

BiH Media Round-up, 16/4/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

Bosnian, Yugoslav, Croatian education ministers sign cooperation accord

The education ministers of BiH, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro signed a statement on accepting education cooperation in Sarajevo on Monday. According to the ministers, this document should stimulate exchange of experiences in education and its reforms in line with European standards, as well as international exchange of experts, documents and information in the process of education modernisation. Federation Minister of Education, Mujo Demirovic, explained that the idea of establishing a better cooperation in the area of education was born after last year's informal conference of Southeastern European education ministers in Strasbourg under the auspices of the Council of Europe. "Our aim is clear: a road to the future and development of education systems which, while respecting all different types of differences of all these states, would enable them to join European and world integration processes," said Demirovic.

Demirovic's colleagues from the RS, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro also welcomed this agreement, calling it a historic step forward in cooperation among the countries of Southeastern Europe. The signing of the regional education cooperation accord was also welcomed by representatives of the Council of Europe, the OHR and the OSCE, calling it a step towards Europeanization of Southeastern Europe.

Constitutional Reform

Most Croat parties accept in principle proposed constitutional changes in the Federation, HDZ refuses to take part in the talks

Representative of most Croat parties in BiH, except the HDZ, decided on Monday to accept in principle the proposed

constitutional changes which have been forwarded into parliamentary procedure by the Federation government, but urged defining a precise mechanism which will prevent the domination of one people in executive and legislative authorities. At yesterday's meeting in Sarajevo, Croat parties in BiH attempted to harmonize their views on constitutional changes in the entities, however, in words of Miljenko Brkic, the president of the HNZ (Croat Peoples Community), the differences in opinion were still evident. While the leaders of the NHI and the HSS (Croat Peasant Party), Kresimir Zubak and Ilija Simic, insisted that the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement on constitutional amendments is implemented in full, other parties suggested minor modifications to the structure of the House of Peoples in the Federation Parliament (namely, to ensure full representation of *only* three constituent peoples and not also of "others" or national minorities.)

Oslobodjenje reports that representatives of the HDZ refused to take part in this meeting, saying that they are "unable to understand the essence of such gatherings." However, similarly to the last week's meeting between Croat parties and Croatian officials, HDZ's Mariofil Ljubic attended the session, again, as he said, in the role of a deputy in the BiH Parliament and not as this party's official.

In a statement for the press, the HDZ said that by refusing to sign the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, "it clearly confirmed that it cares more about agreements reached by Croat parties in BiH, than any haggling with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch." "We believe that there is no room for any compromise when it comes to the equality of Croat nation with other nations in BiH," said HDZ, accusing the Croat parties within the Alliance of hypocrisy and "blind obedience and loyalty to Petritsch, instead to their own people."

At a meeting with Contact Group ambassadors, SDA reiterates it will not support the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement

At Monday's meeting with Contact Group ambassadors (Great Britain, USA, France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation and Spain), the leadership of the SDA reiterated that it will not support the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement or the Federation government-proposed constitutional amendments. SDA's president, Sulejman Tihic, explained that the Agreement is not acceptable for the party because it "does not ensure the equality of peoples and respect for human rights on the entire territory of BiH." The meeting was also attended by the SDA vice president, Adnan Terzic, and the honorary leader, Alija Izetbegovic.

Party for BiH: Disputed RS amendments must be annulled, corrected, supplemented

At yesterday's meeting, the Party for BiH's senior official, Safet Halilovic, announced that the party will hold a consultative session on April 17 in order to define its position on constitutional changes in the entities before the upcoming sessions of the RS National Assembly and the Federation Parliament. Although he would not speculate as to the conclusions of the meeting, Halilovic stressed that the S BiH will continue insisting on the harmonization of RS amendments with the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. "Anything short of that will be unacceptable for us," Halilovic said.

Contact Group: April 18 deadline for constitutional changes must be complied with

In the recent series of meetings with representatives of political parties in BiH, ambassadors of countries making up the Contact Group (see above) stressed that the last deadline for adoption of constitutional amendments in line with the so-

called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement in the entities is April 18. "The International Community believes that this deadline will be complied with and that local parliaments in both entities will do their job properly," Spanish ambassador, Rafael Valle Garagorri, told Dnevni Avaz. Garagorri, whose country is presiding over the EU, stresses that local authorities must accept the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. "This is the beginning and the end of the story. We do not want any new negotiates," he said, adding that the provisions of the M-S Agreement must be built in the constitutional amendments in both entities. The first secretary of the US Embassy in Sarajevo, Christopher Hoh, concurred with Garagorri, stressing that the Constitutional Court ruling on constituent status of all peoples in BiH must be implemented. "We said what we had to and now we want to see results," he said.

EU General Affairs Council urges adoption of constitutional amendments

At yesterday's session, the EU General Affairs Council welcomed the Agreement on constitutional changes in the entities reached in Sarajevo on March 27, and urged political leaders in the RS and the Federation to adopt constitutional amendments in line with this Agreement. "By implementing the Agreement... BiH would take an important step towards its European future," notes the Council in a [communiqué](#).

OHR urges the parties to adopt constitutional changes in line with Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement

OHR also urged political parties in BiH to adopt constitutional changes in the entities in line with the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement by Thursday afternoon, so as to leave enough time for the BiH Election Commission to announce the elections. At a press conference in Sarajevo, OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer stressed that parties that have signed the Agreement have shown a "vision, statesmanship

and responsibility for the future of this country.” “We expect that on Thursday, each party that shares these views, which wants to build a functioning Bosnia and Herzegovina, which wants to take the country into Europe, will vote for amendments in which the Agreement is incorporated,” Stiglsmayer said. She added that the way in which votes will be taken will determine who the International Community will consider a partner in the future. “Parties who vote negatively will thereby endorse the status quo under which Bosniaks and Croats are discriminated against in the constitution of the RS, and Serbs are discriminated against in the constitution of the Federation. They will have said yes to this set up,” Stiglsmayer said, adding that parties which reject the Agreement are national and nationalist parties which by nature are not interested in normalizing the situation. “Seven years after the war, both entities are becoming multi-ethnic, which cannot but help BiH’s integration in Europe and growing harmonization with European standards. Everybody who advocates a multi-ethnic BiH should support this,” Stiglsmayer stressed. News agencies carry the report from the press conference.

Federation

BiH ex-interior minister, intelligence chief charged with terrorism

The Federation prosecutor’s office has filed criminal charges against three persons charged with committing acts of terrorism, espionage, making and purchasing equipment for terrorist training and abuse of power, report all Sarajevo dailies on their front pages. These are the former interior minister and AID [Bosniak intelligence service] director, Bakir Alispahic, former AID adviser Irfan Ljevakovic, and the former head of the Sarajevo sector of AID, Enver Mujezinovic. The Federation prosecutor’s office has confirmed that it has requested an investigation into Alispahic, Ljevakovic and

Mujezinovic, as well as their detention. Media say the three have been charged with setting up a terrorist training camp in Pogorelica, which provided a "basic terrorist education" for its students. The camp was established in co-operation with the Iranian intelligence service MOIS, whose members have been identified as perpetrators of over 20 terrorist attacks around the world. The camp was closed in February 1996 after a raid by SFOR troops.

Federation Army marks its 10th anniversary

Federation Armed Force marked on Monday its tenth anniversary. "We are justified in saying that an army which prevented occupation and division of Bosnia was created then, an army which conducted a just war of liberation..." said yesterday the Federation Defence Minister, Ferid Buljubasic, expressing hope that the next anniversary will be marked by a single BiH Army.

Justice Minister of Federation: We are reducing number of judges and courts (provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries an interview with the Federation Minister of Justice Zvonko Mijan in which he talks about the current situation in the judiciary and judiciary-related issues.

Mijan says that they had contacts with active judges of the ICTY about establishment of a mini ICTY for processing of war crimes in BiH when the judges have been informed about the fact that Cantonal, Municipal and Supreme Court(s) in Federation as well as courts in the RS are not capable of processing those kind of cases. "Me and my colleagues were advocating for an idea to either form a special court for war crimes or to establish a special department within the recently established BiH Court that would deal with that matter. We will see after this visit of international legal experts in charge of the field which option is acceptable",

says Minister Mijan. Minister Mijan also announces new reforms to the judiciary which includes adoption of series of measures. The Minister hopes that the organization of Federation judiciary would become more rational saying that is evident that the current set up is untenable when it comes to efficiency and funding. In that sense, Minister Mijan says that there will have to be reductions in numbers of courts with naturally cuts in number of judges and prosecutors, Minister Mijan did not specify how many judges would lose jobs. "Simple statistics say that BiH has more judges and courts than some European countries", says Mijan. When asked to comment statements of some judges that the big number of unsolved cases require more judges, Mijan says that efficiency will never be reached through additional hiring of judges saying that a more efficient court procedures have to be enabled through adoption of completely new process laws. When asked to comment on announcement that the Alliance made that it would tackle corruption and organized crime, Minister Mijan says that the fundamental goal is to build an independent and impartial judiciary saying that it is not good that an authority initiates and conducts processes. With regards to organized crime and corruption, Mijan says that it is a whole process which has already started in cooperation with the IC, with the IJC formed by the High Representative. "There were some goings off course in the reform so far and the results are not as expected. Everyone is resolute to go into a dramatic reform to judiciary", says Minister Mijan. Answering to a question that it is being mentioned that some parts of Anglo-Saxon law, which would increase competence of prosecution, would be introduced, Mijan says that the idea is to transfer many competence from investigative judge to the prosecution thus practically abolishing the role of the investigative judge, all for the sake of a more efficient procedure. "When it comes to building of some parts of Anglo-Saxon law into our continental system, one has to be very careful because of the specific environment", concludes Minister Zvonko Mijan, reads Vecernji List.

International Community

EU Solana to visit BiH, Kosovo

European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana will travel to BiH and Kosovo on Tuesday and Wednesday to meet with UN and regional officials. BiH Radio reports this morning that Solana will arrive in Sarajevo today to discuss preparations for hand over of the international police mission in BiH from the IPTF, and which is to take place early next year.

After meeting with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for BiH, Jacques Klein, Solana will travel to the province of Kosovo for discussions with UN and local government officials.

Kosovo's UN Administrator visit Sarajevo

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo, Michael Steiner, visited on Monday Sarajevo and held talks with senior international and BiH official, including the members of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic and Jozo Krizanovic, BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in BiH, Jacques Paul Klein and the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch. Steiner used this opportunity to inform BiH leaders about the present situation in Kosovo and the steady stabilization in this Yugoslav province. He also suggested to the members of the Presidency to consider the possibility of organizing an official visit to Kosovo. Nezavisne Novine quote Steiner as saying that Kosovo administration could learn a great deal from peace implementation in BiH.

Headlines

Dnevni Avaz

- Federation Prosecutor charges three former BiH officials with terrorism

Oslobodjenje

- Federation Prosecutor presses charges against Alispahic, Ljevakovic and Mujezinovic

Jutarnje Novine

- Federation Army marks its 10th anniversary

Dnevni List

- What happened behind the scene of “Melodije Mostara 2002”: Ismeta Dervoz chased away Croat journalists
- Reaction of UD VDR HR HB Mostar: Tailoring history again

Vecernji List

- How much is spent on MPs: Members of Parliament get 2400 marks – Ministers’ salaries 1000 smaller
- Trials against Slobodan Milosevic: Izetbegovic a witness in The Hague after all
- Zvonko Mijan, Federation Justice Minister: We are lessening number of judges
- Sarajevo meeting on constitutional changes: Croats still without agreement

Glas srpski

- Banja Luka Clinical Center: Full wallet necessary for medical treatments
- Smuggling routes: a jacket costs 2 KM

Nezavisne novine

- More than a hundred people died in an airplane crash in South Korea: 54 passengers survived
- NATO analysis on terrorist networks in Balkans: Nine terrorist groups in BiH

- Tihic and Izetbegovic with Contact Group Ambassadors: SDA would not support the amendments