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## **BiH State-related Issues**

### **Council of Minister Accepts Terms For BiH Accession to the Council of Europe**

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the Council of Ministers at yesterday's session adopted a statement accepting terms for the BiH accession to the Council of Europe. The Council also tasked its Chair, Zlatko Lagumdžija, with signing this document on behalf of the CoM. At Thursday session, the Council also discussed Draft law on special security measures in case of an international armed conflict or an international terrorist crisis that jeopardize security in BiH and accepted Draft Agreement on abolishment of visa regime between BiH and FRY.

### **Bosnia, Croatia fail to reach agreement on border crossing in Bosanka/Hrvatska Kostajnica**

BiH Radio One reported that expert teams of the commission in charge of border crossings between BiH and Croatia discussed in Hrvatska Kostajnica on Thursday a suitable location for a border crossing between Bosanska Kostajnica and Hrvatska Kostajnica. However, media report, the commission members failed to reach a compromise. A member of the working group, Goran Tegeltija, confirmed that the two expert teams did not manage to harmonize individual proposals by BiH and Croatia and arrive at a joint proposal. "Of course, some progress had been made but the two sides failed to reach a joint solution," he said, adding that the Croatian team insisted on finding a temporary solution while its BiH counterpart stressed that all necessary conditions for the opening of the joint border crossing must be fulfilled first.

## **OHR to impose changes on Property Laws by December?**

Dnevni Avaz reports, quoting anonymous sources, that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, may impose changes and amendments to the Property Laws in the Federation and the RS as well as to the entity recommendations for the implementation of OHR Decision to abolish the two year ban on purchase of apartments in the Federation and to introduce benefits for returnees who are privatizing their homes in the RS. The daily notes that the Federation Ministry of Urban Planning is not satisfied with the OHR proposal for the amendments, while its RS counterpart has fully harmonized its proposal with that of the OHR.

### **Federation**

#### **After Federation Parliament refused to comply with OHR orders – No sanctions by the OHR!?**

Vice president of the Federation, Safet Halilovic, told Oslobodjenje that he fully supports the decision of the Federation government to leave 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 on the agenda of Wednesday's session of the entity House of Peoples, despite objections by the OHR. He said, however, that criticism and objections of the OHR, as well as that of all municipalities concerned will be taken into consideration while reaching final decision on this issue. "I am confident that we will reach solutions which will satisfy all parties participating in this project," he said, adding that he does not expect any further tensions between the International Community and the Federation government. "There is no room for concern. The OHR will understand the fact that the Federation government would like to resolve this issue in a systematic

fashion," he said.

## **Possible consequences of the adoption of the Draft Law on Hydropower Plants: Mostar will get reduced incomes from electricity**

After Alija Behmen, the Prime Minister of the Federation Government, had refused the OHR recommendation to withdraw a Draft Law on the Allocation of Elektroprivreda Income (see item above), it is imminent, Vecernji List argues, that the adoption of this law could be highly detrimental to the city of Mostar. Only 20 hours before the beginning of the Federation house of People's session, Daniel Besson, the Head of the OHR Economic Department, demanded the withdrawal of the Draft Law. Quoting anonymous sources, the daily writes that this Draft Law implies a considerable reduction of the Elektroprivreda incomes for the City of Mostar. The OHR only explained that the content of the law has not been discussed with the Mostar City Administration.

Alexandra Stiglmayer, an OHR Spokesperson, said that the OHR does not want to discuss this issue in public, however, the OHR will continue to cooperate with the Federation Government.

Vecernji List writes that the OHR is trying to protect the City of Mostar and a progress achieved, primarily because of the Mayor Neven Tomic. The OHR expects that it will succeed 'to reach an agreement' with the Federation Government until the Draft Law appears before the Ministers again. The IC believes that the reduction of the city incomes coming from Elektroprivreda and the equating of their amounts with other cities and municipalities would endanger the already unstable political position of Mayor Tomic, who was ousted from the HDZ, whilst Safet Orucevic, a former Mostar Mayor, does everything in order to prevent a further integration of the two parts of the city. Persons who are better informed claim that Orucevic is related to the fact that the 'agreement ' between his good friend Alija Behmen and Mostar, regarding the

incomes coming from Elektroprivreda, was not reached.

## **New Incidents in Stolac: Small conflict from Wednesday evolves into demonstrations on Thursday**

Oslobodjenje reports that a group of about 220 high school students of Croat nationality gathered in front of the Stolac High School building shouting offenses at Bosniak students entering the school. According to the daily, Croat students threw rocks at their Bosniak fellow-students and in the direction of the site, where the reconstruction of the town's mosque is to commence shortly. UN spokesman Stefo Lehman told Oslobodjenje that the IPTF is still looking into the situation.

Dnevni List reports that Croat students physically attacked construction workers working on the rebuilding of the Careva Mosque in Stolac, and which located near the school building. Their parents gathered in front of the town's municipal building protesting the removal of all Croat insignia from the school premises.

In a press release, the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton Ministry of Interior confirmed that a series of incidents took place and added that all perpetrators have been identified and detained. It also said that the situation in the town was tense, but there were no additional incidents reported. The Ministry argued that the Wednesday's fight between two groups of Bosniak and Croat students was not organized, but it rather occurred in a spontaneous fashion.

Vecernji List also reports about the incident and quotes a concerned Stolac Mayor, Zeljko Obradovic, as saying that he hopes that this event does not negatively affect the implementation of the educational integration plan. "We are having talks with the Bosniak side and we hope that these problems will be resolved to the benefit of all sides involved," said Obradovic.

The incidents took place only two days after a group of 70 Bosniak returnee children began attending classes in the Stolac High School.

## **Federation Minister of Urban planning offered, but then withdrew his resignation because of a dispute with the OHR**

Oslobodjenje reports, quoting Party for BiH's Safet Halilovic, that the present Federation Minister of Urban Planning and Environment, Ramiz Mehmedagic, offered and withdrew his resignation to the Federation Prime Minister because of a dispute with representatives of the OHR. "Because of some dispute and then pressure from the OHR, Mehmedagic internally offered his resignation to Alija Behmen. However, as the dispute was settled and the Minister and the OHR now again work together, the resignation was withdrawn," said Halilovic.

## **Luzanski and Raguz: We are returning to institutions of authority from which we were chased away**

Speaking at a forum entitled "Constitutional-legal position of BiH Croats in the light of forthcoming constitutional changes" which was held in Tuzla on Wednesday, the Vice President of the HDZ BiH, Ivo Andric Luzanski (unrecognized by the IC), announced that the HDZ is officially returning to the institutions of authority. "We are returning to the institutions we did not leave voluntarily, but from which we were chased out". Martin Raguz, a Vice President of the HDZ BiH who also participated in the forum stressed that the act that has to be followed during the constitutional reforms is the Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of all peoples on the entire territory of BiH. Raguz also stressed that principles of equal representation, parity and rotation in key positions in the Federation and the RS have to be secured. All these are the main pre-requisites for a self-

sustainable return. Speaking about the relationship with Croatia's authorities, Ivo Andric Luzanski said that he was dissatisfied with the attitude of the current authorities in the neighboring country, adding that they treat BiH Croats quite harshly. Luzanski said that BiH Croats did not need money from Croatia but rather their support in achieving an equal status for the Croats within BiH, reads Dnevni List.

## **Republika Srpska**

### **RS Premier: Factions within the SDS**

The RS Prime minister, Mladen Ivanic, said that there are two factions in the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) – one which still has not realized that the war times are over and the other one which lives in the present.

In an interview for Banja-Luka based Alternative TV last night, Ivanic said that relations within the SDS were crucial for relations between the RS and the Federation, hinting that some changes would be made within the party in the coming months.

### **SDS Senior Official Mirko Banjac Says no factions in the party**

Commenting on Ivanic's statement (see item above), an SDS senior official, Mirko Banjac, said that the Prime Minister's statement about factionalism in the SDS – one moderate and the hard-line – is hasty. "I really feel sorry for Ivanic who considers himself the standard of democracy. In SDS, like in any other political party there are various people who have various interests", Banjac told Nezavisne Novine. The daily also reports that the SDS top leadership started yesterday a meeting during which party leaders will discuss the government reshuffle and the SDS relations with Ivanic's PDP.

## **RS Interior Ministry denies receiving from The Hague a warrant for arrest of Gen. Milosevic**

The RS Interior Ministry spokesperson, Zoran Glusac, said on Thursday in Banja Luka that the ministry had not received The Hague tribunal's warrant for the arrest of Gen Dragomir Milosevic, indicted for crimes committed against civilians in Sarajevo in 1994 and 1995. "The RS Interior Ministry is not the first or the only element in the government which implements The Hague's decisions and I can confirm that the ministry has not received any warrant for the arrest of Gen Dragomir Milosevic," Glusac told a news conference, SRNA reports. When asked if the ministry would be arresting Serbs in Croatia, suspected or found guilty of committing war crimes by the Croatian government, and for whom warrants for arrest had been issued by Interpol, Glusac reiterated that a number of warrants had been sent to the RS Interior Ministry, but that he would not act upon them. "At one of its sessions, the Serb Republic government decided that proceedings against Serbs in Croatia are not in line with the 'rules of the Roman Road'," the Interior Ministry spokesperson said.

## **RS Prime Minister Ivanic Says RS Started Hunt For Karadzic and Mladic**

Both Banja Luka dailies carry an [interview](#) that RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic gave for the Reuters in which he said that the RS has started the hunt for its war crimes suspects. Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic told the agency those sought included the two most wanted – Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. "I know that judicial authorities have created conditions for the search for these people and that the search is ongoing", said Ivanic.

## **Mirko Sarovic on Palic case: Captain Pecanac knows**

## **where Avdo Palic is!**

In a letter addressed to the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic (and cc-ed to the OHR, Human Right Chamber and the US Embassy in Sarajevo), the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, said that it is his intention not to give up until the notorious Palic case is resolved. Avdo Palic was a Bosnian Army general in the UN safe zone of Zepa, who had been abducted by the Serb Army in 1995, since when no one knows his whereabouts. Sarajevo daily Oslobodjenje reports that Sarovic also presented Belkic with the RS Defence Ministry statement which points out to particular Serb Army officials, in particular to the Captain Zoran Pecanac, who were responsible for the release and transfer of the then arrested General Palic back to the Bosnian Army. The RS Defence Ministry stresses, however, that Captain Pecanac is presently not available, and thus the fate of the General Palic still uncertain.

## **President of the RS Constitutional Commission Says Constitutional Changes Before the Parliament Soon**

Nezavisne Novine quotes the President of the RS Constitutional Commission, Miroslav Mikes, as saying that the Draft text of changes to the RS Constitution will soon be forwarded to the RS National Assembly and that currently the most important question to be agreed upon is the way in which Bosniaks and Croats will be represented in the RS Government, courts, RS NA leadership and administration. Mikes also said that there is no need to set up a House of Peoples in the RS NA since the RS Constitutional Commission protects national interests of all RS citizens. Mikes denied statements that the RS Constitutional Commission is lagging behind the Federation constitutional Commission in drafting constitutional changes. "We have the draft text of amendments, which, if passed by the RS NA, will be made available for public discussion, which is more than I can say for the Federation", said Mikes.

## Editorials

In an editorial published in *Dnevni Avaz*, Fadil Mandal comments on the results of the opinion poll recently conducted in the RS, and which indicated that over 80 percent of residents of this entity object to the arrest and extradition of one of the most notorious indicted war criminals Radovan Karadzic. Mandal notes that such findings are not surprising, as all governments in the smaller entity have shared the overwhelming belief that Karadic and Ratko Mladic are legitimate representatives of the Serb people who had fought for freedom of this "endangered people." He argues at the end that the only solution to this is the final arrest of the two, which would put an end to one side's story and enable the residents of the RS to see "the other side of the coin." "Not a single people can be proud of genocide committed in its name," concludes Avaz's commentator.

## **Jutarnji List: Croats in BiH worse off than back in 1991**

By Snjezana Pavicic

"No Croat option in Bosnia-Herzegovina is possible without getting into a conflict with the International Community. They simply do not understand what we want", a BiH Croat recently stated resignedly while re-telling discussions with international diplomats who are on a mission in BiH.

"They do not understand why we insist on the Croat(ian) language when there is no difference in between Croat(ian) and Bosnian, as they put it, they do not understand why we request that our children learn according to a separate, Croat(ian) curriculum. They remove people who do not want to give up the Croat flag, you can call it the Herzeg-Bosnia flag, but it is our flag, and they treat any attack on the American flag as the gravest act of crime", says the man who is normally a

fierce critic of the HDZ BiH policy. He sees no prospects for the Croats in BiH – the HDZ is not capable of grasping the political reality, and Kresimir Zubak's New Croat Initiative cannot be considered an alternative since any essential request of Zubak's is met in Sarajevo with hostility same as Jelavic's requests.

On the eve of the 10th anniversary of Herzeg-Bosnia, Croats in BiH are surely in a worse position than they were on November 17 1991, when the Croat Community Herzeg-Bosnia was founded in Grude.

Apart from the fact that Croats in BiH are halved in number, ten years later they have politically lost their head thanks to the war between the HDZ and the IC, and the official Zagreb has turned its back on them.

Bosniaks make the majority population in the Federation, so Bosniaks are also the strongest ones in the Alliance and national interests are easily recognised in the statements of the Alliance politicians, as it was the case before when the authority was in a brotherly manner shared between the HDZ and the SDA.

In the spring of 1992, Mate Boban called upon the Croats from the bodies of authority to leave Sarajevo, yet, in 2001, it is only in Sarajevo, not in Grude and Zagreb, that they can fight for and achieve their rights.