BiH Media Round-up, 21/11/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- BiH leaders pledge to align country with European standards
- OSCE welcomes appointments of the new BiH Election Commission
- The Alliance to remove its Ministers?
- Dnevni List: Belkic and Kljujic comment on Tokic's initiative on the establishment of a single BiH intelligence service
- AFP: Bosnia to preserve mark's memory after euro arrival

Brcko District

- Brcko District 2002 Budget totals KM 136 million

Federation

- HDZ BiH confirms return of its representatives to the Federation Parliament
- Tomic and Jahic presented a document to accelerate Mostar's development
- AFP: Bosnian Croat war crimes suspect heads to The Hague
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Bozo Misura, the Head of the Federation MIO Bureau in Mostar, says **Bender supports integration of Funds**
- Vecernji List: Interview with Professor Miljenko Brkic, a man behind initiative on establishment of Croat Democratic Block

Republika Srpska

- A suspect for murder of Meliha Duric apprehended
- RS authorities report on steps taken to prosecute corrupt officials
- RS delegation in Moscow
- RS versus the Palic family case: Where is RS Army officer Dragomir Pecanac?

International Community

- Petritsch says things in BiH have fundamentally changed during past six

years
- The New York Times: Islam Is Part of the West, Too
- Second session of the Civic Forum to be held on Wednesday
- OHR surprised with the Alliance's criticism of Petritsch's decision to appoint national Election Commission members
- OHR and OSCE criticize HNS and SDA calls for non-payment of TV subscription
- PLIP agencies say instructions on property laws implementation accepted by all authorized state and entity officials
- Policija documentary series to be re-broadcast over 22 regional TV stations in BiH
- OSCE rejects Dodik's proposal for early elections

Editorials

- Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

BiH State-related Issues

BiH leaders pledge to align country with European standards

The Bosnian leadership pledged Tuesday to fulfil a number of conditions that would align the country with European standards after it becomes a member of the Council of Europe in 2002. "This document is one of the key parts of the path we must take for Bosnia-Herzegovina to become a normal, democratic" country, AFP quoted BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija as saying. According to all BiH media, a letter of intent, signed Tuesday by the members of BiH Presidency, Jozo Krizanovic, Beriz Belkic and Zivko Radisic, Lagumdzija and the speaker of the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives, Zeljko Mirjanic, outlines over thirty conditions that Bosnia is to fulfil after it joins the Council of Europe. It includes notably adoption of a series of

conventions on protection of human rights and measures aimed at stepping-up the process of return of refugees from the country's 1992-95 war. BiH is expected to become a member of the Council of Europe in January next year. Oslobodjenje reports that earlier on Tuesday, the BiH House of Representatives discussed the issue and adopted a resolution, in which the deputies reiterated their full support to the BiH admission into the Council and expressed their readiness to take over all and implement all post-accession obligations.

OSCE welcomes appointment of the new BiH Election Commission

OSCE Mission to the BiH welcomed the appointment of the Election Commission, which held its first meeting on Tuesday. "With the establishment of the commission, OSCE's intense involvement in elections in BiH for the last five years comes to an end. The responsibility for holding elections now lies with the national authorities," OSCE Spokesperson Urdur Gunnarsdottir told journalists on Tuesday in Sarajevo. "The commission's predecessor is the Provisional Election Commission, which was mandated in The Dayton Accords with the regulation of the electoral process since 1996. Now that the Election Law has been adopted and an Election Commission appointed, the Provisional Election Commission will be officially dissolved and will hand over its responsibilities to the seven newly appointed members: Mr. Hilmo Pasic, Mr. Branko Peric, Ms. Lidija Korac, Mr. Vehid Sehic, Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, Ambassador Dieter Woltmann and Ambassador Matthias Sonn," Gunnarsdottir added. According to Oslobodjenje, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH Robert Beecroft said at a press conference following the meeting that he saw the role of the international representatives in the Commission as giving support to their BiH colleagues, who will govern the election process.

The Alliance to remove its Ministers?

According to an Oslobodjenje front-page story, all members of the Alliance for Change will on Tuesday have to submit names of their candidates for 250 vacated seats in the executive authorities at all levels to the Alliance's coordination body. Several offices in the BiH Council of Ministers at the level of assistant ministers are expected to be filled together with vacated places in the steering boards of the public companies, agencies and bureaus.

Dnevni List: Belkic and Kljujic comment on Tokic's initiative on the establishment of a single BiH intelligence service

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Member of the BiH Presidency Beriz Belkic on the Tokic initiative: I support Tokic's initiative. If the initiative were to be realized everything would be given another dimension, that would question the need for the entity intelligence services. According to the information that Jozo Krizanovci and I have, Alibabic and Vuksic have an intensive cooperation thus making preconditions for the amalgamation of the two Federation intelligence services. Those services cooperate with each other and with the Anti-Terrorist team at the Federation level contributing to the anti-terrorist fight. Stjepan Kljujic on the initiative: "The joint service should be established without political ambitions, with the aim of fighting terrorism, organized crime and other menaces. As far as security and political espionage is concerned it is obvious that the entities will have their services in the future", reads Dnevni List

AFP: Bosnia to preserve mark's memory after euro arrival

By Sabina Arslanagic

Once euro cash replaces the mark from January 1, the memory of the German currency will live on in Bosnia, where it represents a guarantee of security and a symbol of prosperity. The Bosnian Convertible mark (KM) was introduced in 1998 and pegged in equal value to the German mark following tough negotiations between Serb, Bosniak and Croat communities that fought one another during the 1992-95 war. Since the creation of the scriptural euro on January 1 1999, the mark has been a sub unit of the single currency at a fixed conversion rate. Although the name of the KM caused no major problems, Carlos Westendorp, then the international community's representative to Bosnia, had to impose the KM's design. The currency was printed in two versions, one which features famous authors, poets and other historical figures who are either Bosniak or Croat, and the other which portrays only famous Serbs. Both series of banknotes are of the same size and color, and have Cyrillic and Latin lettering. They are used equally in BiH Federation and the Republika Srpska, the two entities created under the 1995 Dayton peace accords. Although some feared the KM would not be widely accepted among Serbs or Croats that had used the Yugoslav dinar and Croatian kuna, within three years the new currency had squeezed out the other two and assumed a dominant role along with the German mark. The BiH central bank works on the principle of a currency board, which in this case means that each banknote is backed by an equal value of the anchor currency. The KM has thus maintained the value and stability of its German mentor. When euro banknotes and coins become legal tender on January 1, the KM will be linked directly to the single Europen currency. So although Bosnia is years away from European Union membership, Bosnians will have a currency as stable as that of the Finns, Dutch, or Spanish. "As long as the currency board is in operation, Bosnia-Herzegovina is protected from movements against the euro … it (the KM) has the stability of euro," said Daniel Besson, chief economist for top international envoy Wolfgang Petritsch. The foreign currency reserves behind the KM come mainly from international donations, in particular from funds provided by

the World Bank. In an ironic twist of monetary fate, Bosnia, Bulgaria and Latvia – which also apply the currency board system and peg their money to the mark, as a representation of the euro, – will set a precedent as their monies outlast the anchor currency. “It is the first time,” Bosnian central bank governor Peter Nicholl told AFP. “I am not aware of any other examples where currency boards have tied themselves to an anchor currency, and then had the anchor currency change.” The German mark also circulates in Bosnia and has been a currency of choice for private savings since the early sixties, when workers from the former Yugoslavia left for Germany in search of a higher living standard. The KM, commonly called a mark here, may offer consolation to those who regret the lifting of the German anchor at the end of the year. “A lot of the (German) Deutschemarks are being changed into KM … the amount of KM (in circulation) is rising rapidly,” Nicholl noted.

Brcko District

Brcko District 2002 Budget totals KM 136 million

The interim government of the Brcko District approved on Tuesday a 2002 budget proposal totaling KM 136 million, ONASA reported. Of this sum, the authentic revenues of the District account for KM 96.7 million, whereas the funds to be transferred from the current fiscal year account for as much as KM 30 million. Commenting on the revenue planned to be collected, Head of the District’s Revenue Agency Osman Osmanovic said that the departures from the fixed amount are possible due to the ‘‘harmonization of the tax laws between the Entities”, but added that the harmonization will not have a substantial impact on the budget amount.

The 2002 District budget proposal will be submitted for public consideration to the representatives of the Interim Assembly by mid-December, when the budget is expected to be approved.

Federation

HDZ BiH confirms return of its representatives to the Federation Parliament

The HDZ BiH general secretary, Josip Merdzo, confirmed at a press conference in Mostar on Tuesday the party's representatives would attend the next session of BiH federation Parliament scheduled for November 28 due to the extremely important issues which were on the agenda, including the amendments to the entity Constitution. According to Oslobodjenje, Merdzo assessed the work of the current authorities, meaning the Alliance for Change, both at the Federation and the state level as disastrous pointing out at the alarming social situation.

Tomic and Jahic presented a document to accelerate Mostar's development

Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic and his deputy Hamdija Jahic last week presented the Document "Directions of actions and operative measures for acceleration of Mostar's construction, as a functional city entity." According to the Mostar's leaders, the plan is to establish city institutions that will enable overcoming of the barriers which are on the way to construction of Mostar as a normal and functional city entity. In an interview with Onasa, Tomic explains the details of the Document and states possible barriers in its implementation and the present obstructions of work of the City Administration.

AFP: Bosnian Croat war crimes suspect heads to The Hague

Pasko Ljubicic, a Bosnian Croat indicted by the UN war crimes court for allegedly planning a massacre of over 100 Bosniaks, arrived Wednesday at Zagreb airport where he was to leave with

a regular flight for the Netherlands, his lawyer told journalists. An appellate panel of the Zagreb county court approved Ljubicic's extradition to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on Friday. The ICTY has indicted him for his role as a commander of the first company of a battalion of Bosnian Croat military police involved in attacks on the central Bosnian Bosniak villages of Vitez and Busovaca between June 1992 and July 1993.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Bozo Misura, the Head of the Federation MIO Bureau in Mostar, says Bender supports integration of Funds

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Bozo Misura stated: 'I am glad because of the fact that the HDZ BiH, as the central party, is getting involved in the resolving of pensioners' issues and I hope that the HDZ will contribute to the resolving of this problem.' Misura gave this statement commenting on the HDZ Presidency press release saying that the integration of the Pension Funds does not lead to any reform of the system because in this way the present model, which has shown to be ineffective, is being preserved. He added that he has not had any problems with Ivan Bender, the Head of the MIO Mostar, with regard to the establishment of the Federation MIO, and that he also has a good cooperation with the Bureau's employees. Misura added: 'So far, I have had their full logistic support, and I would like to use this opportunity to thank them, and I hope that the HDZ will engage more actively in the resolving of this problem.'

Vecernji List: Interview with Professor Miljenko Brkic, a man behind initiative on establishment of Croat Democratic Block

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Previous initiatives aimed at creation of a Croat democratic

block did not bear fruit. Is it going to happen to your initiative too?

Brkic: There were similar ideas before, and I launched them myself. But never has it been as important as now and the need for it has never been as strong. Now with BiH facing constitutional changes, it is not all the same how the things develop and in what position the Croats in BiH would find themselves. It is a reason good enough for us to get serious and find common ground on the constitutional changes, There are many reasons for the initiative. Let's mention one that the Croat political leaders do not seem to see. Are we aware that the period of single-minded representation of peoples in BiH is over and that it should never happen. Let's look how we (the Croats) and how the other peoples reacted to it. The Bosniaks have, although the SDA lost power, articulated their interests through the Party for BiH and SDP, and other parties that were the SDA allies. The SDS disguised itself nicely in form of the PDP and set a coalition to the people's liking. But the HDZ got angry, left the authorities and let the SDP and other members of the Alliance to represent us (the Croats). It does not reflect the will of the Croat people and the SDP, the way it is, cannot represent the Croats' interests. The measure in which the HSS and NHI do it is insufficient too. That's why a Croat democratic block must be created, so it could make a coalition with the majority in the parliament. The HDZ must return to the institutions, to the House of Peoples and represent national interests together with other Croat MPs.The HDZ cannot use the pending issues, for which it is at fault, as an alibi. They must turn the wheel in the right direction and help themselves, its people and whole BiH, and the Republic of Croatia too. It would appear that the time is good for it.

Many consider the project as an historic attempt. Has your initiative **surpassed that stage (of being an initiative)?**

Brkic: Even if it is not a historic attempt, we have a

historic responsibility. We should use this opportunity in the time of the constitutional changes and not let others decide for us. We do not have a right to commit a mistake. The initiative envisages that the political parties send their representatives to the coordination body, which would make a Memorandum of Understanding and the Protocol on Joining which should be signed by Christmas of this year. I am an optimist.

If the idea becomes reality, how do you see the functioning of the block?

Brkic: A Coordination body would be formed which would enact a Program and Protocol on joining. I think that no party should lose any of its identity, no principles should be made. Everything is there, all you need is good will and more understanding.

HNS claims that such a block already exists?

Brkic: Not like this one. We wanted to participate in the HNS. We liked the idea and took part in the preparatory meetings. But from the moment the HNS tried to engage authorities that do not belong to it we decided to leave. Even the leaders of that block admitted to have failed with the self-rule. Even some members of that block are in the Alliance.

Do you think, regardless of the block being functional in the future or not, that all the Croat parties should gather in light of the constitutional changes?

Brkic: Yes, they should. I accept talks on important issues, if we cannot bind in the long run.

If you could, how would you establish BiH?

Brkic: As Switzerland, although I’d rather see it in a union with Croatia and join Europe together with them.

How Croat is the FTV?

Brkic: It is early days and we should not judge it as yet. We should not compare it to other televisions too, because they have tradition and backing from their states. The FTV will be as Croat as much as we accept it as ours, if we opt to take part in it, and not by taking armchairs or seats in the Steering Board, but by organizing a network of correspondents. If there are not Croats on it, others will take over our positions. The FTV does not prevent Croats from joining forces and have their own TV and other media with Croat(ian) programs and in the Croat(ian) language.

Republika Srpska

A suspect for murder of Meliha Duric apprehended

On Monday night at approximately 2100 hours the local police monitored by the IPTF detained a male Serb in Sokolac based on suspicion of being involved in the murder of Meliha Djuric, the 16 year old girl killed in Vlasenica on 11th July this year, Oslobodjenje quoted UNMIBH Spokesman Stefo Lehmann as saying at a press conference on Tuesday in Sarajevo. “As the investigation is still in progress we will not release the name of the individual who is currently in custody and being questioned by the Zvornik police. The detention was conducted based on preliminary results obtained from a ballistic analysis laboratory in France which has provisionally identified the weapon used during the murder. Although the IPTF is currently awaiting definitive results from the laboratory, the analysis conducted by the laboratory so far has provided sufficient evidence to make the detention. The investigative Judge in Zvornik is expected to press charges against the individual later today. The IPTF Human Rights Investigation team continues to closely monitor the case. Further details will be communicated at an appropriate time,” Lehmann said.

RS authorities report on steps taken to prosecute corrupt officials

Both Banja Luka dailies and Sarajevo Dnevni Avaz report that the Head of the OHR Anti Corruption Department, Manfred Dauster, visited Banja Luka on Tuesday where he met with Republika Srpska Public Prosecutor Vojislav Dimitrijevic and RS Supreme Auditor Bosko Ceko. After the meeting, Dauster and Dimitrijevic agreed that a progress had been made in the fight against corruption in the RS. Both Banja Luka papers quote Manfred Dauster, as saying that 5 charges have so far been filed with the Banja Luka Basic Public Prosecutor's office against 5 officials of the RS Government (1 serving and 4 former) and that these 5 cases concern a total sum of around 300,000 KM which has been misappropriated from the RS budget. Dauster also said that another two criminal charges were now being prepared and would be filed very soon. The papers write that the RS Police filed criminal charges against former RS officials from the Dodik's government: Milan Trbojevic, Cedo Vrzina, Milorad Karalic and his deputy and the current Secretary General of the RS National Assembly, Mirko Stevanovic. Dauster said he could not provide more details about the cases that the RS Public Prosecutor's Office and RS law enforcement agencies were currently working on but confirmed that the case of the RS Oil Industry was currently under investigation as well as some other cases. When asked to comment on Milorad Dodik's statement that the ongoing anti corruption campaign was a sort of a which-hunt aimed against him and former RS ministers, Dauster said that the OHR deals with crimes and not with political opposition. See the Press Release

RS delegation in Moscow

Wednesday's edition of Nezavisne Novine quotes an anonymous source from the Russian Foreign Ministry as saying that it is true the RS delegation is in Moscow but that no one can confirm whether Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov will meet

with the delegation members. “We shall have the information after the meeting, if the meeting is held, but as things stand now Mr. Ivanov’s protocol does not foresee such possibility”, says the source. Glas Srpski learns from sources close to the RS delegation that the Russian Federation might approve $ 50 million worth credit for the RS in goods.

RS versus the Palic family case: Where is RS Army officer Dragomir Pecanac?

Oslobodjenje journalist Edina Kamenica continues a series of articles about the Republika Srpska versus the Palic family case. The RS was ordered by the BiH Chamber for Human Rights to tell the truth about the destiny of missing wartime Commander of the BiH Army brigade stationed in Zepa, Avdo Palic, to his family and to pay compensation if he had been killed. Kamenica wonders where is the RS Army officer, Dragomir Pecanac, who had in September 1995 come to the Bijeljina military prison in order to take Avdo Palic away? This information was unveiled recently by RS President Mirko Sarovic in his letter to Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency Beriz Belkic. Kamenica concludes that the new Director of the BiH Interpol, Brane Pecanac, might know where Dragomir Pecanac is?

International Community

Petritsch says things in BiH have fundamentally changed during past six years

In regard of the six years of Dayton, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, wrote an open letter to the BiH citizens. “Things in Bosnia and Herzegovina have fundamentally changed and its future will be determined not only by Dayton implementation, but also through its integration in Europe,” Petritsch emphasized in the letter. (Dnevni Avaz announced the Press Release on its front page and carried it in full on the

fourth page, as Oslobodjenje and Jutarnje Novine published stories on the Dayton agreement's anniversary not mentioning the HR's letter but interviewing BiH officials, who basically assessed that the Agreement was not perfect but that its should be implemented)

The New York Times: Islam Is Part of the West, Too

By Wolfgang Petritsch

"The Sept. 11 attack on America has sparked a debate about Islam that has, unfortunately, been framed in terms of us (the civilized, Western world) and them (the dangerous, suspect Muslims). Even well-intentioned statements dismissing the rhetoric of crusades have not softened an implicit skepticism among many people toward Islam. This wariness is of immediate concern to the 12 million Muslims who are citizens of European Union countries, five million of them in the Balkans," High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch wrote at the beginning of his article published on Tuesday, November 20, 2001. (Dnevni Avaz carried the article in full, as Oslobodjenje, Jutarnje Novine and Banja Luka Nezavisne Novine carried just certain parts of the article)

Second session of the Civic Forum to be held on Wednesday

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will hold the second session of the Civic Forum at his home in Sarajevo on Wednesday, Senior OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer announced at a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday, according to Dnevni Avaz. "The topic of this session is Bosnia and Herzegovina's economy and ways how to improve it. Hence the High Representative has invited successful business people such as Jerko Ivankovic from Lijanovici, Nihad Imamovic from ASA Holding, Fuad Strik from Coca-Cola and Alma Smailbegovic from the Univerzal Bank. But we also have Ms. Jasenka Perovic, the Managing Director of Knitting Together Nations, a Bosnia

and Herzegovina NGO that is successfully making and selling knitwear knitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina refugees and displaced persons. The High Representative has also invited distinguished professors and academics, such as Professor Dragoljub Stojanov, Dr. Rajko Tomas, Professor Zarko Papic, and experts with hands-on experience, such as Radomir Marinkovic, a Bosnia and Herzegovina expert on EU Integration," Stiglmayer said.

OHR surprised with the Alliance's criticism of Petritsch's decision to appoint national Election Commission members

"We are surprised to be reading in the press statements by Alliance members who criticize the High Representative for having nominated the remaining four national members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Election Commission last Friday," Dnevni Avaz quoted Senior OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer as saying at a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday. "The Election Law, Article 18, clearly states that if the members of the Election Commission from Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been appointed by 15 September 2001, the High Representative shall appoint the members from Bosnia and Herzegovina," Stiglmayer emphasized. She added that, "last Friday, when the High Representative carried out the appointments, it was more than two months after this deadline."

OHR and OSCE criticize HNS and SDA calls for non-payment of TV subscription

The OHR and the OSCE Mission to BiH criticized on Tuesday the HDZ-led Croat National Assembly, HNS, and the SDA calls for non-payment of the subscription to the Federation TV. "Political parties, of course, have the right to voice their opinions on program quality, and constructive public criticism is more than welcome. However, any calls to stop the payment of subscription fees are illegal and unacceptable, and

undermine the rule of law. Political parties should support the development of self-sustainable public broadcasting that has a sound financial basis – and the collection of subscription fees is the method of funding, which is in line with the European standards, " Jutanje Novine quoted Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer as saying at a press conference in Sarajevo.

PLIP agencies say instructions on property laws implementation accepted by all authorized state and entity officials

The organizations of the Property Legislation Implementation Plan (PLIP) announce the finalizing of the text of the Instruction on Exchange of Information Related to the Sealing and Repossession of Property. (Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine carried the Press Release)

Policija documentary series to be re-broadcast over 22 regional TV stations in BiH

The three-part documentary series "*Policija*", produced by MC Media in cooperation with UNMIBH and OHR, will be rebroadcast weekly for the next three weeks over 22 regional TV stations across BiH. The series was first broadcast in September on RT RS and TV BiH (now FTV). See the Press Release.

OSCE rejects Dodik's proposal for early elections

The OSCE Mission to BiH does not support a proposal by the SNSD President, Milorad Dodik, to hold early elections in BiH. The OSCE is of the view that just the regular elections should be held in October next year, OSCE Spokeswoman Urdur Gunnarsdottir told Srna news agency.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Emir Habul commented on the poor results achieved by the Republika Srpska police in unveiling perpetrators of the murders of the Bosniak returnees including Murat Badic, Meliha Duric and Seid Mutapcic. Habul concludes that the RS authorities were passive in this matter because the faster resolution of these cases would have positive influence on the return of a larger number of Bosniaks to their pre-war homes in the entity. However, it was hard for the RS officials to explain to the displaced Serbs occupying some one else's properties that they had been manipulated for the political purposes, and that after all they had to leave their current places of residence. Slavo Kukic wrote in another Oslobodjenje editorial about the recent Ante Jelavic's statement in which he had condemned war crimes committed in the Herceg-Bosna territory during the war. Kukic emphasized that, finally, he agreed with Jelavic. However, he added that Jelavic should in exchange agree with him in a position that the individual responsibility for the war crimes had to be determined by the local courts as the institutions tasked to do this job. Almina Pilav wrote in the Avaz Commentary of the Day about the current dispute between the BiH Federation Government, on one side, and the war-disabled persons and members of the families of killed soldiers, on the other, over the BiH Federation draft law stipulating the rights of these categories of the population. Pilav emphasized that the problem basically caused by the poor economic situation in the country could not be resolved through mutual verbal attacks and accusations. In the Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial, Nermin Butkovic commented on the results achieved in the implementation of the Dayton agreement and its annexes, as well as the disputes over the process. He particularly pointed out at the too slow processes of the constitutional changes and the return of refugees.