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BiH State-related Issues

The Alliance for Change leaders dissatisfied with their meeting with Petritsch

According to Oslobodjenje, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, did not fulfill expectations the Alliance for Change leaders, who were attempting during the two-hour meeting in Sarajevo on Wednesday to get an answer on the question why the implementation of the BiH Constitutional

Court's decision on the constituent peoples was so late. The Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, told the newspaper following the meeting that it seemed Petritsch still intended to make compromises, which was a policy not achieving necessary results. BiH Liberal Democratic Party (LDS) leader Rasim Kadic added that he got an impression Petritsch did not respect the Alliance's demands for the acceleration of the process. In their reports on the meeting, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine just said that it had not reached any concrete conclusions.

Safet Halilovic says the House of Peoples must be established in the RS

The Party for BiH Presidency President and the BiH Federation Vice-president told Oslobođenje that the Alliance for Change leaders had on Wednesday requested High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to influence all relevant Republika Srpska institutions in order that the House of Peoples is established in the entity. According to Halilovic, the Alliance maintains that parity in protecting vital national interests must be set in BiH, meaning the both entities. The secretary of the BiH Federation Constitutional Commission, Sead Dizdarevic, told the newspaper that, in his opinion, Petritsch should decide whether the constitutional commissions would resume their work, or he would impose the amendments to the entity Constitutions in accordance to his powers.

BiH Presidency members and Petritsch visit PBS BiH

BiH Federation TV and Oslobođenje report that the members of the BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic, Beriz Belkic and Zivko Radisic and the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, visited the BiH Public Broadcasting Service (PBS BiH) on Wednesday and discussed the process of the PBS establishment. The President of the PBS Foundation Board, Plamenko Custovic, and the PBS Director, Drago Maric, informed their guests on the problems they were facing in the process, which were

primarily of a financial nature.

Radisic receives PDHR Hays

The Serb member of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, met in Sarajevo on Wednesday with the Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, the BiH Presidency said in a press release. According to the Dnevni Avaz and Fena news agency, the two officials discussed the constitutional reforms in the Republika Srpska and the BiH Federation, preparations for the next year's elections and the role to be played by the international community in the future.

Cardinal Puljic meets with Petritsch

The Head of the BiH Catholic Community, Cardinal Vinko Puljic, receives the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in his residence in Sarajevo on Wednesday. Jutarnje Novine reports that the two officials discussed the current political situation in the country, with a special attention paid to a possibility that better conditions are created for the existence of all peoples in BiH.

Federation

Sefer Halilovic announces he will re-assume his ministerial duties early in January

The retired BiH Army general and the war crime suspect, Sefer Halilovic told Oslobodjenje he would re-assume his duties as the BiH Federation Minister for Social Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons early in January next year. In a statement with the newspaper, Alija Behmen, the BiH Federation Prime Minister, said that he and Halilovic had not reached any concrete agreement on the issue during their Tuesday meeting in Sarajevo. "It is up to Halilovic to decide whether he will re-assume his ministerial duties since there are no legal

obstacles to this," Behmen said.

BiH Federation House of representatives fails to adopt reduction of the regular military service from 12 to six months

Oslobodjenje reports that, at its session in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the BiH Federation House of Representatives failed to adopt the reduction of the regular military service in the entity from 12 to six months. However, Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen said a comprehensive draft defense law, which would include this segment as well, would be prepared as soon as possible.

Vecernji List: Federation Government concludes that Defense Minister Mijo Anic visit to Israel to create new jobs in military industry

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reads that the Federation Government discussed the report on the visit of the Federation Ministry of Defense to the Israeli military industry between December 10 and December 12. The Federation Government stood in defense of its Minister Mijo Anic, who was leading the MoD delegation, who was attacked by many politicians including Zlatko Lagumdžija who said that the timing of visit was bad and the visit itself was not executed according to the protocol. The Federation Government concluded that the visit was thoroughly planned in past two and a half months and arranged in cooperation with the BiH Embassy in Israel. The purpose of the visit was to present the capabilities of the FBiH military industry during which the Israeli delegation offered talks on concrete cooperation, which can result in the two sides offering products to other customers. That cooperation would create new jobs in the now unused capacities of the military industry (...), reads Vecernji List.

Dnevni List: Israel and Croats in BiH – everlasting Homeland War

Written by Leo Plockinic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Judging the statements given by its leaders, the Bosniak part of the Alliance for Changes, that harshly condemned the visit that Mijo Anic paid to Israel, by this act indirectly showed that they support a Palestinian self-rule, that is, terrorist organizations that act within it. Both the Bosniak public and organizations do not hide their sympathies for the Palestinian self-rule, that is, for the terrorist organizations that act within it, and the proof for this claim is a media campaign led by the associations called 'Muslim Youth', 'Active Muslim Youth' and 'Mosaic', that held a protest rally called 'A Day of Support to Palestinian Youth' organized in the Army House in Sarajevo on Friday (December 14).

The poster, which was issued for this occasion, shows an Israeli soldier in a verbal duel with a Palestinian and a question that says: 'What sin they have been killing for?' (a copy of the poster is also published).

Certainly the European Parliament will not accept an official Sarajevo attitude and the mood of the Bosniak part of BiH or any other country in Europe that supports the Palestinian self-rule. By insubordination of the Bosniak (Muslim) component of the Federation Army, exactly the Article of the Law on Defense was violated, according to which Ante Jelavic was charged with the crime, which in its contents has the seizure of weapon and giving of the same to the 'enemy', shows double standards. However, it is not surprising since Bosniaks in the Authority bodies in Sarajevo are larger in a number. It is obvious that terrorism is a form of revenge of radical Islamic fundamentalists who will 'take advantage' of each country (like BiH is) that gives them an unofficial support, and which is located near Europe and its allies. The IC in BiH cannot fight against terrorism efficiently since almost all

organizations are 'blended ' in the Bosniak-Muslim lobby which stresses and protects 'general Muslim interests all over the world'.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Ilija Simic says Croatian Constitution does not allow Agreement on Ploce Port

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

President of the HSS BiH, Ilija Simic said on Wednesday that the ratification of the Agreement on the Ploce Port could be ratified in the Croatian Parliament in January 2002 (...) "The problem is not with the Croatian Government or the Croatian Parliament but in the Croatian Constitution that does not allow any interventions into the state sovereignty", said Simic adding that are ways to solve the issue of the establishment of the Steering Board of the Ploce Port (...) Regarding the ongoing constitutional changes in BiH, Simic said that the Croat Caucuses in both the State and Federation Parliaments would not give up their request aimed at introduction of House of Peoples in the RS which would ensure the full protection of national rights. His assessment is that the Croatian officials were not vocal enough with regards to the support to the Croats in BiH, perhaps not wanting to be accused of interfering into domestic affairs of the neighboring country. Simic pointed out that Croatia has a constitutional obligation to take care of the BiH Croats (...), reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Republika Srpska

Petritsch to request Ivanic and SDS to urgently change RS Constitution

Nezavisne Novine quotes OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic as saying that the High Representative will request the Republika Srpska

officials to deliver into the parliamentary procedure the proposed amendments to the entity Constitution, which refers to the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court decision on constituent status of all three peoples in BiH. "This procedure has to be ended as soon as possible because there is no time for waiting on its implementation", said Milisic. According to him, the RS authorities and members of the RS National Assembly's Constitutional Commission have to find the way to introduce Bosniaks and Croats in the RS executive bodies.

RS political parties comment on the amendments to the RS Constitution

Nezavisne Novine carries reactions of Republika Srpska politicians to the High Representative's initiative on the representation of all three constituent peoples in the RS executive and legislative bodies in line with the 1991 Census.

A SPRS (RS Socialist Party) senior official, Krsto Jandric, says that the High Representative's initiative is not realistic. "SPRS has always advocated reasonable representation of non-Serbs in all RS power-structures. As to the initiative, I have to say that then it is pointless to have elections. It is impossible to impose something like this in countries in which elections are being held", said Jandric and added that the SPRS would decide whether to support the amendments or not.

A member of the SDS Presidency, Milenko Stanic, says that the High Representative's initiative is neither acceptable for the SDS nor for other political parties in the RS. "Why do we have elections then? Why go back to some deja-vu principles, because they do not lead to democracy", said Jandric.

Leader of DNS (Democratic National Alliance) Dragan Kostic also rejects the High Representative's proposal. "We are fully aware of the importance of High Representative's initiatives.

However, this initiative is not based on democratic principles. Election results determine parliamentary majority. It is inadmissible and non-democratic to form a government in line with the 1991 Census", said Kostic.

SNS Spokesman, Vinko Lolic says that apart from the proposal on appointment of a Bosniak as the RS vice-president, all other proposals are not in accordance with democratic rules. "This is going back to Tito's Yugoslavia who could not meet all interests of peoples. Only election results are acceptable", said Lolic.

SNSD and DSP officials (Nebojsa Radmanovic and Milan Tukic) also find the High Representative's proposal completely unacceptable.

The paper carries reactions of representatives of SDA, SBiH and SDP BiH who all said they would support the High Representative's initiative to form the RS government and other RS bodies in line with the 1991 Census.

SDS source says that Kalinic is going to isolate Mirko Banjac and Milenko Stanic

Nezavisne Novine quotes an anonymous source close to the SDS Presidency as saying that Mirko Banjac, Milan Ninkovic and Milenko Stanic will be removed from the SDS unless they "soften" their views. According to the source, Banjac, Ninkovic and Stanic are seen as hard-liners in the SDS, who very often criticize the work of the SDS Presidency and the SDS president, Dragan Kalinic. The source also claims that just before the party congress, scheduled for December 24th, Dragan Kalinic is putting a lot of pressure on the SDS leadership to have him re-elected for the party president. "Kalinic is putting a lot of pressure because he is afraid that Banjac, Stanic and even Cavic might take his place", says the source. The source also claims that Stanic was offered the post of the RS Telekom general manager and he accepted it.

Kalinic did it just to keep Stanic out of the game. On the other hand, Stanic says he does not believe that his appointment has anything to do with his withdrawal from the SDS leadership.

RS Government holds session on Thursday

The RS Government will discuss at Thursday's session in Banja Luka the draft Law on Public Attorney's Office and the draft amendments to the Law on Labor. The agenda of the session also includes a proposal for the Law on changes and amendments to the Law on Fire Protection and reports on the performance of eight ministries. The session will also discuss a report by the Health Insurance Fund and the Ministry for Health and Social Protection on the realization of recent decisions and the situation with regard to the pension and disability benefits. The Government will also consider a proposal for a decision to establish priorities in regard to payments in line with the Law on the Rights of War Veterans, Disabled War Veterans and Families of Killed Soldiers.

International Community

NATO to cut SFOR troops number next spring?

According to Oslobodjenje, the SFOR officials maintain it is still premature to comment on the situation in BiH to be created if NATO [cuts the number](#) of the peace-keepers in the country as it was suggested at the recent ministerial meeting in Brussels. SFOR Spokesman Daryl Morrell said that the NATO military bodies had been instructed to work out such the option, but in a way, which would ensure that SFOR remains capable of fulfilling its tasks in BiH. However, the reduction of the SFOR contingent will not be made until the next six-month evaluation of the SFOR performance and the situation in BiH, planned to be completed in May next year.

New Head of the OHR Mostar appointed

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, [has appointed](#) Mr. Jean-Pierre Berçot as Deputy High Representative and Head of the OHR Mostar Office. (Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz, as well Zagreb Vecernji List carried the Press Release)

CRA gives long-term broadcasting licenses to two TV and 20 radio-stations in the Mostar, Trebinje and Livno regions

The Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) [announces](#) the results of the Merit-Based Competition Rule for Awarding of Long-Term Licenses for thirty-one stations in Trebinje, Mostar, and Livno Regions. The relevant CRA departments reviewed and assessed all applications in accordance with the Competition Rule criteria and decided that 22 stations (2 TV and 20 radio) qualified for long-term broadcasting licenses. (All Sarajevo dailies and Split Slobodna Dalmacija carried the Press Release)

Dnevni List: Croats in Mostar remain without TV and radio stations in Croatian language

Written by L. P. (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The CRA decision disappointed the Croat people in BiH and Mostar because due to them the significant and currently the crucial part of the media space in Croatian language in BiH is being lost (it refers to the fact that Croat Radio Mostar and HTV Mostar did not get long-term broadcasting licenses). This kind of displeasure was evident at the CRA press conference, which was held yesterday, where some of the present journalists loudly expressed their disapproval asking questions related to the destiny of the media that they represent. According to the DPA Articles, a democratic right on the freedom of speech in one's mother tongue has been guaranteed. By a non-launching of a TV program in the Croatian language and shutting down of the local radio and TV stations

in Croatian language, by all accounts, the Croats were deprived of the one of basic democratic rights, that as an equal, constituent and sovereign people in BiH they should have. Comparing the number of the Croat and Bosniak media that did not get the long-term broadcasting license it is obvious that the Croats got the worst of it.

Asked about the national composition of the CRA employees, since most of its personnel are Bosniaks, Dunja Mijatovic, the Head of the CRA Broadcasting Department, resolutely denied this claim saying that the most important thing is that the employees are doing their job professionally.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Hercegovacka Banka used as “cash machine” for Monitor Company

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Spokesman of the OHR, Mario Brkic, said that the HR appointed Jean Pierre Bercot the Deputy High Representative and the Head of the OHR Regional Office in Mostar. According to Brkic, the new Head of the OHR South is a graduate of the military academy and has been in the French diplomacy since 1985. “At the moment Mr. Bercot is arriving from the New York City, where he was assigned to the French Mission at the United Nations in the Political Section for South-East Europe. Speaking about the media reports on the Hercegovacka Banka case, spokesman Brkic said that it was hard to believe the media report according to which there were no irregularities in the bank and reiterated results of the findings of the bank’s Provisional Administration. “Although established under the motto ‘A Bank for small Croat people’, in reality the Hercegovacka Banka was a cash machine for a closed circle of individuals and companies, for example the Monitor M Company had loans that surpassed the capital of the bank as a whole, and the common people were needed only to finance the loans of the privileged persons”, said Brkic. Speaking about the some media reports that mentioned the “Roman Defense” plan, Brkic

said it was time to forget that “nonsense”. “We are surprised that certain outlets keep going on about something that does not exist, for which there is no evidence whatsoever. There is no plan for melting Croats and Bosniaks into one nation because that would be in contravention of the DPA”, said Brkic, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Dnevni List: HTV Oscar C public opinion poll – Toby Robinson’s ‘evidence’

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

According to the public opinion poll organized by HTV Oscar C, 75 questioned persons or 26,8% of them answered that they believe that the Provisional Administration has substantial evidence that criminal activities were committed by the removed Bank Management, while 197 of the questioned persons or 70,3 % of them gave a negative response. 2,9% of the questioned persons do not have an opinion on this issue.

Vecernji List: New HPT management regularly pays back loans

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Following the claims made by the Provisional Administrator for the Hercegovacka Banka, Toby Robinson, according to which the HPT Mostar owes the bank more than 5 million KMs in unpaid loans and that the HPT Mostar is behind the schedule when it comes to return of the loan to the bank, the HPT Mostar reacted to the aforementioned claims by saying that the new management of the company honours its obligations towards banking institutions including the Hercegovacka Banka. The Public Relations Office of the HPT Mostar says that the company is not denying the sins of the former structures adding that the company is willing to pay back the loan under the agreed dynamics. The HPT Mostar also forwarded the media a recapitulation of the loan taken from the Hercegovacka Banka. The loan amounted to 5.557.138 KMs out of which they paid back

almost two million KMs. The loan now stands at 3.558.230 KMs. The report reads that the HPT Mostar paid 647.810 KMs between September 19 and December 12. "We agreed at the meeting with the Provisional Administrator, on December 13, that the HPT sets forth a suggestion of prolongation of pay-outs of outstanding debts, which was done these days", says the PR Office of the HPT Mostar.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus editorial, Zija Dizdarevic wrote that the recent visit of the FRY delegation headed by President Vojislav Kostunica to Sarajevo represented another step forward in the Belgrade's acceptance of BiH as the state. In another Oslobodjenje column, Gojko Beric comments on the influence of the religion on the general situation in the country, concluding that sometimes it seems that the religion itself makes people better. Faruk Cardzic wonders in the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day whether an announced comprehensive draft Defense Law of the BiH Federation will split the BiH federation Government members as foresees Defense Minister Mijo Anic. In the Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial, Vanja Ilcic also comments on the recent Yugoslav delegation's visit to BiH. She concludes that, in the coming months, President Vojislav Kostunica and his associates will have to confirm in practice what they agreed in Sarajevo with their BiH hosts.

Dnevni List: How much we can endure?

Written by Renata Marijanovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Croats in BiH have received another blow. After the HTV signal was shut down we could take comfort in the fact that we had at our disposal the local media that nurture the Croatian

language and culture. By the last CRA decision, broadcasting licenses were not issued to Croat Radio Mostar and HTV Mostar, which is one out of two TV outlets with a Croat prefix in BiH. In a civilized, Western, democratic world a freedom of speech is being respected and the media responsibility is being secured in a completely different way. Mechanisms of denials and charges are being used, and not bans on work and depriving of media of broadcasting licenses. However, in this country other methods are being applied in order to control the freedom of speech. Simply, someone decides to ban the work of an outlet, finds a good excuse for it and then he does it. The Croats are the only ones who, after the ban on the work of Erotel, shutting down of the HTV signal, almost stayed without the media in their own language, by which their basic human rights are being trampled down. How long shall we be able to endure this terror?

Dnevni List: The return of Sefer Halilovic, a suspected war criminal, to his ministerial position would be a violation of the Dayton Peace Agreement

Written by Vladimir Buic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Namely, in the Article 9 of the Dayton Peace Agreement it has been clearly stated that the persons against whom The Hague has issued a bill of indictment, who are serving a jail term that The Hague pronounced them and, finally, the persons, who did not respond to the ICTY summons, cannot run for the elections, cannot perform public duties or hold positions for which they were elected. According to this, the OSCE and ICTY interpretation encourages the Federation Government to violate the DPA. Urdur Gunnarsdottir, an OSCE Spokesperson, stated that this rule does not refer to Halilovic since he turned himself to the Court. It is clear even to an average Law student that Sefer Halilovic does not have a right on the position of a Minister since the bill of indictment has been

issued against him. The fact that Miss Gunnarsdottir is not aware of it, or, perhaps, deludes BiH public on purpose by giving priority to some rules and regulations over the highest BiH legal Act, is hard to understand since the OSCE Mission has stated many times that they support the establishment of the Rule of Law in this country. The information that various well-paid lawyers like Mr. Nobile, after they have been for years presenting their clients who turned themselves in to the Court, failed to get a favorable status that Bosniak officers have, is unbelievable. To be honest, the Authority that practically sent them to The Hague did not pay much attention to Blaskic and others, and just to remind you it was the Authority of the Republic of Croatia. However, in the whole harangue regarding Halilovic and other released BiH Army officers one should be sincere and pay a professional honor to those, who, as their lawyers, make possible for them to be at a pre-trial release, and admit that the Authority, that mediated in their extradition to The Hague, has done everything for its people. The least important is as to what the HR, a supreme power-holder for the implementation of the DPA in BiH, will say or what kind of judgment he will pass on this issue. The most important thing with regard to the whole story on the ministerial position of The Hague defendant is that to the BiH and not Guinness world book of records and unbelievable events (in which everything is possible) another specific case has been reported.

Vjesnik carries that according to the Article 9 of the DPA the return of Halilovic to his ministerial position might cause a serious political crises in the BiH Federation and cause a fall of Alija Behmen's Cabinet.

Vecernji List: BiH Army officers back in The Hague in a few months

Written by Florence Hartmann (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List carries an editorial by Florence Hartmann, the

spokeswoman for The Hague Prosecution, in which she says that the Prosecution opposed the provisional release awarded to the three BiH Army officers adding that was up to the Panel of Judges to decide whether to grant the pre-trial release. "The Panel explained that such practice should be a rule and not an exception. We decided not to appeal against this decision because the Panel has already let them go. We drew up an appeal during the hearing and asked that they be held in custody until our appeal was considered but the Panel dismissed our motion so we said, fine, let's not appeal, they will be back in four months. We gave up because it would be waste of time and money. It is not true that the prison cells are too crowded, because the system has planned that there's enough room at all times. Furthermore, the space can be expanded. It is every man's right to ask for a provisional release because everyone is innocent until proven otherwise. Yesterday we appealed against the Panel of Judges' decision, which disallowed the joining of all three indictments against Slobodan Milosevic. They decided that the Kosovo-related indictment will be separate and that the BiH and Croatia-related would be joined. The Appeals Council will deal with that in January next year", writes Hartmann, reads Vecernji List.