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BiH State-related Issues

Council of Ministers: Citizens of 35 Western European countries and former Yugoslavia will not need visas to enter BiH

Oslobodjenje reports that the Council of Ministers should by next Tuesday adopt the proposed decision on determining the countries whose citizens should be excluded from visa regime

while entering in, passing through or departing from BiH. The daily writes, quoting anonymous sources, that some 35 Western European countries as well as all former Yugoslav republics will be exempted from the visa regime.

Federation

BiH Presidency refuses to annul the appointment of two intelligence services directors

Prompted by strong public reactions, the BiH Presidency clarified on Thursday that the directors of the two intelligence services in the BiH Federation were appointed in accordance with the provisions of the laws still in force and ”primarily because of the current needs and situation” in those two services. ”In parallel with the appointments, the BiH Federation President and Vice President were requested to come up with, in accordance with their powers, appropriate forms of coordination, joint activity and control of the intelligence services, to be applied until such time as the Law on the(integrated) intelligence service of the BiH Federation is passed”, Public Relations Office of the BiH Presidency said in a press release, and quote all Sarajevo media.

The Presidency members also stressed they ”fully agree that the new appointments are not aiming to strengthen and preserve the parallel structures in the BiH Federation institutions but that, on the contrary, those appointments constitute a necessary step toward integrating the two (existing intelligence) services”.

In addition, at yesterday’s press conference, BiH Presidency member Beriz Belkic openly rejected the request of SDP vice-president Ivo Komsic that the Presidency immediately revoke

the appointments of the new directors of AID and SNS intelligence services.

The BiH Presidency members appointed on Wednesday Munir Alibabic the director of the Agency for Investigation and Documentation (AID) and Ivica

Vuksic the director of the National Security Service (SNS), which caused a serious rift among Alliance parties. *Oslobodjenje* argues that these appointments not only provoked a crisis in the Alliance, but even more so within the SDP. According to the daily, one faction in this party fully supported the appointments and strongly criticized Ivo Komsic, a vice president of the party, for (ab)using the SDP press conference room for voicing his opinion on the new directors of intelligence services. Even the SDP president, Zlatko Lagumdzija, stressed in an interview with Radio Free Europe, that Komsic was not representing the view of the party itself and expressed his support tot he move of the three Presidency members.

UN mission calls on intelligence agencies to work jointly

HINA news agency reported that the UN Mission in Bosnia-Hercegovina on Wednesday called on two Federation intelligence services – the Bosniak AID (Investigation and Documentation Agency) and the Croat SNS (National Security Agency) – to begin working as a team. International officials in the country have criticized the two intelligence agencies for insufficient involvement in the discovery of potential terrorist danger in Bosnia after the 11 September terrorist attacks on Washington and New York. Federation Interior Minister Tomislav Limov publicly complained that his ministry was obtaining intelligence information mostly from Western agencies. During his visit to Mostar on Wednesday, UN Mission spokesman Stefo Lehman accused the two federation intelligence

agencies of spending most of their time working against each other by gathering information about each other. He appealed to the agencies to work jointly on protecting the interests of the Federation and the entire Bosnia-Hercegovina. “The AID and SNS working in an integrative manner would be more effective,” Lehman added.

Entity Refugee Ministries cooperate on reconstruction of houses in Pritoka

SRNA news agencies reported that the Ministries for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the Federation and the RS will finance the restoration of 15 houses belonging to Serb families in the village of Pritoka in the municipality of Bihac. This information was also confirmed by the commissioner for returns in Pritoka, Pero Kljajic. He said that the Federation Ministry for Refugees and Displaced Persons provided the material for the building of houses while its RS counterpart will pay for the building work. Kljajic said that the work on the houses should be finished by the end of this year.

SRNA notes that this is the first time in Bosnia-Hercegovina that both entity ministries are taking part in a joint project with regard to the issue of refugees and displaced persons. Around 20 Serb families have returned to the village of Pritoka so far and 21 houses have been restored with the aid of foreign institutions.

Speculations have fallen through – Ivo Lozancic is in Zepce: ‘This is staged process’

Slobodna Dalmacija reported that Ivo Lozancic, the first defendant in a group of 15 Croats, processed by the Cantonal Court in Zenica, is not hiding in Croatia, as some media claimed. Instead, he is still in Zepce. ” In my view, one reference of the BiH Human Rights’ Chamber sent to the OHR and

Executive Authorities in Zenica, has given results. It says that this is an inappropriate and one-sidedly instituted legal proceeding that endangered the defendants' right on defense. For this reason the OHR has suspended the process temporarily, and we shall see as to what will happen afterwards. (…) The staged process has been prepared and in all this I would not refer to the Alliance but to the domination of Zenica over the Croats, and their constant attempts to retaliate because they failed to destroy us and our homes, during the war. '

What can you say about the alleged deals made between you and the High Representative?

These are the underground and back-corridors talks, used by those, who had been preparing the staged process. It included the Headquarters in order to present that it is about the people, who were preparing and had the plan as to what to do with the Bosniaks and seven years after the situation was presented in a completely different way. It is well known that we were under a siege and we were defending ourselves until the end of June 1993. We did not have anything prepared and we did not have the prison camps. Civilians were not our victims, and for this reason there is no ground for the bills of indictment issued against us.

Jutanji List also carries on the same issue: The arrest warrants after 14 Croats from Zepce were withdrawn by the decision of the BiH Human Rights Chamber. Michele Picrad, the President of the Chamber, has signed the instruction. The instruction remains in effect until November 7, when this case will be discussed. It has been expected that the ban on arrests will be in force until the Chamber passes a final decision.

OHR condemns threats against Fed TV Council Chairman

At Thursday's press conference, OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan

said that the OHR strongly condemns the threats against Slavo Kukic, the president of the Fed TV council, and stressed that "this sort of cowardly activity is contrary to every guiding principle of free speech and personal security in a democratic society." "It is our view that this is an attempt to scare off those Croats who are productively involved in establishing Federation Television," said Sullivan, adding that the OHR is also aware that some elements at the Mostar faculty are trying to undermine Mr. Kukic's work. (All Sarajevo and most Croat (ian) media carry Sullivan's statement)

Slobodna Dalmacija: FTV editors choose the HRT programs to be broadcast on FTV soon (provided by OHR Mostar)

Written by Robert Bubalo (provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reports that delegations of the FTV and the HRT signed a contract on program cooperation on Tuesday. Marija Topic-Crnoja, the News and Informative Program Editor on the FTV, told the daily that the FTV has taken over HRT-produced documentary, children's, musical and informative programs.

"We have arranged some projects that we will be co-producing. This cooperation has, in fact, started already and the HRT and the FTV are already co-producing a documentary. It is being filmed on the territory of BiH, we are providing the technical support and staff, and the idea, that is the script and the directing come from the HRT. There will be similar projects in the opposite roles in the future," said Topic-Crnoja.

Since copyrights for some of the programs must be paid, the Croatian Government offered help and will pay to the HRT, i.e. the authors.

They hope in Sarajevo that the HRT-produced program on the FTV will calm the huge dissatisfaction of Croats with the shutdown of the HRT signal because the Croatian language is almost non-

existent on the FTV. That is indeed the case, although Croats were promised to have a channel in their own language. So far, the Croatian language can be heard mostly in advertisements produced by the HRT, which are aired much more often than those produced in Sarajevo, says Vecernji List.

The daily also carries the position of the PIC Steering Board regarding the FTV launch and HRT shutdown.

Vjesnik: Failed attempt to destroy Aluminij (provided by OHR Mostar)

Interview conducted by Mario Marusic

Mijo Brajkovic: (…) 'Aluminij has succeeded and some people mind it so much that, by its destabilization, they are trying to sow panic among the Croat people, the people, who have been deprived when TV and media are in question, and whom they want to deprive of their real role when the Parliament and ruling come into question. Now, with this impact on Aluminij, that 30 000 people live on, they are trying to disorient it in terms of economy and force the Croats to keep emigrating from BiH. (…) All these pressures and threats are a part of political games that have been played since 1995 (…) Why do not the Croat representatives in the Authority bodies raise their voice against all these schemes and defend this people and the company that they live on?(…) It is understandable that out foreign partners are a bit nervous, and even angry, because of the whole situation. For this reason, as far as I know, Gerhard Schroder talked with Zlatko Lagumdzija and warned him about some things. Also representatives of Daimler Chrysler talked with Authority representatives in Sarajevo, warning them that the moves, that they have made, are impermissible. (…) Now, it seems that everything has stopped and that the situation is calming down. (…)

Republika Srpska

OHR still looking into situation in Kotorsko, near Doboj

Oslobodjenje and *Dnevni Avaz* quote OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan as saying that the OHR is still looking into the situation in Kotorsko, where Serb residents are allegedly not complying with the OHR decision on prohibition of all construction on the socially-owned land. Sullivan said that OHR officials will on Thursday investigate the situation on the ground.

Palic Case: The problem is under the OHR carpet

Sarajevo Oslobodjenje carried today yet another story on the controversial Palic case. Avdo Palic was a commander in the BiH Army who was abducted in 1995 in the UN Safe Zone of Zepa and no traces of him have been found thereafter. The daily quotes several paragraphs from the High Representative's speech delivered at the graduation ceremony of the University of Sarajevo Department for Human Rights in Southeast Europe and which specifically refer to the case of Avdo Palic. Commenting on Petritsch's statement that a "democratic society cannot function well as long as cases like this are swept under the carpet", Palic's wife, Esma asked why does not the OHR lift the carpet. "It doesn't have a mandate for it?," noted Palic with a doze of irony. Oslobodjenje notes at the end that the High Representative should recognize that the problem is "under his carpet."

Government Reshuffle Made a Big Splash in the RS – Vast Majority Supports New Majority

Today's edition of Nezavsine Novine quotes SPRS Secretary General (SPRS – Socialist Party of the RS) Drago Vucic, as saying that final decision on government reshuffle should be

made by RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic and added that, at the same time, the SPRS is not satisfied with work of RS ministries for justice, interior and industry and technology. Vucic find unacceptable the initiative on formation of technical government, launched by the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD). The paper also quotes PDP Spokesman, Igor Crnadak, as saying that the initiative on government reshuffle is completely unacceptable. Crnadak also added that such decision should be made only by the Prime Minister himself. SDS top officials, Mirko Banjac told "Nezavisne novine" that he does not know anything about the government reshuffle. "I did not take part in formation of the Government. Therefore I do not want to participate in the reshuffle", said Banjac. SNSD PA Officer, Milan Tukic says that the SNSD will support new parliamentary majority if the majority accepts a minimum of SNSD's political aims, out of which the most important one is organizing the extraordinary elections in May next year. Vice-president of SDP BiH, Slobodan Popovic says that the SDP BiH is going to support any government that does not include three nationalist parties, SDA, SDS and HDZ. "We have not discussed participation of the SDP BiH in formation of new RS government yet, but if something like that happens and depending on what are we offered, we are ready to participate in such talk. We are ready to participate in a new government and to make any sort of coalition, alliance and agreement that would exclude nationalist parties. SBiH deputy in the RS National Assembly (SBiH – Party for BiH), Dzevad Osmancevic says that the SBiH is not going to support a new government that would include the SDS. "If Ivanic forms a new government that would exclude all three nationalist parties – SDS, SDA and HDZ – then in that case, the SBiH would have a completely different approach. President of Democratic National Alliance (DNS), Dragan Kostic says that in this situation it is very difficult for Prime Minister, Ivanic to extricate himself from the influence of SDS and predicts that the SDS will try to get rid of the Prime Minister. "I am not quite sure that Ivanic will

be able to form a new parliamentary majority. In any case, we shall take a new position as soon as we become familiar with concept of the new government with completely new balance of forces in the RS National Assembly", says Kostic.

International Community

High Representative asking Western Foreign Ministers to donate money and help returns in BiH

Dnevni Avaz reports that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on 23 October addressed a letter to Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the major donor countries, asking them for a financial assistance for the process of return in BiH. Marking the return process as a "success story", Petritsch stressed that further additional financial means were needed to ensure the sustainability of the returns as well as further progress in this sphere. OHR spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer explained that the letter was sent now in order to mobilise the funds that have remained unspent in this year's budgets, and alert donors to next year's requirements.

High Representative to visit Banja Luka on Monday

At yesterday's press conference of international organizations in Sarajevo, OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan announced that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch will visit Banja Luka on Sunday and Monday and hold meetings with the RS leadership. Commenting on the conclusions passed at the extraordinary session of the RS National Assembly, Sullivan said the High Representative considers these conclusions to be problematic and he will certainly take up this issue with the Republika Srpska authorities during his visit on Monday. He stressed that the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council has now on several occasions voiced its discontent with the RS

delegates' behavior. "The language of the conclusion which was reached on Tuesday evening, speaks about the interest of the RS, the interest of the RS National Assembly, the interest of the Entities. It does not mention the interest of the people of the country as a whole and one would ask is it in the interest of the people to delay the creation of jobs by blocking the development of the Single Economic Space?," asked Sullivan at the conference. (All Sarajevo media carried the statement)

High Representative to visit Franciscan monastery Plehan

OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan said on Thursday that, ahead of his meetings on Monday in Banja Luka, the High Representative will on Sunday at the invitation of Brother Petar Andjelovic visit the Franciscan monastery of Plehan and the returnees in the villages of Susnjari and Poljari, in the same area. Oslobodjenje said that currently, there are 42 houses for Bosnian Croats being reconstructed there, 8 in Susnjari, 22 in Poljari and another 12 in Kulina, a third village.

World Bank prepares a new credit for BiH Federation

World Bank (WB) Director in BiH Joseph Ingram informed the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, on Thursday in Sarajevo that the WB is preparing a new credit for BiH worth US$ 40-50 million and intended for the improvement of security on the roads. Ingram informed Behmen that the discussion on the credit will start on November 26 in Washington D.C., and the final decision is expected early next year,

ONASA news agency reported, quoting the Federation Government's press office. The two officials also talked about the law on forests and the preparations for the privatization of the Privredna Banka Sarajevo (PBS).