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BiH State-related Issues

Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly considers BiH's admission into the organization

All BiH media announce that the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly is expected to adopt a resolution recommending the admission of BiH into the oldest European organization in Strasbourg on Tuesday during the second day of its regular January session. The Assembly's decision will then be forwarded to the Committee of Ministers comprising the Foreign Ministers of all Council member-countries, which is authorized to confirm (finally decide on) the accession. The Committee is likely to do it at its session scheduled for May 2 this year. In the course of the day, the Council Assembly members will be addressed by BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdžija and High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, who are expected to hold a joint press conference in the afternoon.

AFP: Bosnia gets green light to join Council of Europe

BiH, which was torn apart by three years of ethnic conflict in

the 1990s, was given the green light Tuesday by the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly to join the pan-European organization. A large majority – 105 in favor, one against and six abstentions – of assembly members, meeting in Strasbourg for their winter session, called on the council's executive to admit Bosnia-Herzegovina as the 44th member state. The Balkans nation would be represented in Strasbourg by a delegation of five deputies. "The country is moving towards a democratic system and a market economy, while at the same time completing a process of ethnic reconciliation among peoples who have been at war in the recent past", the assembly said. However, the assembly added that the weakness of BiH's central government meant its membership of the council was dependent on the country's adherence to a long list of conditions. The assembly's decision brings to an end a long process began in January 1994 when Bosnia-Herzegovina obtained the status of "special guest" at the Council of Europe.

Radisic vetoed budget of BiH common institutions

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the BiH Presidency member, Zivko Radisic vetoed the proposed budget of the BiH common institutions for this year. Radisic decided to veto the budget because it includes the provision according to which BiH common institutions should provide 436,000 KM for financing of BiH law-suit against the FRY. Radisic informed the BiH Presidency Chair, Jozo Krizanovic and RS National Assembly Speaker, Dragan Kalinic about his decision. Krizanovic has to forward the Radisic's request to the Republika Srpska National Assembly. The RS Parliament has to discuss this issue and if the Radisic's proposed decision on budget gets support of two thirds in the RS National Assembly then the proposal made by the Presidency (two other members) will be declared invalid.

Serb deputies threaten to vote against draft BiH Budget for the year

SRNA news agency reports that the SDS and PDP deputies in the

BiH Parliamentary Assembly's House of Representatives will not vote for the draft budget to finance BiH institutions in 2002, which includes funds to finance the law suit filed by BiH against the FRY. SDS Chief Whip in the House of Representatives Mirko Banjac has told SRNA that the deputies of this party will not support this draft "because it is politicized in order to benefit only one nation in BiH". "The budget is politicized in order to promote the policy of one nation and cannot be a model for BiH," Banjac said, adding that the work of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly was being reduced to its bare minimum while the functions of the Council of Ministers' ministries were being widened through investment of funds into setting up various agencies which are to become a type of new BiH institutions. PDP deputy Zeljko Bilbija announced that PDP deputies would propose an amendment to the budget, in line with the house procedure, demanding the removal of the stipulation that the law suit against Yugoslavia be financed from the budget, if, indeed this stipulation was to be included in the 2002 draft budget. "If our amendment in which we demand the removal of the provision to finance the suit against Yugoslavia from the budget is rejected, the PDP deputies will vote against the draft budget," Bilbija said.

Co-chair of BiH House of Peoples Nikola Spiric called for RS political parties to reconsider further support to the Alliance for changes

Glas Srpski reports that the Co-chair of the BiH House of Peoples, Nikola Spiric, called for political parties from the Republika Srpska to reconsider their further support to the Alliance for Change, because its leaders openly advocate for elimination of the RS. "This is about statements made by Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency Beriz Belkic, BiH Federation President Safet Hlilovic and Vice-president of SDP BiH Ivo Komsic. Their statements can be boiled down to the following: radical changes of the BiH Constitution and the RS

has to change its name, flag and coat of arms", said Spiric. He warns that behind these statements, the serious intentions aimed at elimination of the RS are hiding. "Members of the Alliance and parties who support it should not only sit and watch what the Alliance is trying to impose through the constitutional changes. If they (Please note that Spiric does not say who) leave this artificial coalition then the campaign the Alliance has been running will not jeopardise the RS", said Spiric. The paper quotes Chair of the BiH House of Representatives Zeljko Mirjanic as saying that implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and not alteration of the Agreement should be demanded. "Those who wish to raise the issue of alteration of the DPA and elimination of entities are in conflict with political reality. They, in fact, ignore will of the world leading politicians who stood up for the peace Agreement," said Mirjanic. The paper also quotes PDP spokesman Igor Crnadak as saying that PDP expects that leaders of the Alliance will stop their campaign aimed at elimination of the RS. If they fail to do it, the PDP will reconsider its support to the Alliance", said Crnadak.

Kukic and Todorovic distance themselves from Dizdarevic's criticism against deportation of Algerians

ONASA, Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz report that the members of the Steering Board of the BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Slavo Kukic and Branko Todorovic, have distanced themselves from the positions of the Committee's President, Srdjan Dizdarevic, expressed at the Saturday's press conference in Sarajevo in regard of the deportation of six Algerians from the country. Among other things, Dizdarevic said that the deportation had taken place following the US pressures and blackmails and that the process was obviously violating the European Convention on Human Rights. However, in their public address, Kukic and Todorovic said that the Steering Board had not considered the issue and that

Dizdarevic's allegation could not therefore be considered a position of the BiH Helsinki Committee.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Hand-over of the six to the American SFOR causes serious discussions and accusations

Written by Zvonimir Cilic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija says the deportation of members of the so-called Algerian group to the American SFOR caused serious incidents which could have had incalculable consequences. In the night from Thursday to Friday, radio station Naba in Visoko kept calling the citizens to join the demonstrators in Sarajevo and prevent their brothers from being handed over to the Americans.

TV Studio 99 was doing something similar and the so-called Federation TV, says Slobodna Dalmacija, was doing it for two days in their newscasts, but much more perfidiously, indeed not that directly, but their messages were not too hard to see through. In their prime-time broadcasts, the FTV gave a chance to all those who wanted to warn the public that a possible deportation would be illegal and inhumane, or that it was destroying the law order and the state of law (as if it existed). At the same time, the so-called FTV did not show the reverse of the medal. They did not tell their (mostly Bosniak) viewers that those are criminals, swindlers and terrorists (some of them became BiH Army members even before coming to this state) who were given the BiH citizenship on the basis of lies, false testimonies and forged documents.

The daily says it will be interesting to see if the High Representative will ban these media outlets from broadcasting as he did with some Croat media in BiH at a time.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Helsinki Committee for Human

Rights – Authorities exert pressure on the media

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Branko Todorovic, the Secretary General of the BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, gave a press conference and said that journalists and media across BiH are exposed to pressures, blackmails and even physical attacks from the authorities.

While presenting the Committee report about the human-rights aspect of the state of media in the course of last year, Todorovic said the authorities and political parties used various means to keep the media under control and deny them of prompt and accurate information. It was said that local and independent media are in a particularly bad position, whereas the media founded by municipalities or cantons are often completely obedient.

Todorovic said there are still some media that do not give up on their inflammatory language and the language of hatred. Listed as such are the Mostar-based daily 'Dnevni List' and the Banjaluka-based weekly 'Prst,' which are said to contain the worst form of chauvinist propaganda.

Federation

Behmen looking for Budget non-adoption culprits

Oslobodjenje reports that BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen said in a letter sent to the Alliance for Change leaders in regard of the non-adoption of the Entity Budget at the recent session of the BiH Federation House of Representatives that he was not any more prepared to support appointment of any official nominated either by the GDS or LDS. Behmen took such a stand because the deputies from these two parties had not attended the session of the Federation

Parliament. However, Dnevni Avaz quoted Chairman of the Alliance Coordination and GDS leader Ibrahim Spahic as saying that the dispute between Behmen and the two parties had been overcome at the regular session of the Alliance leaders late on Monday in Sarajevo.

Behmen meets with OHR's Dauster

Dnevni Avaz reports that BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen met in Sarajevo on Monday with Head of the PHR AFD Manfred Dauster. The two officials concluded that there would be no foreign investments without a legal stability. They pointed out as a fact a large number of industrial crimes had still not been tried. According to a press release from the BiH federation Government, Dauster announced his Department would soon prepare a comprehensive analysis on the causes of such a situation.

Aluminum to be privatize only after determination of the ownership structure

According to Dnevni Avaz, BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen said at a meeting with World Bank and IMF delegations, led by Joseph Ingram and Bruno de Shaetzen, in Sarajevo on Monday that the privatization of the Mostar Aluminum without prior determination of its ownership structure was not possible. "The precedent in this case would bring into question the entire privatization process in the Federation," Behmen emphasized.

BiH Federation Constitutional Commission to hold its session on Tuesday

BiH Federation Constitutional Commission President Jakob Finci told Dnevni Avaz the proposed changes of the entity Constitution should be sent into a public debate since everyone commented on the draft amendments although just a few

were aware of their contents. "The public debate would allow citizens to make their positions on the issue," Finci said. However, Sahbaz Dzhihanovic, a member of the Commission, is against organization of the public debate considering it a waste of time. The Commission is expected to meet in Sarajevo on Tuesday, and BiH Federation President Safet Halilovic, his Deputy Karlo Filipovic and Prime Minister Alija Bemer have been invited to attend the session.

General Bahto says Anic and Buljubasic arranged his apprehension

In a letter send to Oslobodjenje, BiH Federation Army General Hamid Bahto, who is detained under suspicion of involvement in arms smuggling to Kosovo, said that his apprehension had been agreed at a meeting in the office of the BiH Federation Prosecutor, Marinko Jurcevic, which was also attended by BiH Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic and his Deputy Ferid Buljubasic.

Vecernji List: Jelavic did not ask anything from Ivanic in secret

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The HDZ denial says that Ante Jelavic, a removed HDZ President, did not lobby for the establishment of the 'Constitutional Commission in the RS Assembly or against the installing of the House of Peoples'. The HDZ claims that Jelavic talked with Ivanic over phone and at Ivanic's initiative. They talked about Ivanic's initiative that three legitimate sides talk about the future of BiH. Jelavic used this opportunity to inform Ivanic that this is a crucial moment for the consistent implementation of the Constitutional Court decision on constituency of peoples on the whole BiH territory.

Republika Srpska

British ambassador Ian Cliff visits Banja Luka – Sarovic promised changes in SDS

Both Banja Luka dailies report that British Ambassador to BiH Ian Cliff on Monday visited Banja Luka, where he had separate meetings with RS President Mirko Sarovic and RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic. After the meetings, Ambassador Cliff told press that with both politicians he discussed constitutional amendments, BiH Constitutional Court ruling on constituent status of all three peoples in BiH, privatization, economic reform and many other issues pertaining to the process of BiH's European integration. "I was also looking for information about changes in the SDS. Mr. Sarovic told me that this party is ready to become a really democratic party with moderate orientation. He referred to a change of the SDS Statute, according to which indicted war criminals can no longer be members of the party.

International Community

Petritsch says SDS obstructs democratic processes

In an [interview](#) with the Monday's issue of the Banja Luka daily Nezavisne Novine, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that certain nationalistic political parties in BiH, including the SDS in the Republika Srpska, were still obstructing democratic processes. (Fena news agency, Dnevni Avaz and Jutranje Novine carried parts of the interview)

SFOR is looking for Vinko Pandurevic

Both Banja Luka dailies report that SFOR members were looking for Vinko Pandurevic, indicted by the ICTY, at his family

house in the village of Jasik near Sokolac. Jovan Pandurevic, the father of the indictee, told Glas Srpski that SFOR soldiers came to his house around midnight and asked him if Vinko Pandurevic was in. Jovan Pandurevic told them that Vinko is not in the house and the SFOR soldiers left. According to him, the house was surrounded by well-armed soldiers, who, however, did not use force. Spokesman for SFOR, Michael Odom refused to confirm or deny this information. Glas Srpski learned off the record that group of police officers employed with the Sokolac Police Public Security Center refused to participate in possible arrest of Vinko Pandurevic.

Brdjanin's attorney accused the ICTY of bribing witnesses

Glas Srpski reports that Radoslav Brdjanin's attorney John Ackermann indirectly accused the ICTY of collecting witnesses in inappropriate manner in the process against Brdjanin and RS Army General Momir Talic, both indicted by the ICTY. According to SRNA correspondent from The Hague, at the pre-trial conference, Ackermann has been alluding to "giving bribe to witnesses". The ICTY Prosecutor's Office did not react to accusation of the defense.

ICTY Spokeswoman says case files against 12 Serbs have not arrived to The Hague

ICTY Spokeswoman Florence Hartman could not confirm or deny whether case files against 121 Serbs arrived to The Hague, Nezavisne novine reports. "These cases are already being processed before RS courts. According to the Rules of the Road, all cases that are being processed before local courts have to be forwarded to the ICTY, and the ICTY will decide on their future status. In these cases the ICTY checks whether there are enough evidence to continue with processes. If there is enough evidence the ICTY approves the procedure and if there is not it advises local courts what to do next and how to collect new evidence", said Hartman.

Jutarnji List: Serbian media unveil ICTY's top secret – Milan Milutinovic, a key witness against Milosevic

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

President of Serbia, Milan Milutinovic, will witness against Slobodan Milosevic, learns Belgrade-based daily "Nacional" which speculates as to which close associates of the former Yugoslav President could "speak up", reads Jutarnji List. The Belgrade daily assess that the witness could be none other than Milutinovic, also an ICTY indictee, elaborating it with the fact that Serbian PM, Zoran Djindjic, recently stated that he hoped that "some people who officiated (senior) functions during the Milosevic era but who were not influential when it came to decision-making, would be exempt from responsibility before the ICTY", which is clearly related to Milutinovic, comments the Belgrade daily. Nacional also learns from well-informed sources that Djindjic and Milutinovic agreed that Milutinovic should remain in his office until Djindjic is strong enough to appoint his man or nominate himself for the post. Until that moment arrives, Milutinovic will be protected and some western diplomats claim that he would even retire and enjoy his pension. The ICTY would withdraw charges against him, reads Nacional, but in return he would have to witness against Milosevic. In the meantime, The Hague investigators do not waste time. Last week they questioned Radomir Markovic, former Head of State Security Service, in the Belgrade prison. The investigators also talked to former Yugoslav Finance Minister, Jovan Zebic, who should know a lot about financial transactions made during the former regime and funding of wars in the former Yugoslavia. Unofficial sources say that he agreed to testify and that he too has been promised the exemption (...), reads Jutarnji List.

Tanovic won Golden Globe

All BiH media reported that Danis Tanovic's "No Man's Land"

won the Golden Globe for the best foreign motion picture in Los Angeles on Monday. The award is being given by the Hollywood-base Association Foreign Journalists.

Editorial

Dnevni List: Victims of symmetry

Written by Marko Tokic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

“I am doing my best not to yield to temptation and mention his name in vain – Wolfgang Petritsch. Does anyone remember Robert Barry? Who is that man? He is the one that left us with the rule of Alliance and the so-called civic concept of majority in the state-forming community of more than one constituent people, which resulted in that those larger in number have the possibility of being more equal, too.

The vast majority of Croats probably do not even remember who Barry was, but we still feel the consequences of his Decision on the election of deputies to the Federation House of Peoples, along with an infinite possibility of expansion of those negative consequences in the view of our inequality. Petritsch will leave, too.

Still, what sort of comfort is that? Is it the fulfillment of the following promise: ‘We must ensure that Croats and Bosniaks in the RS get the same rights that Serbs and Croats will be given in the Federation’?”

Tokic says when he first read this sentence, he thought that it was a mistake and that, instead, it read: ‘We must ensure that Croats and Bosniaks in the RS get the same rights that Serbs will be given in the Federation.’ He goes on to say that the sentence means the idea of a full implementation of the Constitutional Court Decision on the constituency of peoples has been abandoned, but that it also speaks of a possible

political compromise in the implementation of this Decision. Tokic says the High Representative's statement about introduction of House of Peoples in the Republic of Croatia points to two facts: the first being that Croats in BiH are a minority and not a constituent people; and the second that there will be no Houses of Peoples in the Entities and it unrealistic to expect that.

"Naming of the harmonization of Entity Constitutions with the BiH Constitution is a matter of Petritsch's future political alchemy, or, as people tend to call it as of lately, of a 'symmetry' in the solutions of Entity Constitutions. It is clear already now that Croats will fall as victims of this very 'symmetry.' It is good that we have diagnosed the illness. So we have at least named the execution of us as a political people, constituent and equal to the other two peoples in BiH. (...) So much from Petritsch. After this, he leaves. Consequences will remain. Take care – of yourself. Needless to say.

Finally, let me not forget Mostar. It is a wonderful city. Divided and undivided. It is not ruled by facts, but stereotypes.

One has the support of the internationals, others are supported by the people and need to be removed, and removed without the unnecessary 'why' because after the previous elections they even removed the people at higher levels, so why would they not remove individuals that the people support at lower levels.

As for the one that is supported, they support him so much that I do not understand why they support him so much. People here support only what is thought to be falling down and is not self-sustainable," says Tokic in conclusion.

Headlines

Glas Srpski

- SFOR is looking for General
- They bribe witnesses

Nezavisne Novine

- Tanovic closer to Oscar + big picture of Denis Tanovic;
- BiH in the Council of Europe as of today?

Dnevni List

- City Board of Mostar SDP claims: Bodies of Bosniaks buried at "Vihovici" waste dump

Oslobodjenje

- Confession of Brigadier General Hamid Bahto: My apprehension agreed by Anic and Buljubasic
- Tanovic won Golden Globe

Dnevni Avaz

- Dizdarevic acts on his own will
- Tanovic's step towards Oscar

Jutarnje Novine

- Interview with Mirhunisa Zukic, the President of the BiH Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons: Approximately 2,600 people in the tent settlements afraid of "white death"