guarantee – if they do not return it (the credit), the HB would, if the HB did not, than the PBZ would. The whole story about the 54 million KMs on the HDZ account, secret sub-accounts, money laundry, it's all down to the fact whether someone got a loan or did not.

In a separate article Vecernji List carries Ljubo Cesic Rojs as saying that he would sue Johan Verheyden, Toby Robinson, Vecernji List and its journalist, Dejan Jazvic, over Johan Verheyden's claims that Rojs took a loan from the Hercegovacka Banka adding that he never had an account in the bank nor was a stockholder of it. "Rojs does not own the Monitor Company. It is true that the Monitor took a loan amounting to 15 million DEM, in order to buy machinery for construction of roads in Croatia, but it is also true that the Monitor was paying back its loans in an orderly fashion up to the moment the tanks raided the bank. Out of the 15 million DEM, the sum that was not paid back to the bank, including the interest, amounted to 1,35 million EUROs (...) We promise that we will return these loans together with interests, but the Republic of Croatia also owes the Monitor 100 million DEM for construction of roads (in Croatia)", said Ljubo Cesic Rojs. Rojs also announced that he would contact international institutions, foreign embassies and the Strasbourg Court to try to get hold of the money from the Republic of Croatia.

Republika Srpska

RS leadership and political parties' representatives discuss constitutional reforms

Both Banja Luka dailies quote President of the Republika Srpska National Assembly Constitutional Commission Miroslav Mikes as saying that the RS leadership and the political parties' representatives have been informed about the OHR proposal on representation of the other two BiH constituent peoples in the RS authorities i.e., that Bosniaks and Croats should be represented in the RS authorities in line with the 1991 census. Mikes told the press that they are trying to reach a compromise on national level in order to avoid inter-party misunderstandings regarding this issue. "All sides are familiar with this proposal, all solutions have been discussed, but we need some time for consultations", said Mikes. Another round of consultations will be held on December 20 given that the next session of the RS National Assembly Constitutional Commission is scheduled for December 21 when, according to Mikes, the members of the Commission will vote on draft text that will be forwarded to the RS Parliament. Nezavisne Novine reports that the representatives of the political parties from the RS told the RS leadership that the OHR proposal was not acceptable.

International Community

Petritsch says he had to made difficult but necessary decisions

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said in an interview with Dnevni Avaz that he wanted the decision of the BiH Chamber for Human Right on the rebuilding of the Ferhadija mosque in Banja Luka to be completely implemented. "The

Republika Srpska authorities do not want at all to learn one thing: the obstructions are absolutely counter-productive, and they may postpone by not prevent something to take place," Petritsch said. He emphasized that many times he had been requested to end work of the Constitutional Commissions. "But they must end their work by their own. I have created basic conditions for the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision (on the equal constitutional status of all three peoples in the entire BiH's territory)...I will wait a few more weeks that something concrete happens. It must happen, otherwise we will use some other means – I can impose the decision," Petritsch said. The High Representative criticized the BiH Federation TV because it had recently failed to broadcast reading of the BiH indictment against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. "This cannot be considered a professional behavior and it shows that much has yet to be improved in the media house. Much has to be changed in media in general, moving their focus from speculations to facts," Petritsch said. Commenting on his relations with the current BiH authorities, Petritsch emphasized that he was very satisfied with the Alliance for Change. "With the Alliance, we have finally come to the level of political processes at which political and not some other issues are subjects of discussion and dispute," Petritsch said.

The Hague Tribunal decides to free four BiH Army wartime officers

The Hague-based UN war crimes tribunal (ICTY) has decided to release provisionally four senior Bosniak wartime army officers awaiting trial, a spokeswoman for the court's prosecutors said on Thursday. Florence Hartmann told Reuters one trial chamber had decided to release three suspects – Mehmed Alagic, Enver Hadzihanovic and Amir Kubura – indicted for crimes against Croats in 1993. Another chamber decided to release former overall commander Sefer Halilovic, indicted separately for crimes against Croats committed in the same

year, Hartmann said. "They have got a provisional release from the court with an obligation to appear before the court when asked to do so," Hartmann said by telephone. The tribunal sometimes decides to release suspects pending their trial if they have shown a willingness to cooperate with the court and their home states have provided guarantees that the indictees will not be able to flee. These guarantees have been recently provided by the BiH Federation Government. According to Oslobodjenje, Halilovic is expected to arrive in Sarajevo on Friday. His lawyer, Faruk Balijagic, said that, as of next Monday, Halilovic would return to his office of the BiH Federation Social Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Minister.

ICTY sends indictments to RS; Ivanic has not received them yet

Nezavisne Novine quotes ICTY Spokeswoman Florence Hartman as saying that the Republika Srpska authorities had received official indictments against Savo Todorovic and Mitar Rasevic before the ICTY unsealed them. "We request the RS authorities to arrest Todorovic and Rasevic", said Hartman and added that she did not know where the indictees were but that the RS authorities should know that. On the other side, the RS Prime Minister's Advisor for cooperation with the ICTY, Sinisa Djordjevic, denies the RS authorities have received the indictments. "The indictments have not arrived here otherwise the public would be informed about that. We have no reason whatsoever to hide the names of the indictees", said Djordjevic. He also says that the RS authorities are expecting the indictments to be delivered and that he does not know when it is going to happen. As to arrest of the indictees, Djordjevic says that the RS authorities will undertake certain activities to eventually find these two persons once when the indictments are delivered.

FRY accession to the Partnership for Peace

conditioned with apprehension of Karadzic and Mladic

The issue of the apprehension of the most wanted war crime suspects Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic was raised again by the United States at the Wednesday's meeting in Brussels of the permanent ambassadors at NATO. "Americans want that Karadzic and Mladic are apprehended in order to finally normalize its relations with Yugoslavia," a diplomatic source told SENSE news agency according to Oslobodjenje. The source added that the removal of this obstacle would allow Yugoslavia to access the NATO Partnership for Peace program.

IJC recommends extension of the Comprehensive Review Process for an additional year

The director of the Independent Judicial Commission, Judge Rakel Surlien, on Wednesday informed the Federation Judges' Commission, the Federation Prosecutors' Commission, the Republika Srpska High Judicial Council, and the RS High Prosecutorial Council that the IJC was recommending the Federation and RS assemblies to extend the Comprehensive Review Process (CRP) for an additional year. (Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine carried OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic's address on the issue at the Thursday's press conference in Sarajevo)

IJC Director meets with RS National Assembly Speaker

Both Banja Luka dailies report on the meeting of Republika Srpska National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic with Director of the Independent Judicial Commission Rakel Surlien. The meeting discussed the reform of the RS judiciary, particularly the future relations between the judicial, legislative and executive authorities. The meeting also discussed the harmonization of the jurisdictions related to the work of the High Judicial Council, the High Prosecutorial Council and the RS National Assembly's Board for Election and Appointment. The

participants at the meeting pointed out at a need for the adoption of new laws in various fields, such as the establishment of an institute for the training of judges and prosecutors and a new law on the structure of the magistrate courts, the IJC Director stated after the meeting. "We have agreed that the process of the review of the performance of judges and prosecutors needs to be prolonged for another year", Surlien emphasized. However, a press release issued by the RS Parliament Speaker's Cabinet reads that the final decision on this issue is to be brought by the RS National Assembly. The IJC Director said that it was necessary to amend and change the Law on Courts and Court Practice, which defined the work of the High Judicial Council. "We will work together on short-term solutions, as well as on long-term solutions, because that is a part of the promotion of the independence of the judiciary." Commenting on the recent statement made by the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, that the High Judicial and High Prosecutorial Councils should be more transparent, the IJC Director said that this problem would be solved jointly, just as the Prime Minister had proposed.

Petritsch supports BiH and Croatian bid for the 2008 European Football Championship

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Thursday met the joint delegation of the BiH and Croatia Football Federations. The joint delegation, led by Presidents Jusuf Pusic and Vlatko Markovic informed the High Representative of the joint bid of the Football Federations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia to host the 2008 European Football Championships. The High Representative welcomed the joint bid of the two football Federations, as an important example of regional co-operation, capable of drawing much needed international attention and investment for the region. (Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodjenje carried the [Press Release](#))

Vrbosic claims Croatian share in the Aluminum ownership amounts up to 12 percent

According to Dnevni Avaz, Croatian Ambassador to BiH Josip Vrbosic confirmed on Thursday that a Croatia's share in the Mostar Aluminum ownership structure amounted up to 12 percent. During his visit to the Company, Vrbosic explained that such the percent of the Croatia's ownership had been obtained by country's investment of 70 million kunas (approximately 17.5 million KM) in the restart of the production in this as he said economic giant.

Dnevni List: What did Wolfgang Petritsch tell the officials of the American National Security Council?

Written by D. L. (full translation provided by OHR Mostar)

After Dnevni List published the contents of the talks that the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch had in Washington, on which occasion we literally quoted Petritsch's talks with Armitage, Shulte, Pittman, Prosper and others, we have found out that the OHR, the EUMM and the OSCE distributed among themselves the assignments aimed at discovering our sources.

In the meantime, our source disclosed what might be the most interesting part of the talks that Wolfgang Petritsch had with his interlocutors in Washington, and it refers to the repeated victory of Ante Jelavic at the HDZ BiH Congress. Here is what was said during that talk, word for word: "Since the last Congress of the party, during which Jelavic was re-elected, a substantial faction of the moderates have made a move towards secession. Financial dependence has prevented them from seceding from the mainstream policy of the HDZ so far. It could be materialized now that the financial flows have been seriously shaken up."

Evidence, Petritsch said without presenting it, indicates that the international community was absolutely right to set about

Hercegovacka Banka. The project, he went on, of a parallel para-state was immediately abandoned by Jelavic and the company.

Dnevni List has found out exclusively that Petritsch conveyed to his interlocutors the opinion that "integration of Croats can be achieved if criminals and radical elements are eliminated."

"Zagreb supports the course taken by the international community but they could be even more pro-active. Zagreb would prefer the international community to take the first steps." Thus spoke Petritsch at the National Security Council in Washington on 15 November.

Protection of SDS

When Petritsch spoke of the integration of Croats, he probably meant the integration in terms of assimilation of Croats into a Bosnian nation, elements of which were elaborated in a secret document from Brussels, titled "Roman Defense. Our paper was the first to disclose the existence of that document, and not even the international organizations in BiH are familiar with the whole document, but the international officials in BiH instead receive parts of that plan in the form of diplomatic instructions.

The attitude of the international representatives towards the SDS proves that it is not just about elimination of the extremist Croat right-wing party in BiH, as international representatives call the HDZ, but about the implementation of the Roman Defense plan, which envisages elimination of Croats as a political nation and their consequent assimilation into a Bosniak or Bosnian nation by means of elimination of the representatives of the political will of the majority of the Croat population, regardless of which party they may come from. Although they (SDS) have been threatened and called an extremist party, no concrete actions have been undertaken

against "Karadzic's party." In an interview for BBC before going to Washington, Petritsch himself rejected the idea of casting the SDS representatives out of the political life by saying: "I do not want to believe that approximately 40% of the elected political representatives could be simply cast out. That would mean ignoring the will of 40% of the voters in the Republic of Srpska. SDS still has many supporters and we have to establish a dialogue with them."

Adjusting reality to Dayton architecture

Before Petritsch was hosted in the BBC show 'Hard Talk,' the SRSG Jacques Klein, answering a question by the journalist Tim Sebastian about the isolation of Karadzic's supporters from the SDS, similarly said: "You must bear in mind the fact that the SDS won the support of 41% of the electorate in the Republic of Srpska... We ban the SDS and what happens next. They will be established as a new party. You see, we always have to think about consequences of the actions we undertake," concluded Klein.

This diverse attitude to the political parties that won – the HDZ more than the SDS- the majority of votes of the Croat and Serb electorate respectively, the parties that the international representatives labeled as extremist ones, is not a matter of personal hypocrisy of either Klein or Petritsch, but this hypocrisy is a manifestation of the approach to the BiH problem that prevails in the predominant political and economic circles in the world, i.e. practicing of the predetermined policy.

They believe it will be easier to achieve peace and stability in BiH if, instead of adjusting the architecture of the Dayton Agreement to the reality, the reality is adjusted to the Dayton Agreement in the way of achieving the logical and sustainable solution for BiH: one state-two entities-two peoples, instead of the illogical and unsustainable formula: one state-two entities-three peoples.

As we know from the history of political theory and practice, every policy finds executors.

Editorial

Slobodna Dalmacija: Pay-outs of up to 5,000 KM to small depositors in Hercegovacka Banka conditioned upon signing of unprecedented statement

Written by Petar Milos (provided by OHR Mostar)

In his editorial for Slobodna Dalmacija, the author says signing of a statement denying kinship to any of the persons on the lists produced by the HB Provisional Administrator Toby Robinson, is the culmination of the international administration's impudence, as well as culmination of the Croat people's tragedy, a case which would have been unusual even in the Stalin regime. Since the persons on the lists are neither suspects nor subject to legal proceedings, their appearance on the lists is both an indictment and a sentence. Mentioning kinship in such a banal matter as bank deposits smells not only of totalitarianism, but also of racism, says Milos.

He says the impression is that standards applied on Croats in BiH would be illegal and undemocratic "on the other side of the civilization," which is substantiated in the fact that none of the international organizations of human rights in BiH reacted to it.