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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Presidency urges Entity Constitutional Commissions to finalize proposed constitutional changes

All media reported that the three members of the BiH Presidency asked on Wednesday in Banja Luka the Entity Constitutional Commissions to complete the proposal of constitutional modifications so as to enable the Entity Parliaments to adopt them by the end of the current year, thereby effectively implementing the BiH Constitutional court's ruling on the constituent peoples. At an Inter-Entity coordination meeting, RS President Mirko Sarovic said that

there is "a wish, with these constitutional changes, to promote the principles of equal human rights". He said he wanted to see changes that would provide for equal representation of BiH three ethnic groups in government institutions, as well as an elimination of all discrimination in each entity's constitution. He added that he would like to see the changes implemented by the end of the year.

"We must confer equal rights on all of Bosnia's citizens," Beriz Belkic, Bosniak member of the Presidency, said, adding that the process of constitutional change was currently at a standstill. Karlo Filipovic, the Federation President, called for both entities to institute the same constitutional changes, without elaborating on what the changes might look like.

A follow-up meeting has been scheduled for December 15.

Session of the CoM Convenes

BiH Council of Ministers is expected to decide at today's session on the statement by which BiH accepts conditions required for the admission to the Council of Europe. The statement with additional 10 amendments proposed by the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council was accepted by the Presidency at the last session. Goran Turjacanin, a member of the BiH delegation at the session of the Political Committee of the European Council, said that significant changes to the initial text of the statement referred to the 10th amendment, which regulated the issue of armed forces in BiH. Turjacanin pointed out that this amendment did not prescribe a joint army, but defined the modernization, reconstruction and cooperation of armed forces in BiH, and the transparency of military budgets.

The BiH Foreign Ministry has prepared for the session a report on the Agreement on establishment of the Inter-state Council for Cooperation between BiH and the FRY. The agenda is

comprised of 21 items, including the draft law on special security measures in case of inter-state armed conflict or terrorist crisis and the draft law on the protection of the rights of minorities.

Almost 8,000 foreigners arrived and remained in Bosnia this year

Fena reported that, according to the data released by the State Border Service [DGS] of Bosnia-Herzegovina, some 13,600 foreign citizens arrived in this country between January 1 and November 8 this year, while only 4,800 of them actually left the country. Most of the foreign nationals who arrived in BiH in this period, 11,000 of them, were Turkish nationals, the spokesman for the UN and IPTF for the Banja Luka and Bihac areas, Alun Roberts, said. "The whereabouts of some 8,000 foreigners, who entered BiH in this period, is still unknown," Roberts said, adding that in the same period Croatian police turned back 1,247 foreigners from the Izacici border crossing and 433 from the Velika Kladusa border crossing.

Federation

Federation Parliament's House of Peoples: Premier refuses to comply with OHR order

All media report (Dnevni Avaz on its front page) that the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, rejected the proposal of the OHR to postpone the discussion on the Draft Law on Allocation and Investment of a Part of the Revenues of Companies Earned by Usage of Hydro Accumulation Facilities. According to media reports, the Head of the Economic Departments in the OHR, Daniel Besson, addressed a note to the House asking deputies that this item is removed from the agenda of Wednesday's session, because the Law has been drafted, as he argued, without any prior consultations with the city of Mostar administration.

During the session, Behmen expressed his displeasure that the proposal came only a day before the start of the session and labeled the behavior of OHR representatives as inappropriate and impolite. He stressed that the Federation government will regulate this area in a unique way, taking into consideration not only the interest of the citizens of Mostar, but also of municipalities of Konjic, Jablanica, Tuzla, Lukavac, Prozor and Trnovo. "It was never our intention to endanger the interests of the municipalities or Mostar," he said at the session, adding that the move of the OHR was not in the spirit of the partnership between local authorities and the International Community. (Story carried under titles "Behmen rejected the OHR order" in Avaz and "Allocation of Revenues 'crossed' OHR and Government" in Oslobodjenje. Croatian papers also carried the story with a slightly sensationalist slant)

Financial Police discovers the system of illegal business via Hercegovacka Banka

Oslobodjenje reports that the Federation Financial Police discovered several dozen private accounts in Hercegovacka Banka which were used by owners of a number of trade companies for transfers of funds without paying of taxes. The FP officials refused to reveal more details about these illegal transactions, but stressed that some individual transfers amount to millions of KM.

High Representative's Decision allows provisional administrators in the Federation to make pay-outs to small depositors before they complete their final reports

[Dnevni list carries the OHR press release.](#)

Federation Finance Minister: 17 million KM in

Hercegovacka Banka are ours

Commenting on Wednesday's statement of his deputy, Sefika Hafizovic, that the Ministry of Finance does not intend to press charges against the OHR because of 17 million KM blocked in Hercegovacka Banka, Nikola Grabovac said that his deputy does not have authority to make such decisions. He denied that there are hostile factions within the Ministry and stressed that his position is as strong as ever and that he has support of the Federation government, Federation Prime Minister and its citizens. Grabovac once again said that the OHR has blocked 17 million KM belonging to the Federation government in Hercegovacka Banka, which has enormous effect on the Finance Ministry. "This would be a great blow for a country the size of Germany, and especially for BiH. The end of the year is coming and I have to meet my obligations towards pensioners, invalids, Police and intelligence services and I don't have these funds," said Grabovac. He dismissed claims of his deputy that he could file charges against the OHR only in private capacity, stressing that he, as a public person, acts specifically in capacity of the Minister, and as such could initiate a legal process. Asked to comment on the claim that, by amending the Law on Banks, the High Representative wanted to increase the likeliness of insolvency of the bank, Grabovac refused to speculate, but added that what he knows for certain is the fact the Federation Ministry of Finance had 17 million KM deposited in the bank. He said that he is still not sure as to whether he will indeed proceed with filing charges against the OHR, but added that if it is proven that 'a crime is committed in the bank', someone should be held accountable. Grabovac strongly objected to the Decision of the High Representative to pay deposits up to 5000 KM to small depositors. "Who can authorise anyone to take my money and pay 5000 KM to small depositors? This money is mine, it is the money of my pensioners, invalids, policemen, teachers...", concluded Grabovac.

Croatian President Stipe Mesic supports the BiH Federation Television

In a statement for Avaz, Franjo Topic, the president of the Croat Cultural Association Napredak, said that, during his visit to New York, he briefly met with the Croatian President, Stipe Mesic, who expressed his full support to the new BiH Federation Television. "President Mesic also expressed hope that this television will fulfil its professional mission and please all citizens of the BiH Federation," Topic said. Participating at the lecture of the Croat Center of the Croatian Catholic Mission in New York, Topic also called upon the Croats in Diaspora to support the new Federation Television.

Incidents in recently reintegrated Stolac Secondary School

Dnevni List reports that a serious incident took place on Wednesday in the Stolac Secondary School when Bosniak students attacked their Croat fellow students. The daily claims that one Croat student was taken to the Mostar Clinic because of severe injuries he received in the fight. Dnevni Avaz however reports about a separate incident in Stolac when a waiter from a local bar fired shots at Bosniak students over a fight that they allegedly had with his son. According to the daily, the waiter took his pistol, passed a group of policemen, went to the Stolac Secondary School and searched the school for the Bosniak students that had reportedly punched his son. Bosniak students and their teachers say they are not overly concerned about incident, reads Dnevni Avaz.

The incidents took place only two days after 80 Bosniak students started attending classes in the Stolac High School.

Head of Stolac municipality: Construction permits

for rebuilding of town's mosques are illegal

The Head of the Stolac Municipality, Zeljko Obradovic, told Dnevni List that he considers the construction permit that allows reconstruction of the Careva mosque in Stolac illegal and legally unfounded saying that the decision has been overturned in the administrative procedure. He stressed that the mosque is being used not as the aim but as the means in the whole Stolac situation.

Republika Srpska

ICTY issues Warrant for Arrest for RS Army General Dragomir Milosevic

Nezavisne Novine reports that the ICTY sent an arrest warrant to the RS and the FRY for an RS Army General, Dragomir Milosevic. Milosevic has been indicted for war crimes committed against civilians during the siege of Sarajevo. According to the daily, ICTY Justice, Fausto Pocar ordered RS and FRY authorities to find, arrest and transfer Dragomir Milosevic to The Hague. The paper writes that the RS and the FRY authorities have been requested to immediately inform the ICTY Secretary if they are not capable of carrying out the arrest and to explain reasons for that. The paper quotes FRY Interior Minister, Zoran Zivkovic, as saying that he still has not received the arrest warrant and that he does not know anything about Milosevic's whereabouts. The daily also quotes Spokesman of the RS Interior Ministry, Zoran Glusac, as saying that the RS Interior Ministry will act in line with the RS Law on cooperation with the ICTY. When asked if that means that the RS Police are going to arrest indicted war criminals, Glusac said that the RS Interior Ministry is just one of the institutions that applies this Law, along with RS Justice Ministry, RS Defense Ministry and the Judiciary.

80 percent oppose Karadzic's extradition to the Hague: poll

AFP reports that some 80 percent of Bosnian Serbs questioned in a poll are against the extradition of former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic – the most wanted Balkans war crimes suspect – to the Hague-based UN war crimes tribunal. According to the survey, carried out last month by the Partner Agency, 80.6 percent of 850 respondents said they were against Karadzic's extradition, the SRNA news agency reported Wednesday. Only 5.6 percent said that former Bosnian Serb leader, who is indicted for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in the war, said he should be taken to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The poll showed that 60 percent said they do not believe that Karadzic will be appearing before ICTY judges within the next 12 months, while 13 percent said he would.

Brcko District

District Supervisor: Seats of SDS councilors in the Assembly to be filled by November 19

Brcko District Supervisor Henry L. Clarke told a press conference on Wednesday that his office would be receiving the applications for filling the seats of SDS councilors in the District Assembly who had walked out in early October until 19 November 2001. Supervisor Clarke said that his part of the job was considerably facilitated following an unanimous decision taken last week by the Brcko Assembly which called for filling the seats of SDS councilors.

International Community

The High Representative continues a series of high level meetings in New York

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Tuesday continued a series of high-level meetings in New York designed to sustain the engagement of foreign governments and international agencies in the Bosnia and Herzegovina peace process. On Tuesday morning he met Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Pique. The High Representative attached particular importance to this meeting because Spain has been a longstanding partner in the BiH peace process and also because Spain will take over the Presidency of the European Union from Belgium in January. Mr Pique expressed detailed interest in the status of peace implementation in BiH and commended the High Representative for the courageous decisions he has taken in order to steer BiH towards a modern political environment consistent with European norms and expressed his full support for these efforts and for the High Representative personally. (All Federation media carried the [OHR press release](#) quite prominently.)

US Ambassador to BiH Clifford Bond: International Community realized that the Alliance is a constructive partner

In an interview with Fena news agency, the new US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, said that citizens and political leaders must work together with representatives of the International Community in BiH in order to reach adequate and satisfactory solutions to burning issues in the country. "In this moment, it is more important than ever, that citizens and leaders in BiH take over the responsibility for the reform in the country," he said. Commenting on the effectiveness of the Alliance, Bond added that the International Community realized that this coalition is a constructive partner, which is

focused on the future of BiH.

OHR to impose amendments to Property Laws in the Federation and the RS

Dnevni Avaz reports that representatives of the OHR will today (Thursday) hold talks with experts from the BiH Ministry of Refugees and Human Rights and discuss International Community proposals and Ministries' objections in this area. Entities were to submit their commentaries on the PLIP (Property Laws Implementation Plan) proposals adopted at a conference in Teslic in October. The daily notes that discussions between entity governments and the adoption procedures in both Parliaments could postpone the amendment of the Law for nearly a year. All this could provides for a greater possibility that the High Representative will impose the necessary changes and amendments.

Editorial

Jutarnji List: OHR will isolate the SDS just as it has done with the HDZ BiH

By Gordan Knezovic

(...) Aside from the the number of intra-coalition political conflicts among the parties belonging to the Alliance in the BiH Federation, the other main problem is the difference of attitudes between the Alliance operating in the Federation and the one from the RS. The RS Government headed by Mladen Ivanic is shaken by the conflict with the SDS and their affilaite parties. Ivanic cannot ignore the SDS ministers as this party has the majority in the RS Parliament. The OHR conditioned its cooperation with Ivanic's Government with his breaking with the SDS. Moreover, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, announced recently the possible ban of the SDS. In

addition, Clifford Bond, the new US Ambassador in BiH, upon his arrival to Sarajevo, announced that he does not want to meet with SDS representatives.

(...) Since the political representatives of the RS have not demonstrated any willingness to work on the strengthening the state institutions, the parties of the Alliance from BiH Federation opted for the one-sided transfer of authority from the Federation to the state institutions. The head of the RS Government and the President of the Party of Democratic Progress – the party which, on entity level, is in the coalition with SDS, has opportunity to avoid the international isolation if he breaks up with the SDS. Ivanic cannot remove from the ministers that are resisting the integration processes from the government, while the SDS has a majority in the RS Parliament. In order to resolve the blockade in the Serb entity, international organizations could apply the same method of isolation of radical parties as they did with HDZ BiH and other parties of the HNS (Croat National Assembly).