

BiH Media Round-up, 15/4/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

Presidency welcomes Austria's pledge of continued support, calls on BiH authorities to implement Constitutional Court ruling

During his one day visit to BiH on Friday, the President of Austria, Thomas Klestil, held a number of meetings with senior BiH and international officials. After the talks with members of the BiH Presidency, Klestil stressed that his country, which "energetically lobbied for BiH's admission to the Council of Europe," will continue to support BiH in its efforts to join other European institutions. He promised that Austria would help BiH to sign the EU Agreement on Stabilization and Association as soon as possible. "I have conveyed to the BiH Presidency not only my support and support from the Austrian government, but also that from the entire Austrian nation to BiH on its path towards European integration with the final goal being its fully-fledged membership, because that is also in Austria's interest on the basis of our long-standing friendly relations," said Klestil.

The Austrian President also called on BiH authorities at the

level of the state and the entities to implement the Constituent Court's decision on the constituent status of all peoples BiH which is a "condition for the stabilization of the political situation and BiH's moving closer to European integration." Klestil also said that the key for the abolishment of visa regime for BiH citizens travelling abroad is in BiH itself, and stressed that the strengthening of the State Border Service and regulation which would prevent the illegal migration across BiH would lead the country in this direction. He also commended the efforts of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, who, in his words, helped things move from the standstill.

The Austrian President was accompanied by a business delegation which, during the day, met with several BiH ministers, including Azra Hadziahmetovic, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations. (All media, electronic and print, reported on this item quite prominently). Click here for the [OHR Press Release](#) .

BiH Presidency, Parliament again fail to agree the state budget for 2002

Media report that the Friday meeting between members of the BiH Presidency and collegia of both chambers of the BiH Parliament failed to produce any results as the participants could not agree on the proposed state budget for 2002. The contentious issue is still the provision stating that the legal representative in The Hague (in the lawsuit against the FRY) will be financed from the state budget, to which object most RS representatives. "This is a political issue and until a political agreement is reached, this issue will not be resolved," explained Zeljko Mirjanic, the speaker in the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives.

BiH Election Commission: Elections to be held on

October 5

At a Friday session in Sarajevo, the BiH Election Commission made a decision that the general and presidential elections in BiH will be held on October 5 this year. Dnevni Avaz reports, however, that this information will not be officially announced until April 18.

BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations: Organized crime developed in BiH

BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Azra Hadziahmetovic, said on Saturday that the ill-structured and organized judicial and economic system in BiH is the prime cause of corruption in BiH. Speaking at a session of the Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals (VKBI), Hadziahmetovic said that the only remedies for this problem are a comprehensive judicial and economic reform and the creation of a well-organized anti-corruption system in the country. (Front-page story in Oslobodjenje, other media reported on this item)

Official accuses anti-terrorism team of concealing data on terrorism

BiH Parliament's House of Peoples Deputy Speaker Nikola Spiric again on Saturday accused the BiH Anti-Terrorism Team of concealing rather than gathering information on terrorism. At a news conference in Sarajevo he called on the Anti-Terrorism Team's head Ivica Misic to reveal his links with Safet Catovic, who was allegedly responsible for the Mujahedeen camp in Pennsylvania and was on the BiH Foreign Ministry's payroll until 2001. Spiric called on Misic to explain what the people who printed forged passports in 1991 are doing now and whether a report on the issued passports by serial number will ever be produced.

Constitutional Reform

Zlatko Lagumdzija: IF the RS National Assembly does not implement constitutional changes, someone else will!

The SDP president, Zlatko Lagumdzija, said on Saturday that he believes that the process of implementation of the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement on constitutional changes will be finalized within 15 days. Speaking at an SDP-organized forum in Travnik, Lagumdzija said that the only parties which rejected this Agreement were the three former leading nationalist parties – SDA, HDZ and SDS – who had an interest in preserving a divided BiH. Lagumdzija also expressed hope that the RS National Assembly will change the adopted constitutional amendments and harmonize them with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. “If the RS National Assembly does not do this, it will be done by someone else,” Lagumdzija warned at a Travnik forum, obviously alluding to the International Community. (All media report on Lagumdzija’s address, however, only SRNA news agency carries the controversial quote)

RS parties strongly condemn Lagumdzija’s statement

The **SNSD** (RS Independent Social Democrats) called the recent statement by the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, (that “the RS NA must pass the amendments in line with the Sarajevo Agreement or someone else will do it instead”), as unseen example of political blackmail and fiat.

The **Vice-President of the RS**, Dragan Cavic, said the RS has met the deadline for the adoption of constitutional changes, in accordance with the BiH Constitutional Court’s ruling on the constituent status of three people, Beta reported. Cavic told the RS Television that a statement of President of the SDP, Zlatko Lagumdzija, was “shocking and without a precedent.”

Cavic said that Lagumdžija “obviously has a problem with the implementation of the Sarajevo’s Agreement on the constitutional changes in the Federation BiH, so he is trying to transfer the problem to the RS, which has completed the job.” Refusing the requests of the Federation parties for the changes of the constitutional amendments, adopted by the RS Parliament on April 4, Cavic said the requests of the HDZ, which asked for the division of BiH on cantons or the establishment of a community with three Federal units were unacceptable. Cavic said that demands of the Federation parties were directed to destroy the constitutional order in BiH, adding that he expects sharp reactions from international organizations, particularly the OHR.

SDP asks the International Community to implement the Mrakovica- Sarajevo Agreement

Vice President of the SDP, Slobodan Popovic, said on Saturday that this party will insist on the full implementation of the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, reported ONASA. “If this is not done, we will demand that the International Community uses its power to ensure that the Agreement is implemented,” said Popovic. Speaking at an SDP-organized forum on constitutional changes in Zenica on Saturday night, Popovic also said that the SDP is satisfied with the reached Agreement and added that it paves the way for the full implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling on constituent status of all peoples in BiH. “Republika Srpska will no longer be what it used to be. It is of crucial importance that the national question is fully removed from the politics and that the national parties were taken away the exclusive right to represent national interests,” said Popovic, concluding that the ongoing constitutional changes will enable the construction of democratic and European BiH.

Jozo Krizanovic: Sarajevo Agreement is current

political optimum

Vecernji List carries an interview with a member of BiH Presidency Jozo Krizanovic in which he, talking about the March 27 Agreement on constitutional change (also known as Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement), says that the Agreement is politically mature document which represents the present optimum given the political forces. "It is a good step towards full democratization of BiH. The fact that it being questioned in the RS and attacked by nationalist parties shows that it is nicely measured", says Krizanovic. Speaking about the amendments adopted by the RS NA, Krizanovic says that the amendments are incomplete and do not reflect the Sarajevo Agreement. "I am talking about the Sarajevo Agreement as a basis for defining of those amendments and as you know there is an obligation for the RS NA to carry out a revision of those amendments and achieve complete harmonization to the Sarajevo Agreement", says member of BiH Presidency.

When questioned whether deputies in the Federation Parliament will be unanimous in adopting amendments to the Federation Constitution, Krizanovic says that the current situation shows that the necessary two-third majority cannot be reached adding that until April 18 there is time for political talks with the IC and friends of BiH.

SDA to vote against Federation constitutional amendments

The SDA will not vote in the Federation Parliament for amendments to the entity Constitution drawn up by the Federation government. "The adoption of these amendments would mean that the discriminatory amendments to the RS Constitution ensuring Serb domination would automatically take effect, while Bosniaks and Croats would be reduced to the level of national minorities," SDA's senior official, Adnan Terzic, told a news conference on Saturday.

In today's interview with Nezavisne Novine, the SDA's President, Sulejman Tihic, explains why his party rejected the Agreement reached in Sarajevo on March 27 and notes that his most serious political mistake was his decision to initially take part in the talks on constitutional changes. Click [here for the full interview](#) .

HDZ against the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement

At a session held late Friday night, the main board of the HDZ (Croat Democratic Union) announced that this party has rejected the provisions spelled out in the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. In a statement for the press, the HDZ asked its delegates in the Federation Parliament to reject this Agreement and vote in favour of the constitutional changes proposed by this party. HDZ also reminded its representatives in the Parliament that they are obliged to come up with a "proposal for adequate federalisation of BiH", namely a proposal for either cantonization of the country or the creation of a federal unit, where each constituent people would have its own entity.

Dnevni Avaz reports that HDZ members did not on Friday discuss the personnel changes in the party, which will have to take place if the HDZ wants to run in the elections scheduled for October. The daily also writes that the unrecognised HDZ president, Ante Jelavic, will not step down from this post and will, instead, form a list of independent candidates made up of officials who are not on "Petritsch's blacklist" – that is the list of removed officials – and encourage voters to support them. Zagreb's Vecernji List carries a similar report.

Croatian officials discuss constitutional changes with representatives of Croat parties in BiH

Croatia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tonino Picula, and the deputy speaker of the Croatian Parliament, Zdravko Tomac, held on Friday a meeting with representatives of Croat parties in

BiH. After the session, Picula noted that the disagreement among parties about the ongoing constitutional changes in BiH were evident, as representatives of the NHI and HSS (Croat Peasant party) – that is Alliance parties – insisted on the implementation of the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, while the parties gathered in the Croat National Assembly criticised the same. Picula explained that participants at the meeting discussed the possibility of reaching a consensus on the Agreement, and added that all Croat parties agreed to meet next Monday to, once again, assess the position of Croat people in the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. The meeting was attended by representatives of all Croat political parties in BiH, except for the HDZ. However, the party's vice president, Mariofil Ljubic did participate at the session in a role of a Croat deputy in the Federation Parliament.

Picula: Sarajevo Agreement “good solution “ for BiH Croats

The Croatian Foreign Minister, Tonino Picula, said on Sunday that the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement on constitutional changes represents a good solution for Croats in BiH and could serve as a basis for amending the two constitutions in the entities. “I believe that the Agreement is a compromise. The main question is whether this Agreement – as a compromise – is good in term of correcting deficiencies of another compromise, namely the Dayton Agreement,” said Picula in last night's [interview](#) with the HRT (Croatian Television).

DNS asks for resignations of Sarovic, Kalinic and Cavic if they succumb to Petritsch's pressure

The Vice President of the Democratic People's Alliance (DNS), Jovan Mitrovic, said that the DNS will ask the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, Speaker of the RS National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic, and the Vice President of the RS, Dragan Cavic, to submit their resignation if they succumb to pressure coming

from the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch. "This is a small thing for any individual but a great deal for the RS". Nezavisne novine quote Mitrovic as saying that the leadership of RS and SDS were responsible for the pressure put forth by the High Representative about the constitutional changes. "In the year 2000, behind the closed doors, Sarovic, Kalinic and Cavic, took over an obligation that they now have to implement. If they give up their positions and chairs, the RS would remain part of BiH and people should be allowed to decide about its destiny through a referendum. I expect them, as serious politicians, to submit resignations, if necessary. They should submit their resignations with no hesitation, as they must not allow the High Representative to put forth such strong pressure on the RS. Once again, it is confirmed that BiH is a boiling pot in which three nations live and they – not international representatives – have to decide about their life."- said Mitrovic. He added that his party would call for a referendum in the RS and resignations of its highest officials if they succumb to the pressure of the High Representative who announced that he would pronounce the amendments passed by the RS National Assembly null and void. "Parties from the RS bear responsibility for the Sarajevo Agreement which is not good for RS. Meetings from Mrakovica to Sarajevo are nothing else but a plain farce to which they contributed. Finally, they were given a chance to support something that is against their will. They made a mistake and now they have to be strong enough to sacrifice for the RS and give people a chance to say what they think at a referendum. RS cannot be erased from the BiH map and people would not allow to go under the minimum of interests that were adopted by the 68 members of the RS National Assembly. – Mitrovic stated.

OHR: Constitutional amendments a job for domestic authorities in both entities

In a statement for Dnevni Avaz, OHR's spokesperson, Alexandra

Stiglmayer, stressed that although the High Representative has been receiving numerous appeals calling him to impose constitutional changes in the two entities, the position of the OHR is that this is a job for local authorities. She expressed hope that the RS will harmonise its amendments with the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement by April 18, thereby meeting the deadline set by the International Community.

OHR's Alexandra Stiglmayer: RS is becoming multiethnic entity

OHR's spokesperson, Alexandra Stiglmayer, said that the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement is a good compromise – the best possible compromise at this time – which represents a good basis for constitutional amendments in both entities. In an [column written exclusively for Sarajevo's Jutarnje Novine](#), Stiglmayer noted that by signing this Agreement, the “RS is saying goodbye to its mono-ethnic character” and BiH is moving closer to European standards

Mirko Sarovic: We shall preserve RS

In its Monday edition, Glas srpski carries the excerpts from the interview of the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, with the Novi Sad-based Dnevnik. The daily quotes Sarovic as saying that the RS wants to reach agreements on many issues, but that Dayton BiH, with two equal entities and three constituent peoples, must be preserved. Sarovic added that the RS, in order to survive, has to have its own Parliament, Government, official language, Army and Police. According to Sarovic, Sarajevo media report on daily basis that many things in the BiH Federation are not as they should be and therefore, in order to compensate for that, some representatives of the international community put pressure on the RS. “In my talks with them, I always emphasize that the RS was for the Dayton BiH, not unitary one that we had since 1992 and which was not good for us. We are for full implementation of the Dayton

Agreement, especially Annex 7.” – Sarovic said.

Federation

Crisis in the Federation government ends

A four-day crisis in the Federation government caused by an illegal transfer of funds to Am Sped company from Orasje ended on Friday. Dnevni Avaz reports that the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, held a meeting with ministers in the government when it was decided that the executive authority will hold a session already next week and discuss all outstanding issues, including the Am Sped affair.

Sarajevo stock exchange launched

The Sarajevo stock exchange officially began working on Friday. The Sarajevo stock exchange was set up in September last year by broker firms from Bihac, Visoki Mostar and Sarajevo. The Federation's Commission on Securities signed an agreement with the Ljubljana stock exchange for transfer of software trading systems for the Sarajevo stock exchange. At the opening ceremony, the chairman of the Commission on Securities, Edit Basic said that the stock exchange was set up to serve citizens. "I appeal to you to use the services of the stock exchange and the broker firms. All of you who in the process of privatization became owners of firms or companies should be assured that the stock exchange is the quickest and easiest way of buying and selling your stocks," said Basic while opening the first stock exchange in Sarajevo. (All Sarajevo media reported on this item)

Jutarnji List: Herzegovinian companies targets of Croatian entrepreneurs

(provided by OHR Mostar)

In the midst of political debates there is an economic war

going on whose aim is to take over successful companies in Herzegovina. JL says that Mostar-based "Aluminij" escaped the destiny of the "Hercegovacka Banka" thanks to its mighty foreign partners. Regarding the Hercegovacka Bank case, JL reads that the investigation has so far discovered practically nothing and that the bank was destroyed because of political reasons with a hope that the investigation would give evidence of crime which could justify the spectacular tank raid. JL goes on to say that the famous Herzegovina Holding was never formally founded and says the HDZ has definitely lost its sources of funding if it's to be judged by employees of the HDZ HQ in Mostar who are complaining that they have not received salaries in months. A separate article reads that in the spring last year it was expected that Petritsch would take over the "Aluminij" Company using the same scheme as in the Hercegovacka Banka case because it was said at the time that the Company's CEO Mijo Brajkovic is helping the HDZ and (Croat) Self-rule by donating millions of KM to them. "Everything here is politics, it is more important which party you are in than how you work. I hope that one day it will be realised that there is no prosperity without work, where politics will not be dominant, regardless if I live to witness that", says "Aluminij" CEO Mijo Brajkovic. Regarding redundancies in the company Brajkovic says that among the people who lost jobs in the company there are 35% Croats, many of them who had been employed in the army or police who now insist to return to their jobs. "OHR recommended us to improve the national structure, we accepted that, but what happened was that no Bosniaks are responding to our vacancies or our calls to our former employees to get re-trained", says Brajkovic.

International Community

Amnesty International: BiH criminals hiding in the US

Dnevni Avaz quotes the most recent report on violations of human rights by Amnesty International, which, among other things, notes that the US is sheltering persons who have been charged with torture and other violations of human rights. The reports cites 13 names of such persons, three of which are BiH citizens, and accuses the US of providing a shelter to those who are "on the run from justice."

Ambassador to UN says establishment of ICC guarantee of stability in Bosnia

The BiH ambassador to the UN, Mirza Kustjugic, said that the International Criminal Court, which comes into being on July 1, will be a guarantee of stability in BiH. "The formation of the International Criminal Court, which is of exceptional importance for BiH, in a way guarantees the future of BiH, as it emerges as an institution which will punish individuals responsible for war crimes and aggression anywhere in the world," Kustjugic said in an interview with Dnevni Avaz on Saturday. "The establishment of the International Criminal Court proves that no territorial sovereignty, be it local or ethnic, where there is no international presence, is a guarantee that crimes will be left unpunished," Kustjugic said.

Kosovo's UN administrator Michel Steiner to visit Sarajevo

Michel Steiner, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo, will visit Sarajevo on Monday (today) to meet with BiH and international officials. AFP reports that during his one-day "courtesy visit" to Sarajevo, Steiner will meet with the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in BiH, Jacques Paul Klein, as well as the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch. Steiner is also scheduled

to have talks with the chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, and the former BiH president Alija Izetbegovic. Prior to taking over the UN administration in Kosovo in February this year, Steiner served as the Principal Deputy High Representative in BiH at the time of the Swedish diplomat Carl Bildt.

Official says new Yugoslav Hague law applies to BiH nationals

The Law on Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, which was adopted by the Assembly of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, applies to all war crime suspects who are found to be staying on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, SRNA has been told by the RS prime minister's advisor for relations with the Hague tribunal, Sinisa Djordjevic. "According to our understanding, the law applies to all war crime suspects who are found to be staying on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia," Djordjevic said with reference to consequences that the law may have for RS war crime suspects who may be caught in Yugoslavia. He confirmed that a recent visit by a team of international legal experts to BiH focused on preparations for the setting up of a state war crimes court in BiH and the education of prosecutors in entities in order to be able successfully to deal with cases which will be forwarded to the Hague tribunal in line with the Rome agreement. Djordjevic believes that for the time being it is difficult to say whether such a court would be set up in BiH as the final decision about this will be made by the UN Security Council, which is also the founder of the Hague tribunal, and the parties whom the cases refer to, the RS and the BiH Federation.

Editorials

Editorials in Oslobodjenje: In "Why is Petritsch waiting?",

Mirko Sagolj notes that if the International Community and the High Representative fail to act now and ensure the full implementation of the Constitutional Court decision on constituent status of peoples in BiH, consequences for this country could be fatal – similar to those in 1992, when the International Community failed to intervene in the aggression against BiH.

In a separate editorial, Zija Dizdarevic notes that if the RS National Assembly harmonises at least some provisions in its constitutional amendments with the Sarajevo Agreement, BiH will need only limited intervention by the High Representative. This is evident already now, Dizdarevic argues, adding that the US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, will have to readjust his view on this issue.

Headlines

Saturday

Oslobodjenje

- Alija Behmen ends the crisis in the Federation government

Dnevni Avaz

- Sarajevo stock exchange opens

Dnevni List

- Tonino Picula, Foreign Minister of Republic of Croatia and Dr. Zdravko Tomac, Deputy Speaker of Croatian Parliament visit Mostar: We do not trade with interests of Croats in BiH
- Headquarters for protection of identity and survival of Croats in Stolac sends letter to High Representative: We request absolute application of law
- Strike of education workers in HNC ceases: 25.000 pupils back to benches
- Attention: Dnevni List on Sunday

Vecernji List

- Delegation of Republic of Croatia with Croat parties in Mostar: HDZ avoids Picula and Tomac
- Strike in Herzegovina ceases: Classes on Monday

Glas srpski

- General John Sylvester's letter: friends under suspicion
- SFOR entered house of Slavko Bajagic, two nights ago: they look for Karadzic with a letter

Nezavisne novine

- Alarming situation in Banja Luka Clinical Center: operation rooms without water and electricity
- Nikola Grabovac, Finance Minister of BiH Federation: Party for BiH undermines the Alliance

Sunday

Oslobodjenje

- BiH has a well-developed organized crime

Dnevni Avaz

- Amnesty International: BiH criminals hiding in the US

Dnevni List

- People, is this possible: Zubak withdraws signature from Agreement?
- Classes in schools with Croat curriculum begins tomorrow

Vecernji List

- Mariofil Ljubic on his talks with Picula and Tomac: Zagreb must know what's troubling Croats – HDZ will not go to House of Peoples

Monday

Oslobodjenje

- Local authorities turn a blind eye to human rights' violations

Dnevni Avaz

- Alija Behmen: IMF did not impose embargo on Federation government

Jutarnje Novine

- Alexandra Stiglmayer: RS is becoming multiethnic

Dnevni List

- Who is best paid within Alliance: Terrorism or team for veiling of terrorism – it is a question now
- Bozo Misura, acting Director of Federation Pension Fund: Nobody will be denied pension earned pursuant to law

Vecernji List

- Dr. Franjo Komarica, Banja Luka Bishop and President of BiH Bishops' Conference: If Croats become minority, a war is possible
- Shocking report of Amnesty International: Criminals from BiH hiding in USA
- HDZ in elections as independent list: Removed leadership recommends boycott of elections
- New front in BiH-Croatia oil war: INA must leave BiH

Glas srpski

- Is Darko Trifunovic going to be re-employed? Minister's Jihad camp
- We shall preserve RS

Nezavisne novine

- SFOR Spokesman, Scott Lundy calls upon the indictees to surrender: SFOR follows 24 indictees
- Sulejman Tihic, SDA President, for Nezavisne novine: Izetbegovic will go to The Hague
- Is BiH getting yet another political party: Mariofil Ljubic establishes a

party