

# BiH Media Round-up, 17/1/2002

## BiH State-related Issues

- Dispute over oil transport ban through Croatia continues
- BiH Council of Ministers to discuss future steps after Croatia's ban on transport of oil

## Federation

- Alliance agrees on the new heads of financial institutions and regulatory agencies
- Dispute over Buljubasic's visit to Belgrade
- Politicians react to the removal of the Mayor of the Mostar Municipality Southwest, Ivan Mandic – With Gestapo, Udba and KGB, there was the right to appeal
- OHR: Mandic disregarded any application of law with regard to implementation of Property Laws
- Mostar Municipality Southwest: Mandic ensured to have 4 evictions a day
- Ivan Mandic: I was in the way because I oppose politics in City of Mostar

## Constitutional Reform

- BiH, Croatian ministers agree to ask Petritsch to ensure equality of nations
- Croatia wants to be engaged in constitutional reform in BiH
- PDP finds unacceptable maximal demands coming from Sarajevo
- President of the RS Commission Miroslav Mikes comments on constitutional changes

## Republika Srpska

- ICG Michael Doyle says SDS is an obstructing factor

## International Community

- High Representative in Brussels: Petritsch announces arrest of Karadzic and Mladic
- Sonja Moser-Starrach: BiH soon to join the Council of Europe
- SDHR writes to the leaders of the BiH Parliament: OHR is against the adopted amendments to the State Civil Service

## Editorials

- Dnevni List: Petritsch's conflict with CroatiaDnevni List: Wolfgang Petritsch would introduce House of Peoples in Austrian Parliament?Vecernji List: There will be no consistent implementation of constituencyDnevni List: Petritsch and Silajdzic have dinner at the restaurant owned by Zulfikar Alispago Zuka, a war crime suspect

## Headlines

## BiH State-related Issues

### **Dispute over oil transport ban through Croatia continues**

The Croatian government's ban on the road transport of oil on Croatian territory came into effect on Wednesday, despite Bosnia-Herzegovina demands for it to be scrapped, the deputy minister for foreign trade and economic relations in the BiH Council of Ministers, Seadeta Ceric, told SRNA. Ceric said that the BiH Foreign Ministry issued a diplomatic note to Zagreb over the decision, which she argues violates WTO regulations as it only refers to transit and not transport,

and breaches a bilateral agreement between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia on free trade. She also stressed that BiH would demand that this discriminatory decision be overruled by the Energy Charter unless Croatia did so. The Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tonino Picula, said that Croatia will keep close diplomatic contacts with representatives of BiH and Slovenia all in hope to adequately resolve this controversial issue. Picula stressed, however, that Croatia has to "take care of its ecology". Media report that the oil ban decision caused a serious rift in the Croatian Parliament, as several parties call this move of the government "silly" or "catastrophic", and accuse country's political leadership of trying to create a monopoly in the oil industry in both Croatia and BiH.

## **BiH Council of Ministers to discuss future steps after Croatia's ban on transport of oil**

The BiH Council of Ministers is on Thursday expected to decide which measures it will take after the Croatian Government has banned road transport of crude oil products through its territory. The BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations will recommend to the BiH Council of Ministry to form a group with competent entity ministries, which is expected to determine the way in which the road and railway transport of oil products for the BiH's needs will be established if Croatia does not annul its decision, which came into force on Wednesday.

## **Federation**

## **Alliance agrees on the new heads of financial institutions and regulatory agencies**

News agencies and media in the Federation report that, at the last night's meeting, representatives of the Alliance agreed on the national and party affiliation of persons which will be

named to the leading posts in the Federation financial institutions, regulatory agencies and bureau's. Oslobodjenje reports that the party leaders agreed that the national structure in those institutions will remain the same as the present one. One of the most controversial issues – the nationality of the head of the Federation Securities Commission – was resolved as the parties agreed to leave a Bosniak on the post, thereby also resolving the long standing dispute between the LDS (liberal Democratic party) and the NHI (New Croat Initiative) over this matter. At last night's meeting, the BPS (Bosnian Patriotic party) failed to propose a new candidate for the post of the Federation Minister of Refugees and Social Politics, but promised to do so by Friday.

## **Dispute over Buljubasic's visit to Belgrade**

Oslobodjenje reports, quoting anonymous sources close to the Federation government, that the deputy Federation Minister of Defense, Ferid Buljubasic, went to Belgrade last week in an official visit which was approved by the chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, Federation Deputy Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the Bosniak member of the Presidency, Beriz Belkic. The same source said that Buljubasic visited the Yugoslav Federal Bureau of Transport and Reserves to negotiate the payment of the pre-war Yugoslav military industrial debt to BiH. Belkic told Oslobodjenje that the visit was neither secret, nor illegal. "It was a high time that that BiH opens this issue of repayment of the pre-war military debt," said Belkic, while Federation senior officials still deny they were informed about the talks.

## **Politicians react to the removal of the Mayor of the Mostar Municipality Southwest, Ivan Mandić – With Gestapo, Udba and KGB, there was the right to appeal**

Asked to comment on the removal of the Mayor of the Municipality Mostar-Southwest, Marko Tokić said: "Considering

the ways in which the international community works, it is surprising that Ivan Mandic managed to stay on the position of Municipal Mayor even this long. We know Ivan Mandic and we have got to know the international community, too. It is all clear and there is nothing vague about it."

Petar Milic, the founder of the Croat Christian Democrats, said it was a political removal, aimed at making room for politicians who do not enjoy the support of the Croat people, primarily Neven Tomic and all other Alliance officials.

Many of our interlocutors, says Dnevni List, agree that Petritsch's decisions have some fascistoid elements. They conclude that notorious political and secret polices in the last century abided by court decisions and there was the right to appeal to any decision. But that is not the case today with Petritsch, concludes Dnevni List.

### **OHR: Mandic disregarded any application of law with regard to implementation of Property Laws (provided by OHR Mostar)**

Avis Benes, OHR Spokesperson in Mostar, stated at the regular press conference that the OHR expects that the Municipal Council of the Mostar Municipality Southwest will elect a new Head of the Municipality in the shortest time possible, since the High Representative removed Ivan Mandic. According to her, this removal should not cause a delay in the vacation of the Stone Building's ground floor premises by the City Municipality Southwest. Avis Benes stated: 'The OHR South has warned Mandic a few times because of his way of work and the last time it was done in December last year when the Head of the OHR Mostar told him that his disregard of the rule of law and his irresponsible behavior with regard to the implementation of the Property Laws will not be tolerated any longer.' She also added that the Municipality Southwest is not the only Municipality in the region in which the implementation of the Property Laws is not satisfactory. She

stressed that also Mostar Municipality Southeast ( A. Benes was misquoted, she stated 'with the exception of the Mostar Municipality Southeast') and all other Mostar Municipalities, including the Central Zone lag behind in terms of the Property Laws implementation and the situation is also bad in Drvar and Glamoc. She announced that in the coming year the repossession of property will be the OHR priority and stressed that it should not be obstructed in any way. She called on the Cantonal Authorities to meet their obligations with regard to the securing of the alternative accommodation for the persons who are leaving other people's property. 'With regard to this issue, it has not been noticed that some activities have been taken so far, although, in its budget, the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton envisaged to allocate almost a million Marks for the alternative accommodation and care after refugees. She added that the OHR has not received a response from the Government saying as to how these funds will be spent. Dnevni List also covered the press conference.

### **Mostar Municipality Southwest: Mandic ensured to have 4 evictions a day (provided by OHR Mostar)**

Mostar's Municipality South-West issued a press release which reads that reasons for the removal of Ivan Mandic are unfounded saying that Mandic was personally engaged in the implementation of property laws and solving of issues pertaining to return of property which is currently occupied by the HDZ City Board and Association of Volunteers and Veterans of the Homeland War, reads Slobodna Dalmacija. The information that during Mandic's mandate 1251 persons repossessed their property, that about 4500 persons have returned to this Municipality and that 4 forced evictions were taking place every day were especially stressed.

### **Ivan Mandic: I was in the way because I oppose politics in City of Mostar (provided by OHR**

## Mostar)

Removal of the Head of Mostar's Municipality South-West, Ivan Mandic, was a surprise for Mostarians considering the fact that Mandic had a reputation of being one of the most popular politicians in Mostar, whose results can be called successful, reads Vecernji List. The rumours are that the Mandic's removal was a political lynch carried out by the former Head of the OHR South, Colin Munro, and Mostar Mayor, Neven Tomic. Ivan Mandic himself says that he is not surprised with the decision. Vecernji List carries an interview with him.

"I accept the HR's decision and I will respect it and act in accordance to it. The Statute of the Municipality South-West reads that I am to be replaced by Pero Vrljic. I care that the Municipality continues working normally", says Ivan Mandic.

When asked about the reasons and accusation justifying the removal and his comment to them, Mandic said that the reasons are absurd, bizarre and without argumentation explaining it with the fact that the PLIP rates for the Mostar's Central Zone, which is directly governed by the City, are just over 18%, whilst in the South-West, where some 26.000 Croat refugees live, that figures stands at 29%. When asked to comment accusation that he obstructed evictions of HDZ members and members of various associations, such as the Homeland War volunteers, Mandic said that the real truth is that those evictions had been carried out and that the IC was happy about it.

Q: Petritsch's decision states that during your tenure as the acting Minister of Interior in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton you had prevented the construction of the Careva mosque in Stolac thus preventing the return to Stolac?

Mandic: "I only spent two months at the post and during that time I was waiting to get a confirmation for my post. For the sake of the truth, in order to avoid speculations, I will say

that the Head of the OHR South, Colin Munro, and William Ozkaptan of the UNMIBiH, promised that Petritsch would abolish the decision of the Head of Municipality Stolac which was to restrict access to the Careva mosque site in Stolac. Since it never happened I followed the Head Kuzman's decision and restricted the access to the mosque's site".

When asked to comment rumours according to which the decision to remove him is just a political lynch, Mandic said that the decision is politically motivated adding that 98% of the allegations within the decision are untrue. "That's why there are no reasons not to accept the decision, because I know it has a political motive behind it", says Mandic. When asked if there was something else behind the removal other than reasons stated by the HR, Mandic said that he did not believe it was the HR who took the decision but rather some political circles in the City of Mostar.

Q: Do you have the current Mayor Tomic and official authority in mind when you say that?

Mandic: "It can be assessed like that. I will say again. Somebody had a problem with my work in Mostar".

The article is concluded with Mandic's message to his successor when he told him to resist the political games and carry on with a greater pace, reads Vecernji List.

## **Jadranko Prlic on Oscar C Television: I felt sick at HDZ meetings**

"In a few years time Bosnia and Herzegovina will not look anything like it does now. Its current internal establishment will not survive, but BiH as a state will", says the Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade in the Council of Minister, Jadranko Prlic, for the Mostar-based Oscar C Television. During the one-hour interview Prlic was answering questions about his wealth and stressed that his motive in life is not the money. "My wife and I make between five and ten thousand KMs a month

and live very good. All those stories in the media of me controlling some things are ordered articles", says Prlic (...) When asked as to why he left the HDZ, Prlic said "because I had an ulcer problem" at the party's meetings and that he was a different man nowadays. According to him, his political aim is to become the Sarajevo Mayor adding that he has not yet decided to form a political party, reads Vecernji List.

## **Constitutional Reform**

### **BiH, Croatian ministers agree to ask Petritsch to ensure equality of nations**

The chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers and the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zlatko Lagumdžija, and his Croatian counterpart, Tonino Picula, will ask the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, that the decision on the constituent nature of all three nations in Bosnia-Herzegovina be implemented throughout the country, while the Constitutional Commission in the RS and the House of Peoples in the Federation be brought to the same level. Federation Television reports that the two agreed upon this at a meeting in Zagreb which was held on Tuesday.

### **Croatia wants to be engaged in constitutional reform in BiH**

The Croatian government maintains that the constitutional reforms in BiH are an opportunity to advance the democratic process and establish a symmetry of institutions in the country's two entities, Foreign Minister Tonino Picula told Croatian parliament on Wednesday, HINA reports. Zdravka Busic from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), the largest opposition party, asked why the government did not react to a proposal by the High Representative for setting up in the RS National Assembly a special commission for protection of the fundamental national interests instead of a body such as the

House of Peoples. Basic said that the OHR was dodging the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court decision. This, she added, could reduce Bosnian Croats to a national minority.

Picula, on his part, said that he had spoken to Petritsch on the phone earlier in the day and was informed that the High Representative will soon visit Zagreb, explain his intentions, and discuss the constitutional reforms in BiH, Picula added. He told Petritsch that he was both interested and concerned about recent statements as the Dayton Peace Agreement and the constitution oblige Croatia to care about the Bosnian Croats. The High Representative assured Picula there was no cause to fear that Croats in Bosnia might become a national minority. "Croatia will not watch indifferently the constitutional reforms in Bosnia", Picula asserted. (\*\*\*\*\* see also headline in Oslobodjenje below\*\*\*\*\*)

## **PDP finds unacceptable maximal demands coming from Sarajevo**

Both Banja Luka dailies carry a press release, issued by the PDP Presidency, which states that the maximal demands coming from Sarajevo and which pertain to amendments to the RS Constitution are unacceptable. The PDP supports all changes that will ensure that none of the BiH peoples are discriminated as well as creation of democratic conditions at all levels thus enabling other nations to be represented in the RS authorities. The PDP RS believes that election results should be taken as a basis for forming the authorities at all levels, and sees this as the only valid and just solution. The press release further reads that the PDP believes that the recent statement of the High Representative, is concerning since his main duty is to make sure that the Dayton Peace Agreement is implemented and not to incline to anyone's proposals. The party presidency also decided to support the candidacy of BiH Minister for European integration, Dragan Mikerevic for the position of the next Council of Minister Chairman.

## **President of the RS NA Commission Miroslav Mikes comments on constitutional changes**

“Nezavisne novine” reports that the public debate on constitutional changes has officially started yesterday in Banja Luka. The paper quotes president of the RS National Assembly Commission, Miroslav Mikes, as saying that he hopes that the discussion will go smoothly without using inflammatory language that one could hear during the last RS NA session. He says he hopes that, after the debate is over, a compromise will be reached or at least a minimal agreement on implementation of constitutional changes especially with regard to some issues such as the use of Bosniak or Bosnian language, distribution of power in the RS, position of RS president and vice-president and RS Constitutional Court.

## **Republika Srpska**

### **ICG Michael Doyle says SDS is an obstructing factor**

Today's edition of Nezavisne Novine carries an interview with ICG Political Analyst of International Crisis Group (ICG) for BiH, Michael Doyle, in which he explains his views on the political situation in BiH, constitutional changes, cooperation between the RS and the ICTY, Mladen Ivanic's government, SDS, etc... Commenting on the work of the RS Government, Doyle says that RS Prime Minister, Ivanic has good intentions, that he wants to reform the RS and make the RS a better place for its citizens but that these things are not possible because of the SDS. “I think he could not have done more because the SDS is a big burden for him. SDS is a disturbing factor. The international community has made a big mistake by failing to ban the SDS from entering the RS Government. This means that the SDS does participate in the work of the RS Government but does not take the responsibility

for anything that has been done in the RS. When asked who is responsible for such a situation, Doyle said that it is true that the SDS has been obstructing the reforms in the RS to a great extent, but emphasised that the responsibility for that also rests with the International Community. He also said that the RS Prime Minister is also responsible, because he could have formed a different coalition but he did not and unfortunately decided to create one with the SDS.

## **International Community**

### **High Representative in Brussels: Petritsch announces arrest of Karadzic and Mladic**

All media in BiH reported prominently about the High Representative's address to the NATO's North Atlantic Council on Wednesday in Brussels, where he informed the NAC ambassadors about the present situation in BiH and argued against the announced drastic cut in the [US] NATO troops serving in the country. Speaking about the increasingly frequent rumours that the International Community "may soon pack its bags and leave Bosnia," Wolfgang Petritsch said that the time is not yet ripe for such a drastic withdrawal. "To leave now would mean to take a risk that this state in the heart of Europe fails," said Petritsch addressing the NAC ambassadors.

In an interview with SENSE news agency in Brussels, the High Representative said that one of the most important, but still outstanding, issues in BiH is the arrest of the indicted war criminals, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. "Now, after this meeting, I am completely sure that there are no other options for the two save the arrest," he said.

Following the meeting, the NATO Secretary General, George Robertson, stressed that the North Atlantic Council

ambassadors are very pleased with the developments in BiH and expressed their future commitment to the peace and stability of the country. Robertson indeed confirmed that there will be a significant “rationalisation” of forces in the Balkans, but stressed that such reorganisation would ensure greater efficacy of the troops.

(Dnevni Avaz carries the press release on page 2, Jutarnje Novine on page 3, Oslobođenje carries the SENSE report on page 3 – all three have headlines on front pages – , BiH Radio 1, Federation Television and the RTRS also carried the [press release](#), however less prominently).

## **Sonja Moser-Starrach: BiH soon to join the Council of Europe**

Special Representative of the Council of Europe Secretary General Sonja Moser Starrach said on Wednesday that she believed that BiH will soon become member of the Council of Europe and continue threading the path of democracy. During Wednesday talks with President of the European Committee of the Link Diversity campaign Ibrahim Spahic and general secretary of the campaign for BiH Zehrudin Isakovic, Moser Starrach said that she expected the first meeting of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly in this year, on January 22, “will be happiest for BiH.” She said she was satisfied with the realization of Link Diversity campaign and stressed its importance not only for BiH and the southeastern Europe, but for entire Europe and the world.

## **SDHR writes to the leaders of the BiH Parliament: OHR is against the adopted amendments to the State Civil Service**

Dnevni Avaz reports that the Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, sent a letter to the speakers of both houses of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, objecting to the adoption of amendments to the BiH State Civil Service by

Commissions on Constitutional and Legal Issues. In the letter, Sonn stresses that the said amendments are in violation of the Law on the SCS. "I suggest you not to adopt these amendments because they move away from the main aim of the Law, that is, the establishment of a professional and qualified state service in BiH and in accordance with European standards," Sonn said in a letter.

## **Editorials**

(all editorials provided by OHR Mostar)

### **Dnevni List: Petritsch's conflict with Croatia**

By Jurislav Petrovic

After Wolfgang Petritsch said, not in the least diplomatically but rather as a political amateur, that if the Republic of Srpska introduces House of Peoples, it should be done in Croatia, too, a number of Croatian politicians have reacted, says Dnevni List.

The High Representative Petritsch, who got the idea that he can give orders to an independent state as he does to BiH, because he is in charge there, said that House of Peoples should be introduced in Croatia as well. The author then carries the reactions from Zdravko Tomac and Drazen Budisa and goes on to say that Petritsch must have forgotten that Croatia is a state where 82% of its citizens declare themselves as Croats and that they have their representatives in the Croatian Parliament. Therefore, they have no need for House of Peoples, whereas BiH has three constituent peoples that should be equally represented.

The High Representative has once more confirmed that he does not see Croats as a constituent people by saying that Croats and Bosniaks should be equal in the Republic of Srpska as

Croats and Serbs are in the Federation, which confirms that he has already started considering Croats a national minority throughout BiH. This open political war between the independent Republic of Croatia, which unites Croatian politicians against Petritsch's state that is only formally independent and has long stopped being autonomous, did not end at these statements.

It all started again when the Republic of Croatia introduced a decree banning the road transportation of oil and oil derivatives intended for BiH through the territory of Croatia. This decree, which the Bosniak politicians have protested against, will cause a collapse of around 250 phantom companies from BiH that were not paying the taxes. By passing this decree, the Republic of Croatia has started introducing law and order into the oil business, first on its own territory and then indirectly on the territory of BiH. We do not know how Petritsch will take this decree once it turns out that he cannot be the supreme leader on the territory of the neighboring state as well.

## **Dnevni List: Wolfgang Petritsch would introduce House of Peoples in Austrian Parliament?**

By Zoran Bosnjak; full translation

Any change of constitution brings along a great risk and uncertainty even in democratic countries, let alone BiH as it is today. Implementation of the Constitutional Court Decision on the constituency of all peoples across BiH, under the circumstances in BiH, brings along an especially big risk and uncertainty.

Being aware of this fact, the "final authority for interpretation of the Dayton Peace Agreement," Wolfgang Petritsch is not even nearly as decisive when it comes to a consistent implementation of the Decision as he is when it comes to sanctions against Croat officials because its

consistent implementation implies the necessity of changing the BiH and Entity Constitutions. Within this, the public expects that the civic and ethnic principles do not clash, but complement each other, they expect compliance with the subsidiarity principle and standardization of individual and collective rights of the constituent peoples in BiH.

It is logical for the constitutional reforms to go in the direction of a constitutional, democratic and de-centralized state where local government and self-government will be consolidated and efficient. At this time, it is irrelevant whether the components of such a de-centralized BiH will be called cantons, regions, federal units or entities.

In multiethnic and multicultural countries similar to BiH, it is necessary to establish and develop a con-association democracy, i.e. consensus must be based on democratic principles so as to provide special additional mechanisms to guarantee an equal status to all ethnic communities and to protect their national interests.

However, the constitutional amendments produced by Petritsch's legal experts in the Entity Constitutional-Legal Commissions indicate that a consistent implementation of the Constitutional Court Decision, most likely, will not happen.

While the Constitutional-Legal Commission in the Federation of BiH wants a symmetric constitutional structure in the two entities and an institutional protection of constituent peoples, the Constitutional-Legal Commission in the RS merely offers some cosmetic changes without announcing even the slightest possibility of introducing House of Peoples in this Entity as an institution for the protection of national interests.

The Commission for the protection of national interests can exist, but a two-chamber parliament with a House of Peoples in the Republic of Srpska – not for anything in the world.

The High Representative has recently been saying that he is not against the introduction of House of Peoples in the Republic of Srpska, "but people of this country must discuss and reach an agreement about that." Petritsch said so, claiming that he has no intention to be the "final authority for interpretation," much less to make any constitutional corrections in the Republic of Srpska. Instead, defending the RS with all means, he stated that the Republic of Croatia is also preparing to introduce House of Peoples in the Parliament.

It seems to Wolfgang Petritsch "from what Granic said that Croatia is thinking about introducing House of Peoples in Croatia because I suppose he would not ask for Croats in BiH to get what Croatia is not ready to give the Serbs in Croatia." So said Wolfgang Petritsch and stayed alive.

He again forgets that Croats in BiH are a constituent people and that Serbs in Croatia are not, he again forgets that Croats in BiH are not a national minority but a constituent people, or perhaps what hides behind this statement is his subconscious statement and aspiration for bringing the Croat people in BiH into the position of a national minority with his decisions and to declare them a minority before his final departure. Ceremonially, of course. So said Wolfgang Petritsch and left us with a dilemma as to whether he will, upon returning to Austria, introduce, together with Heider, if not a House of Peoples like in the Federation, then at least, as he intends to do in the RS, a Commission for the Protection of National Interests of Carinthian Slovenians or Gradisce Croats. And others, of course.

During this process, it will turn out that the Federation must, whether it likes it or not, adjust to the RS in institutional, legal and all other terms (remember, for instance, the discussion on the purchase of apartments) as the RS, in reality, has more extensive prerogatives than BiH. The Federation of BiH will probably have to abolish its House of

Peoples and introduce Commission for the Protection of Vital National Interests if the goal is a symmetric structure of both entities, which makes every sense.

An asymmetric structure would only weigh down the side of the scale which shows that peoples and citizens of this country are discriminated and that the divided BiH, as a result of Wolfgang Petritsch's work, does not have prospects of becoming truly single in the near future, let alone becoming self-sustainable.

Beyond any doubt, Wolfgang Petritsch will leave BiH divided forever although he himself and many of the international community officials often imputed this wish on Croats and their political leadership. Therefore, after the constitutional reforms and the implementation of the Constitutional Court Decision, BiH will still remain divided instead of becoming a normal and single state where one set of laws will be applied in Banja Luka, another set in Sarajevo and a third set in Mostar, or perhaps, if we go even further, a fourth one in the Brcko District. The dream of a single, democratic and de-centralized state of BiH is getting farther and farther from reality. Every day it becomes more and more of an ulcer, which, by the nature of things, will eventually have to burst.

## **Vecernji List: There will be no consistent implementation of constituency**

By Tihomir Begic, HNS Spokesperson

Any changes to a constitution in democratic countries carry big risks and uncertainty, and the decision of the Constitutional Court on the constituent status of peoples within BiH, in circumstances BiH is in, carry an exceptionally big risk and uncertainty. Aware of that fact, Wolfgang Petritsch, the final authority, lacks decisiveness in implementing the decision because its consistent

implementation would without a doubt lead to changes to the Entity Constitutions and the Constitution of BiH. The public expects that civic and ethnic principles do not confront but complement each other during the constitutional reforms, and that individual and collective rights are standardized. It is logical that the changes lead to establishment of a democratic and decentralized state with an efficient and strengthened local self-government. At this moment it is irrelevant whether these components are to be called cantons, regions, counties, federal units or entities, in other words a consensus must be based on democratic principles so there are special mechanisms which will guarantee an equal position to all ethnic communities. But recent amendments made by Petritsch's legal experts in the Entity Constitutional-Legal Commissions as well as his recent public statements show that there will be no consistent implementation of the Constitutional Court's decision. Namely whilst the Constitutional-Legal Commission in the Federation wants a symmetrical constitutional establishment of both entities and institutional protection of the constituent peoples through Houses of Peoples, the counterpart in the RS only offers a facelift without a possibility of introducing a House of Peoples in the RS. What can this attitude result in? The already seen moves, when the Federation, whether it wanted it or not, has to adjust to requests coming from the RS. So, if a symmetrical constitutional establishment were to be established, which is logical for a state, then it looks like the House of Peoples in the Federation will be abolished, because the RS does not want to introduce it, and instead of them there will be commissions for protection of vital national interests in both entities. These commissions do not have features and authorities of a House of Peoples nor guarantee constituency and equality to Bosniaks and Croats in the RS. It is not in the interest of the BiH Croats nor in the interest of BiH as a state because Petritsch's amendments, without a doubt, legalize division of BiH and are detrimental for Croats. A possible option that the Federation keeps the House of Peoples

and the RS introduces the Commission for protection of vital national interests will leave Croats in the most difficult position in BiH. Croats will end up being a national minority in both entities. The RS would remain an entity of the Serb people and the Federation would be fortified as a Bosniak entity through implementation of the civic majority, reads Vecernji List.

## **Dnevni List: Petritsch and Silajdzic have dinner at the restaurant owned by Zulfikar Alispago Zuka, a war crime suspect**

By Vladimir Buic

The Monday working dinner of Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative in BiH, and Haris Silajdzic, the leader of the Party for BiH, will be remembered by an almost unbelievable curiosity.

This political meeting was held at the Lebanese restaurant in the center of Sarajevo, and the owner of the restaurant is no one else but Zulfikar Alispago Zuka, BiH Army Commander whose actions Herzegovina Croats felt on their own skin.

The Croat side in BiH charged Zuka with war crimes against civilians at a time and addressed an indictment proposal to The Hague. Although the ICTY have not yet issued an indictment against Zuka, or to be more precise, have not declared their view of it, BiH Croats think it is offensive and disgusting that the High Representative and his political interlocutor were trying to shape the destiny of Croat and other peoples in BiH at the restaurant of the person whom this same people holds responsible for war crimes.

By this thoughtless gesture, Petritsch has once more shown a lack of both diplomatic and personal decency.

## **Headlines**

### **Oslobodjenje:**

1. Oil companies “stole” hundreds of millions KM from the citizens
2. Common loss brings together US and Afghanistan
3. Theme of the Day: CoCo Decision and the lack of its implementation (comprehensive summary to follow)

### **Dnevni Avaz:**

1. Jacques Paul Klein: “Ustashas” sentenced me to death!
2. Wolfgang Petritsch: To leave now would mean to take a risk

### **Jutarnje Novine:**

1. Sarajevo – a city of living dangerously?

### **Dnevni List:**

- ‘Path of Shame’ scandal – Tomislav Limov after talking to Mladen Naletilic Tuta and following the release of BiH Army officers – Lagumdzija has them arrested, I have them released
- Diplomatic gaffe of the High Representative – Petritsch and Silajdzic have dinner at restaurant of Zulfikar

Alispago Zuka, a war crime suspect

## **Vecernji List**

- Jadranko Prlic: I felt sick at HDZ meetings
- Ante Jelavic responds to accusations made by Provisional Administrator for Hercegovacka Banka: I would sue Robinson if she were not protected

## **Glas srpski**

- An evening of poetry in Novi Sad – Poems of Radovan Karadzic;
- Mesic is knocking at ICTY's door;

## **Nezavisne novine**

- George Robertson and Wolfgang Petritsch in Brussels – Cut of SFOR troops only in consultations with OHR;
- Michael Doyle says SDS is an obstructing factor;
- After Croatian government adopted decision on transport ban of oil through Croatia BiH left without petrol and heating oil