

BiH Media Round-up, 14/2/2002

BiH State-related Issues

- *Oslobodjenje*: Gold from the succession illegally sold?!
- Leaders of the eight leading BiH political parties at an urgent meeting in OHR: Petritsch fails to bring the positions closer
- BiH political parties met in OHR – On constitutional changes again
- RS NA Speaker on constitutional changes
- BiH Inter-religious Council adopts Memorandum on reconstruction of four places of worship
- *Vecernji List*: UN poll – Grabovac, S. Tokic and Jelavic are the most popular politicians in BiH

Federation

- Tokic says Party for BiH prevents reforms
- *Dnevni List*: Interview with Dr. Miljenko Brkic, President of Croat's People's Community and host at the meeting of Croat parties at Hotel Delminium
- *Dnevni List*: HSS BiH on meeting of parties with Croat prefix
- *Vecernji List*: Croat political parties' leaders comment on the conclusions of their meeting
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: New incident in Stolac

Republika Srpska

- *Reuters*: Republika Srpska up pressure on war crimes indictees
- RS Government requests FRY authorities to extradite The Hague indictees to RS
- RS Interior Ministry says it will not hunt down The Hague's indictees
- RS Government discussed situation at RTRS

International Community

- *Reuters*: Milosevic scorns war crimes trial as "lynching"

- **Reuters: Lagumdžija says Milosevic trial example for others**
- **Petritsch on Milosevic trial**
- **Democratic National Alliance on Milosevic's trial**
- **PLIP agencies present 2001 results in property law implementation**
- **Petritsch welcomes passage of the Law on De-Mining**
- **OHR welcomes announcement of HDZ's return to the Parliament**
- **Vjesnik: Croatian Parliament's Board for Foreign Policy on Croatia-BiH relations**
- **Vjesnik: Croatian Minister says oil dispute with BiH to be solved in next two weeks**

Editorials

- **Dnevni List: Stalin's children**
- **Vecernji List: Openly on Thursdays – Glory and misery of Mostar**

Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

Oslobodjenje: Gold from the succession illegally sold?!

Anto Domazet, the BiH Treasury Minister, told Oslobodjenje on Wednesday that the gold BiH had obtained from the succession to the former Yugoslavia property had already been sold. Asked how this was possible when the Law on the use of succession money had still not been passed, Domazet said that the gold had been sold yet in December last year on the basis of a decision made by the BiH Council of Ministers.

Leaders of the eight leading BiH political parties

at an urgent meeting in OHR: Petritsch fails to bring the positions closer

Oslobodjenje reports that, at a meeting organized by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the leaders of the eight leading political parties in BiH again failed to bring closer their positions on the crucial issues of constitutional reforms harmonization, in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling on the constituent peoples. The newspaper learned from well-informed sources that the introduction of the House of Peoples in the Republika Srpska, still fiercely opposed by the authorities in the Entity, remained the main disputed issue. The Federation leaders believe that only the establishment of the House of Peoples in the RS may ensure a genuine protection of the vital national interests of all peoples. However, what is offered as a compromise by the RS political parties is that the issue of the vital national interest is being resolved at the level of the BiH House of Peoples. The meeting at the OHR building in Sarajevo was attended by Zlatko Lagumdžija (SDP), Safet Halilović (Party for BiH), Kresimir Zubak (NHI), Sulejman Tihić (SDA), Mariofil Ljubić (HDZ), Mladen Ivanic (PDP), Dragan Kalinic (SDS), and Milorad Dodik (SNSD).

Note: Below is Banja Luka Nezavisne Novine report on the same event

BiH political parties met in OHR – On constitutional changes again

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Nezavisne Novine reports that yesterday afternoon the representatives of political parties from the BiH Federation and the RS met yesterday in the OHR building in Sarajevo to discuss the constitutional changes in both entities. The paper quotes High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, as saying that the meeting with the representatives of the

political parties from the RS and the BiH Federation was one of the regular meetings he has with local officials in order to find a joint solution for changes of the Constitution. He said that if BiH politicians find a joint solution to this problem it will indicate that BiH became a normal country. "In the last while developments regarding this issue seem encouraging. With the meetings held on Kozara and in Sarajevo, the political leaders showed that they take responsibility for this issue. On my part I have done what I could. I set up constitutional commissions in both entities and appointed representatives of all three constituent peoples and Others. They did what they could and now it is up to politicians to make steps because that is also a very important political issue", said Petritsch. Before the meeting, leader of SNSD, Milorad Dodik said that he came to Sarajevo to find out whether the High Representative intends to impose constitutional amendments and said that if he does he would walk out of negotiations. "I have realized that Petritsch called this meeting to encourage political parties to reach an agreement regarding the constitutional amendments. My view is very clear and that is that I want to find out whether the High Representative intends to impose the constitutional amendments, because if he does then there is no need to discuss this issue any longer", said Petritsch. Representative of HDZ BiH, Mariofil Ljubic said that he is specially interested in whether the constitutional amendments respect the reality in BiH, that is a full institutional equality of peoples in BiH along with protection of rights of national minorities which is to be accomplished through a law. "In my view this is a very clear position. I absolutely support introduction of house of peoples in both entities. I do not see how these houses of peoples could be a problem for anyone, because if I do not have a problem with existence of an entity then I see no reason why someone would question the introduction of house of people. Therefore, it is a minimum if someone wants us to have BiH organized in accordance with the will of all three peoples who live in this country", said

Ljubic. He said he expected that the constitutional changes, in case the High Representative imposes them, would be in accordance with the BiH Constitutional Court ruling on constituent status of all three peoples in BiH.

RS NA Speaker on constitutional changes

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

RS NA Speaker Dragan Kalinic has stated that the imposition of constitutional solutions would mean that the international community admitted a huge defeat, because all financial and political investments in BiH and the entities would go up in smoke. Kalinic reiterated that the constitutional changes should be limited to what is the essence of the decision by the BiH Constitutional Court and that there were due constitutional procedures for all other issues.

BiH Inter-religious Council adopts Memorandum on reconstruction of four places of worship

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the BiH Inter-religious Council at its Wednesday's session agreed on the text of the Memorandum on reconstruction of four places of worship. According to the Memorandum, the reconstruction will be financed by the UN Mission to BiH and each religious community will decide on places of worship which will be reconstructed.

Vecernji List: UN poll – Grabovac, S. Tokic and Jelavic are the most popular politicians in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

UN experts have conducted a public opinion poll among BiH peoples. Results have warned that most of BiH citizens and peoples support their national parties. It is especially obvious when HDZ and their leader Ante Jelavic, an

unrecognized HDZ President, are in question. For this reason the question arises as to why to have elections at all, if the International Community continues to annul the will of this people through the election engineering.

HDZ is the best among the Croats with 37% of the votes. SDP is on the second place (9,4%), HNZ and HSS have 9%, while HSP has 3,8%. Bosniaks support SDP (24,3%), followed by SDA (13, 4%) and Party for BiH (8,4%). SDS is the most popular among Serbs (14,7%) while Ivanic's PDP RS is on the second place (10,1 %).

The most popular politicians in BiH in December were Nikola Grabovac, Sejfidin Tokic and Ante Jelavic, the unrecognized HDZ President. Nikola Grabovac is also the most popular politician in the Federation (9% of the votes), while Ante Jelavic is on the second place. Among the Croats Ante Jelavic is the most popular politician (14,6%) and followed by Kresimir Zubak (7%) and Nikola Grabovac (6%). Alija Behmen is the most popular politician among Bosniaks, followed by Haris Silajdzic and Alija Izetbegovic. Among Serbs, Mladen Ivanic is the most popular (12,4%), and then Milorad Dodik (8%), while Radovan Karadzic, who has been charged with war crimes, is on the third place.

On the list of the popular politicians were some politicians from Croatia and Serbia. Ljubo Cosic Rojs received the biggest number of votes. At the BiH level even 4% of the questioned persons voted for him and even 7% of the Croats. At the BiH level Slobodan Milosevic received 1% of the votes. Compared with June last year when he had 5% of the votes, it can be concluded that his popularity among Serbs has dropped for 3%. Stjepan Mesic, the Croatian President has not received a single percentage. In the public opinion poll on the politicians at the BiH level even 17,6 % of the questioned persons did not have an answer, and even 46% of them answered that they would not vote for any of the politicians from the list. The HDZ influence at the BiH level has grown for 0,6% since June last year, while at the Federation level it grew

for 1,1%. Among the Croats, the HDZ popularity grew for 3,2 % during the last 6 months. Also, at the BiH level Jelavic's popularity has grown for 0,6%. However, among the Croats he marked a small drop of 2,1%. The biggest drop of popularity is the SDP's, whose popularity among Bosniak people has dropped for 5,4%. At the same time the SDA popularity among the Bosniak people has grown for 5.6%.

Federation

Tokic says Party for BiH prevents reforms

Sejfudin Tokic, the Vice-President of the SDPBiH Main Board, accused the partners from the governing Alliance for Change of a continued cooperation with the national political parties. The Tokic's criticism is directed towards the Party for BiH and Mladen Ivanic's PDP. "The Party for BiH prevents the removal of the people (from certain public offices) who should be replaced yet following the establishment of the new authorities. Such is, for example, the case of Bakir Izetbegovic (the son of Alija Izetbegovic, Honorary SDA President)," Tokic told Dnevni Avaz.

Dnevni List: Interview with Dr. Miljenko Brkic, President of Croat's People's Community and host at the meeting of Croat parties at Hotel Delminium

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

How do you assess the meeting (of Croat parties), are you satisfied with solutions reached at the meeting?

I am satisfied and I think that the meeting went well, better than I expected. I had doubts, especially knowing that there have been similar meetings in the past ten years that have not gone well as this meeting had. I am especially glad that gentlemen from all parties showed up. I think that Lijanovici

regret for not showing up too, but I hope that we will include them if they are interested in further talks. The discussions were really good and an agreement was reached on following issues: Firstly, the issue of the House of Peoples should be solved identically in both BiH entities

Is that the minimum you are ready to accept?

Attempts to protect national rights in one entity through some commissions are in fact an escape from the only true and real mechanism that can protect national interests of the constituent peoples, and that's the House of Peoples. We opted that Parliaments in both entities consist of two chambers, a House of Representatives and House of Peoples. That's *conditio sine qua non*. The next issue that we agreed upon is the establishment of the executive authority.

The executive authority has to be established on parity basis too?

We are against the practice that is going on in the Federation right now, that one people can outvote the other. It is impermissible and that's why we advocate for an executive authority on parity basis. There were discussion about whether it would be good to go to a level where, let's say, there would be 49% of officials from the line of one people in the executive authority the most. That's a sound mechanism of protection that could rule out possibility of outvoting. There is the second idea according to which the executive authority would be formed at the level of election results because that is the practice in modern democracies. But we have not reached their level, BiH is very specific and one has to take it into account, so there is no aforementioned outvoting (...)

How to define vital national interests?

Many tried to define vital national interests by taking elements of the language, religion, culture, cultural heritage, identity etc. as the vital interests. But in the

essence those are fundamental rights of a human and nobody can deny them. That's why we opted that the national interests be those interests that a simple majority of MPs from a line of one people deems vital for interests of one people. We consider that the rights of national minorities should be protected by adoption of a Law on National Minorities in an urgent procedure.

What will happen if the Serb parties go against a House of Peoples in the RS?

I think that the media are pushing the issue too much. I think that the thing should be turned around: how will they behave if other peoples do not accept to adopt constitutional amendments without Houses of Peoples, what then? We agreed, if our suggestions on changes to the Federation Constitution are not accepted, to sit down again and take a stand. I think that the HDZ have decided among their ranks to elect their representatives for the Federation House of Peoples, so the chamber becomes a legal body and that Croats at least have an opportunity to put a veto to solutions unacceptable for the Croat people.

What will be the stance of the Bosniak parties if the House of Peoples is not formed in the RS?

Bosniak parties in the Federation support our standpoints, they think that they are correct, not only as an affirmation of one people but in line with searching of solutions for all three constituent peoples. We think that we will reach a full consensus with the Bosniak representatives on issues rendered at the Hotel Delminium. If the course of discussion on constitutional changes takes a wrong direction, we will hold another meeting. If our requests are adopted and the Election Law is harmonized, we can talk about possible coalitions. I think it is necessary to agree on forming of some election blocks.

Dnevni List: HSS BiH on meeting of parties with Croat prefix

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Regarding the meeting of parties with Croat prefix, today's Dnevni List carries Ilija Simic, the President of the HSS BiH, as saying that the meeting has brought nothing new adding that it was good to hold these sort of meetings. Simic said at the press conference held in Sarajevo that the meeting could not bear bigger changes because the amendments to entity Constitutions are already at their final phase. Simic commends the consensus of the parties aimed at introducing of two-chamber Parliaments in both BiH entities and the promise made by the HDZ that its representatives would return to the Federation House of Peoples prior to adoption of amendments to entities' Constitutions. "I am very happy with the HDZ's decision although I think it is belated", added Simic. According to Simic, HSS BiH agrees with the stance of the participants of yesterday's meeting according to which vital national interests have to be precisely defined. "I think that the most important issues, such as the identity of peoples, must be determined as issues of vital interests", says Simic. Representatives of the NHI, according to Simic, did not commit themselves on the issues because "they were not authorized to do so" "Zubak sent junior officials, who did not have the authority therefore I deem the NHI were not present at the meeting, neither have they adopted its conclusions", added Simic.

Vecernji List: Croat political parties' leaders comment on the conclusions of their meeting

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Miljenko Brkic (Croat People's Community): 'I am especially glad because we have reached the consensus at the highest level. I do not know as to whom has advised the People's Party

Working to Prosperity not to attend the meeting. I believe that a day after the meeting they were unsatisfied because they did not participate at so important meeting. I believe that Bosniak parties will also accept our conclusions, if not completely, then at least, partially.'

Stjepan Kljujic (Republicans):' This is a top-notch document not only for the interests of the Croat people' but for the resolving of the constitutional crises in both entities. This is in the line with the things that Alliance and political parties from the Federation demanded, it was not dissonant to any request for the implementation of the Constitutional Court decisions. This is not an issue of a compromise but a crucial issue because there will be no change of the Constitution in the next twenty or thirty years. '

Mijo Anic (NHI): 'My stand was not to attend the meeting, however the party had made a different decision. I believe that conclusions are not something spectacular and that they do not differ from the things, which have already been stressed in the lines of the parties with a Croat prefix.'

Niko Lozancic (HDZ): 'The result of the meeting are conclusions adopted by a consensus and these are the principles, that HDZ and parties of the Croat National Assembly have been advocating all the time.'

Petar Milic(Croat Christian Democrats): 'The parties from two groups with completely different political approaches regarding the resolving of the Coat issue in BiH have met. The fact that they have met is a success for itself.'

Slobodna Dalmacija: New incident in Stolac

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

An incident took place on Wednesday morning in front of the Secondary School in Stolac when a knife was swung in front of the teachers followed by threats on their lives. The leader of

this latest incident again was the known Stolac extremist, **Nedžad Čerkez**, called **Beredža**, who often provokes Croats in **Stolac** saying that they would not stay for long "because **Stolac is Allah's town**".

On many occasions, especially while the head of the police in **Stolac** was his cousin, **Smajo Čerkez**, the police reacted tepidly and unfairly, which was an additional impulse to the above mentioned person to continue his brandishing in **Stolac** telling the **Stolac Secondary School** employees that he would slaughter them instead of rams for the upcoming **Kurban Bairam**.

On Wednesday, around 9:15 hours, uttering swear-words and threats, he first broke two windows of the English language classroom in the **Stolac Secondary School**, and then, after the teachers **Miro Šutalo** and **Dane Puljić** had warned him that he should not have done it and kindly asked him to stop the provocation, he set out after them with a drawn knife threatening to cut their throats.

The two **Stolac** teachers saved themselves by going into the school premises and locking the door. Čerkez continued raging in front of the school with a long knife.

At the same time in the **Secondary School**, two Bosniak minors known from previous incidents covered the heads of several Croat students with a spray threatening them. That happened in the mathematics class and the class was shortly stopped.

Upon receiving the notification about the attack of extremists on the school this time the police reacted quickly and brought the perpetrator to the Police station in **Stolac**, taking a statement from him, as well as from the witnesses and the attacked persons. If that is going to be the end of everything is to be seen.

Attention of the police was also drawn to the more frequent presence of the dismissed head of the police in **Stolac**, **Smajo Čerkez**, in the **Secondary School** in **Stolac** during the afternoon

hours when the instruction according to the Boanisak program takes place. Otherwise the atmosphere in the town is calm, but quite tense.

Republika Srpska

Reuters: Republika Srpska up pressure on war crimes indictees

The Government of RS on Wednesday increased pressure on fugitives from the U.N. war crimes tribunal to surrender. The cabinet decided to set a 30-day deadline for indictees to give themselves up if they wanted government guarantees, which could secure them a provisional release pending trial. The decision is unlikely to bring about the surrender of the two men most wanted by the tribunal in The Hague – diehard Bosnian Serb wartime leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic – but could induce other suspects to give themselves up. “The RS has been under increasing pressure lately to cooperate fully with the tribunal and that will hopefully ease after this decision,” said Sinisa Djordjevic, the government’s adviser on cooperation with the U.N. court. The pressure has been growing since pro-Western reformers ousted Slobodan Milosevic, whose war crimes trial got under way at the tribunal on Tuesday. Djordjevic said the countdown to the deadline would start eight days after the decision was published in the RS’ Official Gazette. The government acted ahead of a visit on Friday by the tribunal’s chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte to the RS de-facto capital Banja Luka to meet top officials. Local media reported on Wednesday del Ponte would threaten the Bosnian Serb leadership with tough sanctions to persuade them to cooperate fully with the tribunal. But the chairman of BiH’s central government Zlatko Lagumdzija said he did not believe that any sanctions would be necessary. He said he was convinced that all obligations towards the tribunal would be fulfilled. “I believe that people wanted by The Hague will end

up there in the relatively near future,” Lagumdzija told reporters in Sarajevo following his return from Istanbul.

RS Government requests FRY authorities to extradite The Hague indictees to RS

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The RS Government requested that the FRY Interior Ministry extradite to the RS authorities RS citizens publicly who have been publicly indicted by the ICTY. The RS Government's Public Affairs Bureau stated that the extradition of those persons was requested in order to carry out the procedures, stipulated by the RS Law on the Cooperation with the ICTY. The Bureau added that the request was sent after the Government had brought a decision on the 30-day deadline for the voluntary surrender of persons publicly indicted by the ICTY.

RS Interior Ministry says it will not hunt down The Hague's indictees

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Srna news agency reports that the RS Interior Ministry has not been informed that SFOR has stepped up its activities in the eastern part of the RS, due to the possible arrest of the persons indicted for war crimes, including Radovan Karadzic, RS Interior Minister Dragomir Jovicic said in Bijeljina today. Emphasizing that the RS government had given a 30-day deadline to the persons indicted by the Hague tribunal for war crimes to surrender voluntarily, Jovicic told journalists that those persons would have the opportunity to be given bail, and that the RS government would be able to assist them before the tribunal. When asked whether the RS Interior Ministry would participate in the possible search for The Hague's indictees, Jovicic said that the Interior Ministry had a strong police force and that “it does not deem it necessary to take part in the search for these persons or in their possible arrest”. “The RS Interior Ministry works independently and exercises

all its legal powers within the framework of its authority,” Jovicic said. According to Jovicic, the RS Interior Ministry was closely following all incidents of unlawful behavior of the members of staff and their involvement in criminal activities. In January 2002, a disciplinary procedure was set in motion against 82 Interior Ministry employees, on suspicion of acting unlawfully. The interior minister confirmed that the RS Interior Ministry had not received any details of Alija Delimustafic’s arrest from the Serbian Interior Ministry, despite the fact that the former BiH interior minister held a forged passport in the name of Gojko Mitrovic, which was allegedly issued by the RS. He also confirmed that the international arrest warrant had been issued for the head of a surgery in Lopare, Radivoje Kerovic, who has been sentenced to several years of imprisonment by the RS judiciary.

RS Government discussed situation at RTRS

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the RS Government on Wednesday discussed the situation at Radio Television of the RS (RTRS) and decided to discuss the Law on RTRS at the next session of the RS Government. According to RS Minister of Traffic and Communication, Branko Dokic, the Law on RTRS will include provision on the founder of RTRS. ([More comprehensive report on the RS Government news conference](#))

International Community

Reuters: Milosevic scorns war crimes trial as “lynching”

Slobodan Milosevic accused his war crimes prosecutors on Wednesday of mounting a “lynching”, after hearing two days of accusations that he masterminded massacre, persecution and

mass deportation. In his first words at his trial, the former Yugoslav leader sparred with Presiding Judge Richard May and poured scorn on the status of the Hague court established solely to prosecute war crimes in the conflicts of the former Yugoslavia. After prosecutors took nine hours to roughly outline their huge 66-count case, May invited Milosevic to begin his rebuttal in Wednesday's last half hour or to wait until Thursday. "This tribunal does not have the right to try me because it has not been established lawfully," Milosevic answered. "We cannot speak of a fair or equitable trial here," he added forcefully. "The prosecutor is not only biased but has already publicized my judgment." Milosevic's legal advisers have complained of prosecutors saying publicly that he deserves life imprisonment.

"From your prosecutors' office a media campaign has been orchestrated as a parallel lynching," Milosevic told the judge. He said May had not answered his earlier legal objections. In pre-trial hearings last year, Milosevic challenged the legality of the tribunal and of his arrest and extradition, but failed. "These matters have all been dealt with and your views about the tribunal are irrelevant as far as these proceedings are concerned," Judge May told him on Wednesday. The trial was adjourned until Thursday morning, when Milosevic is expected to launch in earnest an opening address which advisers say could last for up to two days. The court earlier heard Milosevic accused of being the shadowy mastermind in the 1990s of "unrelenting violence" not seen in Europe since World War Two, and of employing massacres, sieges, brutal camps and mass deportation.

Reuters: Lagumdzija says Milosevic trial example for others

BiH Foreign Minister said on Wednesday the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was crucial to show that all "terrorists", from whatever religion or country, would be brought to justice. Milosevic's trial for war crimes over the

past decade started this week at an international tribunal in The Hague. "We hope it is a signal that the third millennium may be different from the previous ones," Zlatko Lagumdžija told Reuters Television on the sidelines of a conference of ministers from European and Islamic countries in Istanbul. "This trial has to go on, it has to be finished as symbolic trial of the project that Milosevic was executing," Lagumdžija said. "He was just CEO of a very, very evil company. That company has to be destroyed at its very pillars, its very roots." Lagumdžija said it was vital war crimes suspects Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic also be captured and put on trial.

"I'm sure the Western alliance...will do everything in their power finally to bring Karadzic and Mladic to court because that is finally also the way to show that it's irrelevant who you kill as a criminal, as a terrorist," he said. "Whether you're in Afghanistan or in Bosnia you have to be brought to justice."

Petritsch on Milosevic trial

According to Dnevni Avaz, asked to comment on possible implications of the current Slobodan Milosevic trial in The Hague on the future of BiH, The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said:" The trial of Milosevic in The Hague is of a tremendous importance for the process of reconciliation and normalization in BiH and the region, and it will be in many aspects a defining key of the BiH future. I consider this a historic chance for the countries in the region to finally leave the past behind and start resolving basis causes of the tragedy, war, aggression and all what happened here."

Democratic National Alliance on Milosevic's trial

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

DNS Spokesperson Ostoja Barasin told Srna news agency that former FRY President Slobodan Milosevic is not the only one

responsible for the events in this region and that Alija Izetbegovic and the closest associates of Franjo Tudjman should be in The Hague as well. "If we want to see a solution to the crisis, then all actors of the past events should be brought to one place – The Hague – in order to find an answer as to what really happened in this region", Barasin stated to Srna.

PLIP agencies present 2001 results in property law implementation

At a joint press conference in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the agencies engaged in the [Property Law Implementation Plan \(PLIP\) presented the 2001 results](#) achieved the property repossession process welcoming the sustained progress in property law implementation during the year. As of the end of last year, 102 609 property claims in Bosnia and Herzegovina have resulted in repossession (41% of the total). This amounts to 64,257 repossessions in the Federation (49% of claims resolved in that Entity); 35,649 repossessions in the RS (31% of claims resolved) and 2,703 repossessions in Brcko (39% of claims resolved in the District). The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft, Head of the UNHCR Mission to BiH Werner Blatter, CRPC Chief Executive Steven Segal and Head of the UN Civil Department Jacques Grinberg assessed the property law implementation was of a crucial importance both for the return of refugees and displaced persons and foreign investments in the country, as well as BiH accession to the European integration. See [PLIP Press Release](#).

Petritsch welcomes passage of the Law on De-Mining

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, expressed his satisfaction that the Law on De-Mining had been successfully adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This Law establishes the legal foundation for the

development of joint structures and standards that will be applied in de-mining activities throughout BiH, enhancing transparency and efficiency. (Fena, ONASA and Dnevni Avaz carried the [OHR Press Release](#))

Dnevni List: OHR welcomes announcement of HDZ's return to the Parliament

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Spokeswoman of the OHR South, Avis Benes, commenting on the yesterday's meeting of parties with Croat prefix in Sarajevo, said that "it is positive that people from the HDZ have finally realized what is the only and right way and what the OHR has pointed out many times before, and that is the return to the institutions of the system". Speaking at a press conference of international organizations seated in Mostar, Benes said that that is the only way of realization of all rights and that is clear that the discussion on the Decision of the Constitutional Court on constituency of peoples within BiH will last for a short period of time only. "If other parties with, let's say, Croat prefix think that they would realize their rights by making some sort of a joint front, then the OHR supports it", says Benes. When questioned to comment on the fact that some parties that never had communication or Croat prefix, took part in the meeting, Avis Benes said that "it is not up to the OHR to comment on their free will". "I assume that the cause of it is the key moment BiH is in, in relation to constitutional changes, and in that sense, some parties have recognized that the protection of some interests can be realized more effectively through these modes. It is not up to the OHR to comment on their free will", says Benes, reads Dnevni List. (The statement was covered by Vecernji List in similar fashion)

Vjesnik: Croatian Parliament's Board for Foreign

Policy on Croatia-BiH relations

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vjesnik reads that the Croatian Parliament's Board for Foreign Policy has at its session on Wednesday supported the initiative of the Croatian diplomacy that the talks on future status of the Croats in BiH, in light of the announced constitutional changes, must go through legal institutions of BiH. Croatian Foreign Affairs Minister, Tonino Picula, informed members of the Board that works are being done, in cooperation with the BiH Council of Ministers, on a draft of a document, some sort of a platform on which all sides should reach a consensus. The news about the work on the draft was extracted from Picula by Ivo Sanader (President of HDZ of Croatia) who insisted that Picula clearly says what the Croatian Government plans to do if BiH Croats are reduced to a national minority. "Every solution that is detrimental to the position of the Croats in BiH is unacceptable for the Croatian Government, but bad, haste and unilateral moves by the Croatian policy towards BiH should not provoke the IC", says Picula. This approach was supported by Mate Granic of the Democratic Centre, who reminded that other mechanisms, like the Peace Implementation Council, ought to be used so these initiatives get international credibility. President of the Board, Zdravko Tomac, said that it was the final moment to launch an initiative on the status of the Croats in BiH. "There is no point to try Milosevic, whilst keeping the RS. During the visit to Turkey, we agreed with the Turks that we could make a joint document on how to solve problem in BiH. One must never forget the Russian influence. Without Russia nothing can be achieved", says Tomac, reads Vjesnik.

Vjesnik: Croatian Minister says oil dispute with BiH to be solved in next two weeks

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

“BiH and Croatian expert groups exchanged arguments on why the present corridors and border crossings have been chosen for transport of oil products. We agreed on a part of the documentation so there are realistic odds to reach a solution”, says Croatian Minister of Traffic, Alojz Tusek. Tusek was reluctant to reveal what he was going to suggest to the Croatian Government which will be dealing with the problem on Thursday in the same time being convinced that a solution will be reached within two weeks. When questioned whether the BiH Council of Ministers would increase excise taxes on cigarettes, alcoholic beverages and other high-tariffs goods from Croatia, as previously announced, the BiH Minister of Foreign Trade, Azra Hadziahmetovic, said that the measure, if introduced, would be imposed on all countries and not Croatia alone.

Editorials

Dnevni List: Stalin's children

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an editorial written by its Editor-in-Chief, Marko Markovic, in which he takes a look back at the round table entitled “Ethics and journalism” held in Mostar last week. “The gathering ought to be remembered by a sentence made by Editor-in-Chief of Sarajevo-based “Start” who said ‘ethics means professionalism’”, says Markovic. “I met two young colleagues from Mostar at the meeting: Josip Blazevic and Marko Antonio Brkic. When other colleagues warned me that Blazevic has been appointed a member of the FTV's Steering Board, I decided to write about the round table”, says Markovic. Dnevni List's Editor goes on to say that many journalists were objecting to Blazevic's lengthy speech (Blazevic is also the President of “Apel” journalist's association, comments Markovic), the speech that was

reminiscent of leaden times of journalism in Croats. "The journalists were, reacting to Blazevic's speech, mentioning Stalin's coat and Stalin's policeman number one called Berija. As far as I am concerned the speech of my young colleague reminded me of communist party meetings in Vjesnik from 1972 (Croatian papers of the then communistic provenance) when the UDBA's (Yugoslav secret service) wing of the Communist Party were settling scores with advocates of the Croatian Spring (a movement in Croatia in early '70s denied by Yugoslav authorities). Blazevic, if we were to judge him by his stance on papers and journalism today, was born to late. Had he been born in Stalin, Berija, Broz and Rankovic's times, he would have had some career. Not even the young Marko Antonio Brkic has evolved much. He, being the secretary of the "Apel", was advocating for a body which would issue permits to journalists to perform journalist's job. He would probably be the president of such body. When I heard that my colleague Blazevic has been appointed a member of the Federation TV's Steering Board I decided to comment on his standpoints made at the round table "Ethics and journalism". When Blazevic and Brkic were told by their older colleagues that Stalin would have been happy with their stand and to "step on the brakes a bit", they continued in the same fashion asking permission to speak. Brkic was especially loud, advocating for journalist's "matriculates", whilst the others concluded that it is only the stupidity of his statement that is bigger than his impudence", reads Dnevni List.

Vecernji List: Openly on Thursdays – Glory and misery of Mostar

Written by **Drazenko Primorac** (Provided by OHR)

Imagined as a project of the International Community under the patronage of the European Union, the city was supposed to be reconstructed within a short period of time. However, the main part of the reconstruction, which was supposed to take place in the structure of the city, has never taken place. All those

who were coming and going were mainly accusing each other loudly for this and that, while the International Community was passing decisions the same way as they do it now. A too large administration divided in 6 Municipalities with the City Administration in addition, who cooperate among themselves only when the IC forces them to do it, have become a noose around the neck of the whole city. After great Croat national projects in the city, everything that has remained are, basically, big Croat villas and numerous expensive real estates scattered from Dalmatia to Blidinje. Naturally, the IC is exclusively responsible for them.

The time has come when we all have to ask and tell ourselves in what kind of the city we want to live and whether we want that our children attend classes in a few different buildings during the day, because on the plots, on which schools used to be located, concrete giants are being erected in order to meet increasing consumers' needs. According to those who are currently in power, our children should spend their time there instead of being in a school, because they believe that the school is just another non-profitable institution from which they cannot receive any cash.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Gold from the succession to former SFRY illegally sold?!

Dnevni Avaz

- Tokic: Party for BiH prevents changes

Jutarnje Novine

- Interview: Beriz Belkic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency as of today

Glas Srpski

- First day of trial to Mirko Nozica, Dusan Ilic and Nedjo Djokic – Trial ended before it started;
- Banja Luka Prosecutor's Office: Investigation launched into case of five customs officers;

Nezavisne Novine

- Danis Tanovic on "No Man's Land" nomination for best foreign film "Oscar" – Nomination for BiH;
- RS Prime Minister's Advisor for relations with the ICTY: RS Government officially called for war crime indictees to surrender;

Dnevni List

- Even two years after death of the first Croatian President speculations about his disease do not stop: From which disease Dr. Franjo Tudjman was actually suffering?
- Dr. Milenko Brkic, a host of the meeting of the Croat political elite in Sarajevo: Even Bosniak parties support our stands!
- Mladen Ivankovic on their non-attending of the meeting in Sarajevo: We want to talk in Parliament and not in cheap suburb hotels

Vecernji List

- A result of the Sarajevo meeting of the leaders of the Croat parties in BiH: HDZ is returning to the House of Peoples of the Federation Parliament
- Exclusively: Vecernji list has come into possession of the UN document on the popularity of parties and politicians in BiH: Grabovac, S. Tokic and Jelavic are the most popular politicians in BiH