

BiH Media Round-up 21/12/01

BiH State-related Issues

- BiH Council of Ministers adopts draft law on conflicts of interests
- BiH House of Peoples adopts Law on Copyright and Related Rights

Federation

- BiH Federation House of Representatives fails to adopt the decision on the temporary financing of the entity
- Edhem Biber was elected new President of the BiH Independent Trade Unions Association
- A process of single Mostar Police Administration establishment starts
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Federation Interior Ministry denies media speculations on issuance of warrants for **wiretapping of journalists or any other persons**
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Anic claims military issues to divide Government
- Slobodna Dalmacija: The HDZ Youth says with regard to the 'joint curriculum' that **Croat history should be studied**
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Croat Christian Democrats on CRA decisions – Impact on Croat media
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Travnik-based associations of Croat war victims bitter at the release of Bosniak military officers

Republika Srpska

- Secret meeting at Kalinic's
- Belgrade office denies links with war crimes suspect
- Bosniak businesses stoned in Kotorsko
- Sulejman Tihic to propose abolishment of the institution

of the RS President

International Community

- Petritsch says it is high time that amendments to the RS Constitution are delivered into the parliamentary procedure
- OHR says salaries to OMIs to be paid in accordance to the achieved results
- SDHR meets with Una-Sana Canton Governor
- SDHR addresses students in the Sarajevo Second Gymnasium
- ONASA: Petritsch delivers a New Year message to the children in BiH
- SFOR commander says there is no danger of terrorist attacks in Bosnia

Editorials

- Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

BiH State-related Issues

BiH Council of Ministers adopts draft law on conflicts of interests

According to Dnevni Avaz, the BiH Council of Ministers adopted at its session in Sarajevo on Thursday the draft law on the conflict of interests. It is about one of the most important legal documents from the set of the anti-corruption laws. BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees Kresimir Zubak said following the session that the draft had been harmonized with the standards and experiences of the developed democratic countries. The Council also accepted the text of the free trade agreement with FRY initialed last week.

BiH House of Peoples adopts Law on Copyright and Related Rights

At its session in Sarajevo on Thursday, the BiH House of Peoples adopted draft Law on the Copyright and Related Rights, as well as the amendments to the Law on Foreign Debt, the Draft Law on the BiH ID Card and on the protection of the personal data. Dnevni Avaz reports that the House also adopted draft Law on the Administrative Disputes as well as yet eight legal documents. According to Oslobodjenje, the session will be continued on Friday with a discussion on the BiH Budget rebalance for this year.

Federation

BiH Federation House of Representatives fails to adopt the decision on the temporary financing of the entity

The BiH Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, withdrew the proposed decision on the Federation temporary financing from the parliamentary procedure since it had become clear the deputies to the House of Representatives, dissatisfied with a fact the Government had not prepared the draft Budget for the next year at the same time, would not vote for the proposal. The House tasked the Government to deliver the both documents into the procedure by January 14 next year. According to Oslobodjenje, if the Government fails to do so, the Entity will face a constitutional crisis, and the BiH Federation President will have to dismiss the Parliament.

Edhem Biber was elected new President of the BiH Independent Trade Unions Association

Oslobodjenje reports that Edhem Biber from Sarajevo was elected new President of the BiH Association of Independent Trade Unions at the Second Congress of the Association held in

Sarajevo on Thursday. In the office, he will replace former President Sulejman Hrle.

A process of single Mostar Police Administration establishment starts

According to Oslobodjenje, a process has been started on Thursday to establish a single Police Administration in Mostar, which will be authorized for all six municipalities and the central zone. Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Interior Minister Goran Bilic told journalists in the town that the new Administration would have four police stations.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Federation Interior Ministry denies media speculations on issuance of warrants for wiretapping of journalists or any other persons

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Reacting to the letter that Journalists' Association 'Apel' sent to some foreign and domestic institutions, the Federation MoI issued a press release. The press release says that the Federation MoI is not wiretapping anyone and they have never turned to competent bodies with the request to wiretap journalists or any other persons.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Anic claims military issues to divide Government

Mijo Anic, the Federation Minister of Defense believes that the issue of the Federation Army organization is a political one and that the Federation Government, which has been completely united so far, might divide with regard to this issue. He judges that, at the moment, a bigger problem is that, practically, two Ministries of Defense exist than the fact that he and his Deputy Ferid Buljubasic have different opinion on this issue. 'We propose that the Federation Army remains organized in two components.' He stated that, at the

moment, practically, there are two Ministries, and that, in order to abolish the existing parallelism, it is not enough to have in one office both Croat and Bosniak officials.

Slobodna Dalmacija: The HDZ Youth says with regard to the 'joint curriculum' that Croat history should be studied

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Reacting to the information that the joint curriculum for Primary and Secondary Schools for the whole territory of the BiH Federation has been presented recently, the HDZ Youth issued a press release saying that they do not want curriculums and textbooks that will 'poison' their youth. 'Naturally, students of the Croat nationality will study everything that is good in the literature and history of other BiH peoples. Also, we insist that we study our Croat(ian) history and literature. For this reason we demand from all Croat representatives to work on the realization of our requests to make possible that, in future, our children are equal to other children from the whole democratic world.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Croat Christian Democrats on CRA decisions – Impact on Croat media

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

They named the CRA saying that 90% of their personnel are of the Bosniak nationality 'and many of them are working for AID'. 'This is a great insult to the Croat people, and especially to the Croats from Zepce, Mostar and the whole Herceg Bosnia since these media outlets are their spiritual food. '

Slobodna Dalmacija: Travnik-based associations of Croat war victims bitter at the release of Bosniak

military officers

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The ICTY decision of releasing the four BiH Army officers and letting them defend themselves out of detention has caused a storm of disagreement among Croats in Central Bosnia.

The Association of the Families of Killed and Missing Croat Soldiers, HVIDRA, and the Association of Volunteers and Veterans addressed an open letter to the Federation Government, the Alliance for Changes, the ICTY and the international institution representatives in BiH.

They say the Federation Government and the ICTY are biased, which is proven in the fact that Tihomir Blaskic was in prison for three years while awaiting the trial and still, he and other Croats were not allowed to defend themselves out of detention although they surrendered to the Tribunal.

They say they would not be surprised if the international institutions said that Croats themselves killed 3,056 people of their own nationality in Central Bosnia or that they themselves expelled a hundred thousand Croats.

Republika Srpska

Secret meeting at Kalinic's

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the representatives of the most relevant political parties from the Republika Srpska met on Thursday in the Cabinet of the RS National Assembly Speaker, Dragan Kalinic. The meeting was attended by Deputy RS Prime Minister Petar Kunic (PDP), Serb member of the BiH Presidency Zivko Radisic (SPRS), Milorad Dodik (SNSD), Dragan Cavic (SDS), Nebojsa Radmanovic (DSP), Dragan Kostic (DNS), President of the RS NA Constitutional Commission Miroslav Mikes (SPRS) and Dragan Kalinic (SDS). There were no

statements made to the press. However, both Banja Luka dailies learned that the meeting discussed the constitutional changes and harmonization of the RS Constitution with the BiH Constitutional Court decision on constituent status of all three nations in BiH. Miroslav Mikes stated that the Constitutional Commission is trying to reach a national and not a party interest regarding the forthcoming constitutional changes.

Belgrade office denies links with war crimes suspect

Nezavisne Novine reports a representative of the RS office in Belgrade said on Thursday that General Vinko Pandurevic, who was indicted by The Hague Tribunal, is not on the office's pay-roll and that he is not using the office space in Decanska Street in Belgrade. Reacting to an article in the Banja Luka daily Nezavisne Novine, the RS' Belgrade office stated that "General Vinko Pandurevic is not an employee of the RS's representation office in Belgrade, nor is he using the office space in Decanska Street 8 in Belgrade in any capacity". The Banja Luka daily Nezavisne Novine has reported that General Vinko Pandurevic was an adviser of the RS president and that he was based at the RS government's office in Belgrade.

Bosniak businesses stoned in Kotorsko

Oslobodjenje reports that, on Wednesday night, the businesses and restaurants owned by the Bosniak returnees were stoned in the village of Kotorsko, near Doboj. The main actor of the attack was Nebojsa Panic, a Serb refugee temporary living in the village.

Sulejman Tihic to propose abolishment of the institution of the RS President

The BiH SDA President and a member of the Republika Srpska Constitutional Commission, Sulejman Tihic, told Dnevni Avaz that, at the Commission's session scheduled for Friday, he

would propose the abolishment of the institution of the entity President, because it was clear Bosniaks and Croats would not be allowed to perform the duty. According to the newspaper, the Friday's session will be the last attempt of the Commission to agree on the representation of the non-Serbs in the RS authorities at all levels in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the the constituent peoples.

International Community

Petritsch says it is high time that amendments to the RS Constitution are delivered into the parliamentary procedure

According to all BiH media, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said in Banja Luka on Thursday that "the time has come for the Constitutional Commission to complete its work and deliver draft amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution to the RS National Assembly for the consideration and adoption." Petritsch emphasized that this was what he personally and the entire international community were expecting as a genuine example of taking over the ownership for the future of RS and BiH by local politicians. He told journalists following his meeting with RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic that the adoption of the constitutional amendments would also be way in the economic reforms expected to be carried out next year. For his part, Ivanic said that the amendments should be delivered into the parliamentary procedure and that there was no need any more for waiting agreement to be reached within the Constitutional Commission. BiH electronic media (FTV and RT RS) report that, in the course of his visit to Banja Luka, Petritsch met also with RS President Mirko Sarovic, Vice-president Dragan Cavic and RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic. (All three are senior SDS officials)

OHR says salaries to OMIs to be paid in accordance to the achieved results

The Republika Srpska Budget Support Program, funded by USAID will not pay (departments for the housing issues of the refugee ministry) OMI caseworkers who do not make a minimum of three decisions per day, as set by the RS government, OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic told journalists on Thursday in Sarajevo, according to all Sarajevo dailies. "Furthermore, for the first time the MoRDP will enforce its disciplinary procedures against staff who fail to achieve the expected work output," Milisic added. The Office of the High Representative and Mladen Ivanic, RS Prime Minister at the end of last month signed Memorandum of Understanding setting out new conditions for the payment of OMI staff salaries as part of the RS Budget Support programme. "The Disciplinary procedures have been strengthened by the Memorandum of Understanding to link poor work performance with suspension. Once cases against staff are brought to the Ministry of Refugees and Displaced Persons (MoRDP) attention the staff will be immediately suspended. During this time the RS Budget Support Program will not pay their salaries. OHR RS Budget representatives will monitor the Disciplinary hearings. MoRDP's Disciplinary Board upholds the charges, the OMI staff member will face instant fines or dismissal," Milisic emphasised.

SDHR meets with Una-Sana Canton Governor

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, concerned with the situation in Canton 1 met on Tuesday with Amir Avdic, the Governor of the (Una Sana) Canton, to discuss the political and constitutional aspects of the current political deadlock in USC, Dnevni Avaz reported. During the meeting, the serious problems of the Canton were emphasised. The crucial need for the establishment of a fully-fledged, functioning, and transparent Government in consultation with the Prime Minister was recognised, as well as the need to submit the new Government's composition for the Cantonal

Assembly's approval by mid-January.

SDHR addresses students in the Sarajevo Second Gymnasium

The Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, on Thursday called on BiH citizens to stand up for their rights when politicians and officials fail to do their jobs properly. The SDHR was [addressing students](#) at the Second Gymnasium in Sarajevo on the role of authority and the role of citizens in a democratic society, part of a series of external lectures in a course on Education for Democracy and Human Rights. (Dnevni Avaz carried the [Press Release](#))

ONASA: Petritsch delivers a New Year message to the children in BiH

If you make an advance in eliminating ethnic and religious prejudices you will also make a crucial step towards changes in your country, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch said in his [New Year's message](#) published in the "5 plus" magazine. In a New Year's editorial written especially for the "5 plus", the schoolchildren's magazine with the highest circulation, the High Representative underscored that the future of BiH is in the hands of its youngest population. BiH carries its load of problems, so that its school teachers are often too busy, and the textbooks and supplementary contents provide only basic information. But to live a life means facing up to challenges and not avoiding them, it means overcoming the obstacles and not complaining about them, said the High Representative. "The future of BiH will be in your hands and you can make your future different by taking the initiative, although you are still in school desks", said HR Petritsch, adding that the children, by taking steps in their schools to stop the bullies and eliminate ethnic and religious prejudices can bring about change in their country. That takes energy and courage that, as the High Representative holds, the young people in BiH are not lacking. (The ONASA report was carried

by Jutarnje Novine)

SFOR commander says there is no danger of terrorist attacks in Bosnia

Both Banja Luka dailies quote the SFOR Commander, US General John Sylvester, as saying that at this moment there is no danger from terrorist attacks on SFOR members or civil population in BiH, but that there are still individuals and organisations serving as a support to terrorist activities. In a speech to members of the Federation Army, General Sylvester said that in BiH and some other countries there are individuals and groups which ensure hideouts to terrorists and misuse the law-guaranteed freedoms. "The network of support to terrorism ensure them a hideout, documents, money, job, transport and also serves for planning future attacks and recruiting supporters," the SFOR commander said. He added the network has been interrupted in the scope of wide operations that started after 11 September. Domestic authorities have successfully conducted the biggest part of this job in BiH, although SFOR gave support to the matter, he said. "We must not allow terrorists to militarise our society," General Sylvester said. He called the Federation army members to support the announced lowering of military forces in our country. General Sylvester confirmed the plans on reducing the number of soldiers and officers for at least 14,000 in next several years...

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Antonio Prlenda concludes that SFOR Commander John Sylvester had actually used his Thursday address to the BiH Federation Army officers and Defense Ministry officials to advocate for the reduction of the number of soldiers. Hamza Baksic commented in another

Oslobodjenje editorial on the Javier Solana's visit to Yugoslavia next week. According to Baksic, Solana will try to convince Montenegrin politicians to reconsider their intention for independence from Yugoslavia. Baksic claims that the Montenegrin separatist policy was suitable for the international community when Slobodan Milosevic was in power, since it was using such the orientation for pressures on the Milosevic's regime. Fadil Mandal commented in the Avaz Commentary of the Day on the Friday's session of the RS Constitutional Commission and a need that it finally agrees the amendment to the entity Constitution, which will be in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent peoples. Mandal concludes that, however, the international community should not accept and compromises regarding the issue, since such the compromises are pushing BiH into a bigger instability and uncertainty. Elida Causevic concludes in the Jutarnje Novine's The Seal editorial that eight cultural institutions founded by the state of BiH are close to their shutting down.