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BiH State-related Issues

Euro to replace DM in BiH on January 3

The Euro will replace the Deutsche Mark on January 3, at one Euro to KM 1.95583, SRNA news agency reported. "Germany and 11 other EU countries have sacrificed their currencies for a common European future. We are convinced that BiH and the KM will follow their lead," says a press release from the BiH Central Bank.

Federation

BiH Federation Government adopts draft Budget for the next year

The BiH Federation Government on Monday agreed on a draft budget for the year of 2002 and a draft law on its execution, which should in January be discussed and adopted by the entity Parliament, the Government's Information Office said in press release, according to ONASA news agency. According to the proposal, the 2002 budget will amount up to 1.335 billion KM, which is an 11% increase in relation to the revised 2001 budget. The increase should be realized through the execution of a special program of activities on collecting public revenues through the reformed customs and tax administrations. The 2002 Budget has a social, but also a development and stabilization character. The social component is reflected through the funds planned for the return of refugees and the payment of the second outstanding invalid pension. The development character is reflected in the funds envisioned for encouraging employment and production in industry, agriculture, forestry, water management and small-scale business development. The stabilizing function includes plans to solve the issue of outstanding debts and create a platform for the year 2003.

Rebuilding of Zitomislici Orthodox monastery to start on February 1

The Orthodox Bishop Zahumsko-Hercegovački, Grigorije, told SRNA that the rebuilding of the Zitomislic monastery, the spiritual center of the Serbs in the Neretva valley, which was destroyed by Croatian forces in the BiH War, will begin on February 1. He added that the Bishop's Palace in Mostar would also be rebuilt.

Goran Vasic sentenced to 4.5 years in prison

Judge Davorin Jukic of the Sarajevo Canton Court announced that Goran Vasic has been sentenced to four and a half years in jail for war crimes committed against civilians and prisoners of war, SRNA news agency reported on Monday. In consideration of the time Vasic has spent in custody – arrested February 6, 1998 – the court decided to release him today.

The BiH Federation President says will question constitutional foundation of a series of laws

BiH Federation President Safet Halilovic told the New Year's issue of Dnevni Avaz that a legal council would be established, probably by the end of January, to prepare all cases he and his deputy intended to launch before the entity Constitutional Court. "At the same time, I will initiate that the authorized bodies launched proceedings before the state Constitutional Court to consider constitutional foundation of certain Republika Srpska laws," Halilovic said. Concerning the Federation, Halilovic emphasized that the constitutional foundation would be questioned of the laws adopted during the rule of SDA and HDZ, which reflected the parallelism in functioning of the entity authorities. He did not want to specify which laws this was about.

Vecernji List: Holidays in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton passed without a single incident on ethnic or religious basis

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reports that the Cantonal Ministry of Interior of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton is undertaking the operation "Peaceful Holidays" which is to last until January 15. The daily quotes the Ministry's Spokesman, Sead Brankovic, as saying that the operation is one of the most successful ones so far, without a single incident on the ethnic or religious basis noted in the Ministry's area of responsibility, which, according to Brankovic, is somewhat surprising considering the fact that religious holidays in previous years often used to be marked with desecration of national and religious symbols.

Vecernji List: Hand grenade thrown at Sume Herceg-Bosne building in Mostar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Unidentified perpetrators threw an explosive device at the building of the Public Company 'Sume Herceg-Bosne' in Mostar on January 1, around 00:30. The Ministry of the Interior of Canton 7 confirmed that a police patrol conducted an inspection at the site. The building is located on the wartime separation line in Mostar and has often been a target to similar attacks. The explosion caused a great damage to the façade and windows on the building, and the detonation scattered broken glass fragments all over the offices. The duty guard Branko Soldo was not injured. It is assumed that it was about a hand grenade and that it was thrown from the direction of Bulevar.

This was the eighth attack on the building since the signing of the Dayton Agreement. On the last four occasions, the building was attacked with firearms and explosive devices. The people of the company do not consider the bomb attack to be an

accident but think it was a planned terrorist act.

Vecernji List: Robbers break into Municipality building in Livno and steal around 4,000 KM

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

A series of break-ins to the public institution facilities in Livno continues. The most recent targets were the offices of the Social Welfare Center, the Municipality building and the Municipal and Cantonal Court buildings in Livno. In the night from Friday to Saturday, someone entered the Municipality building through a window and stole around 2,400 KM from the Accounting Office. Since the Municipality building and the building housing the Municipal and Cantonal Courts are adjoined, the robbers combed through the offices of the Courts as well. They stole 1,670 KM from the Accounting Office of the Municipal Court, whereas nothing was stolen from the Cantonal Court.

Slobodna Dalmacija: HDZ Youth refuses to give unreserved support to party's headquarters!

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija reads that the youth organizations of political parties have ceased to be only a decoration or an amorphous mass that the party veterans use when they need someone to do a demanding field job.

A source close to high circles of the HDZ in Mostar told the daily that the HDZ Youth neglected a direct recommendation coming from Ante Jelavic himself at the last Congress of the HDZ Youth held in Kiseljak. Jelavic wanted his man, Marko Santic, to be installed to the position of President of the HDZ Youth for the sake of unity within the party but the Youth neglected the recommendation but instead elected Dragan Bagaric as the new President.

At the last session of the Tomislavgrad Municipal Council, during which the budget revision was discussed, the HDZ Youth refused to give the hitherto guaranteed and unreserved support to the party veterans. Contrary to the will of the municipal leaders, their party colleagues, a few of them abstained from voting on the budget revision draft, while Ivan Mukadin, a Municipal Councilor and President of the HDZ Youth there, was the only person who voted against it, reports Slobodna Dalmacija.

Vecernji List: Propane did not pollute the water in Drvar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Drinkable water springs in Drvar have not been polluted and the residents of the Municipality are not exposed to any health threat. This is the answer that the reporters received from the SFOR Emergency Group that are currently holding the situation under control after last week when a certain amount of propane leaked from a tank at the camp of the SFOR's Canadian Battalion in Drvar.

International Community

Oslobodjenje: Wolfgang Petritsch – The Policy of Inconsistency

In an article published in the New year's edition of Oslobodjenje, Amra Kebo, a newspaper's editor, wrote that, in the past year, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, had become the most hated international in BiH from one of the most popular foreign politicians in the country. The article was placed just below another one in which Oslobodjenje columnist Zija Dizdarevic assessed BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdžija as egocentric but essentially successful politician. According to Kebo, Petritsch is so

hated that the independent weeklies in BiH (not specifying which ones) are counting days hardly waiting his departure and arrival of Paddy Ashdown. She wrote that, all of a sudden, Petritsch definitely changed his course in June 2001. "He started openly and very non-diplomatically arguing with journalists in an attempt to prove he was right. And all because the BiH Council of Ministers did not allow that the license for the third GSM operator be sold for miserable two million DEM, which is, according to some assessment, a tenth part of its real price. And he himself should be happy because of such a move of the BiH authorities, which finally started to apply his concept of responsibility," Kebo wrote. According to Kebo, then followed other Petritsch's failures including the non-punishment of persons responsible for murdering Murat Badic and attacking Bosniaks at the ceremony to lay out Ferhadija mosque cornerstone, and disagreement with the BiH authorities over the CIPS project implementation and Mostar Aluminum privatization. Kebo concludes that, if Petritsch is not to take concrete steps against the Mirko Sarovic and Company even after open gun threat against SDA President Sulejman Tihic, it would mean he just continues with his inconsistencies.