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Constitutional Reforms

Process of constitutional change in BiH's Entities is completed

All BiH media report very prominently report that, in partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leadership and the governments of the two Entities, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has on Friday completed the long process of constitutional change in BiH's Entities by issuing three Decisions. By closing a small number of gaps in the constitutional amendments, the High Representative has ensured that these amendments are fully in line with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement on the Implementation of the Constituent Peoples' Decision of the BiH Constitutional Court, which was reached by BiH's political leaders on 27 March 2002. Through these Decisions the High Representative has also ensured that resistance by nationalist opposition parties in the Federation does not prevent the amendments from taking effect. The High Representative has also amended the BiH Election Law, placing it in accord with the new Entity Constitutions. "I had to make these decisions because as a guarantor I obliged myself to prevent that HDZ and SDA as dinosaurs obstruct democratic changes in BiH and hold further its citizens as hostages," Oslobođenje quoted Petritsch as saying at a special press conference in Sarajevo on Friday. "This is an imposition, but it does not look like the previous impositions. This time, the largest part of the job was done by the domestic authorities and I congratulate them for that," the High Representative told journalists, according to Dnevni Avaz. Click [here for the OHR Press Release](#).

The BiH Presidency supports Petritsch's decisions

The BiH Presidency welcomed decisions adopted in the legislative bodies and through the institution of the High Representative in BiH, which forms part of the constitutional and legal system of BiH, Presidency Chairman Beriz Belkic said

on Saturday after a meeting between members of the Presidency and High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch. "The BiH Presidency has positively assessed the changes which have taken place and believes that this is part and parcel of a process through which we are repaying our debt to BiH citizens, irrespective of the nation to which they belong, in line with the Dayton Agreement," Belkic said at Sarajevo airport upon his return from Macedonia. According to him, new constitutions in BiH should now be used by the ordinary people, not exclusively by politicians and experts, as has been practice so far. "BiH's image has now been given importance in the modern democratic international arena," he said. Belkic concluded by saying he was convinced that the priority was the resolution of existential problems of BiH citizens.

In a brief statement for journalists, Petritsch said he was pleased with the support given to him by the Presidency "in moves that he made yesterday at the end of constitutional changes in BiH". "That was genuine cooperation between the international community, myself and the leading political forces in this country," he said, adding that this was the sort of partnership that the international community expected. The High Representative said that the international community unanimously supported yesterday's decisions of the OHR. (*Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, news agencies -ONASA, SRNA, FENA*)

Monday's Dnevni Avaz: Interview with Wolfgang Petritsch, the High Representative of the international community in BiH

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that he expected the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples to be fully implemented by the end of this year. (Full translation of the interview to follow. Note also that the High Representative's interview for Fena was carried by the

Sunday's Dnevni List and Monday's Jutarnje Novine)

Ashdown says constitutional amendments the most important step in the process of BiH's democratization

At a meeting with BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija in London on Sunday, the British diplomat, Lord Paddy Ashdown, assessed that the decision to impose the constitutional amendments represented the most important step in the process of BiH's democratization, the spokesman for the BiH Foreign Ministry, Amer Kapetanovic, told ONASA (the report carried by Monday's Oslobodjenje). Lagumdžija and Ashdown, who is expected to assume duties of the High Representative of the international community in BiH at the end on May this year, agreed that the decision made by the current High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, represented an important step in building a new and different BiH, and its accession to the European integration. According to Kapetanovic, Ashdown congratulated to the democratic political forces in BiH, because they had in cooperation with the international community created conditions for historic changes in BiH.

The PIC Steering Board supports Petritsch's decisions

The Steering Board fully supports the Decisions promulgated today by the High Representative closing a limited number of lacunae that would have prevented the full implementation of the 27 March Agreement. They remedy a few shortfalls in the RS amendments as well as uproot the obstructionism demonstrated by nationalist parties in the Federation. This will allow elections to be held on schedule under clear rules, fully in conformity with the revised Entity constitutions. (Dnevni Avaz, Fena, ONASA). Click [here for the Communique of the PIC SB](#).

World Bank welcomes the constitutional changes

The World Bank in BiH welcomes the agreements reached on constitutional changes, which are intended to provide a more balanced representation and protection of interests of all ethnic groups across the country. Such legislation is a key towards faster return of refugees, economic recovery, social reforms and establishment of a single economic space within Bosnia and Herzegovina. (*Jutarnje Novine*)

SDP BiH celebrates – This is the day of victory of BiH!

The special SDP BiH conference held in Sarajevo on Friday was a sort of SDP celebration. The leader of the party, Zlatko Lagumdžija, admitted that he had been thinking about the resignation from the office just 24 hours earlier, but that now, following the imposition of the constitutional amendments by Wolfgang Petritsch, everything was in the right place again. “ This is the day of victory of BiH. This is the day of victory of citizens of this country and all three constituent peoples. This the victory of law and rights, and European values in this country. This is also the day when the nationalism was defeated in BiH,” Lagumdžija said. (*Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz*)

Tokic says Petritsch's decision expected, only solution

Chairman of the BiH Parliamentary House of Peoples Sejfidin Tokic said that Friday's decision of High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to impose constitutional amendments was an expected decision and that it was the only choice left. “This is the most serious blow to the constitutional character of entities as exclusively ethnic areas, on one side of the Serb people and on the other side of the Croat and Bosniak peoples, on the foundations projected by nationalistic policies,” Tokic said in a written statement. (*ONASA, Oslobodjenje*)

SDA to support implementation of the constitutional amendments

The president of the BiH Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Sulejman Tihic, said on Saturday this party would accept the amendments proclaimed by the High Representative on Friday, adding it will advocate their implementation, but that it will at the same time use all constitutional means to change them. Tihic said the SDA was ready to submit a request to the BiH Constitutional Court to estimate whether the decision on the constituency has been fully implemented, as well as the charges to the Human Rights Court in the Council of Europe. He added that the amendments to the entity constitutions meant improvement in the RS, compared to the current situation, but that High Representative to BiH Wolfgang Petritsch was not able to change the amendments since the RS' Assembly did not discuss their change. According to Tihic, BiH got the asymmetrical constitutional solutions in the entities based on different standards. "Nowadays, we have the complete equality of Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks in the BiH Federation, while the dominance of Serbs is preserved in the RS, which is now legalized," he said. According to Tihic, the name of the Bosnian language has not yet been recognized in the RS, the RS president has all the powers compared to the vice-presidents, and the Council of Peoples has limited powers compared to the RS National Assembly. Tihic pointed out that the amendments in the RS did not encompass the transitional provisions, so that all discriminatory laws stayed in force.

The deadline of nine months has been determined in the BiH Federation for the change of provisions that are not in accordance with the amendments. (*Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, FENA, ONASA*)

Party for BiH says Petritsch's decisions justified

The Party for BiH believes that the High Representative's decision on the implementation of the amendments to the

Constitutions of the Entities represent a justified and responsible act, which at the very end preserved the credibility of the democratic reforms in BiH. "In spite of certain failures and insufficient consistency of some solutions, the Sarajevo Agreement represents unavoidable mean for launching comprehensive constitutional reforms in BiH," Party for BiH President Safet Halilovic told journalists in Sarajevo on Saturday. In an exclusive statement with Sunday's Dnevni Avaz, Halilovic said that the High Representative's decision had given strong stimulus to the re-establishment of the BiH multiethnic character and its reintegration as the state. (*Oslobodjenje*)

NHI satisfied with epilogue of constitutional reform process

The New Croat Initiatives (NHI) fully supports Friday's decisions of the High Representative to BiH on the proclamation of the constitutional amendments in the BiH Federation and harmonization of the amendments with the agreement of March 27 in the Republika Srpska, as well as on the harmonization of the BiH election law with the new constitutional solutions. "We are completely satisfied with an epilogue of this process and further development of the situation, since the amendments completely reflect the agreement on the constitutional changes which we also signed," NHI President Kresimir Zubak said at a press conference in Sarajevo on Saturday. According to Zubak, this party foresaw before the beginning of the negotiations of political parties on the constitutional changes that they will be ended by a decision of the High Representative, since the national political parties actually do not want the changes in BiH, but the status quo and final division of the country. (*Oslobodjenje*, *ONASA*)

Dnevni List: Interview with Ivo Zivkovic, Vice

President of New Croat Initiative

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an interview with a Vice President of the NHI Ivo Zivkovic in which he mostly talks about the constitutional changes and recent events surrounding the same. Zivkovic says that the imposition by the OHR was the only solution to the problem called the constitutional changes because the sides involved could not reach an agreement especially due to obstruction coming from parties with Serb prefix. "This decision is not an ideal solution, it is a road to a solution and good grounds for building of multi-ethnic BiH (...) which will join democratic Europe in such form", says Zivkovic. Zivkovic says that the Croats' representatives should sit down and find quality people to fill in vacant positions in the RS and encourage return process to the entity and goes on to say that when it comes to the NHI and HDZ, their positions with regards to defining of national interests perfectly match. "We only disagree in methods of political struggle. I think there is animosity towards the HDZ because of moves the party has made in the past, which I find wrong. There are situations when the HDZ makes justified political requests – it goes through with more problems, HDZ has to blame itself for it", says Ivo Zivkovic. Zivkovic also says that Kresimir Zubak did not deviate from the memorandum reached at Cardinal Puljic's saying that Zubak is an experienced negotiator being convinced that the Agreement was good. "As far as the charges from the HDZ that Zubak's signature brings Croats into an awkward position are concerned, it is not true. He did not oblige Croats in any shape or form", says Zivkovic.

HDZ General Secretary condemns Petritsch's decisions

The general secretary of the BiH HDZ, Josip Merdzo, said on Saturday that the imposed constitutional amendments in BiH

made it impossible for the Croats of BiH to elect their representatives in the executive authorities and that this would be done by Serbs in the RS and by Bosniaks in the BiH Federation. The other Croat parties which are members of the Croat People's Assembly (HNS) and analysts have said that certain amendments are completely unacceptable because they reduce the constituent status of the Croats. "It is indisputable that the status of the Croat people in the RS has improved but it is beyond doubt that the new regulations will result in a situation in which decisions on Croats (election of Croat candidates) will be made by Serbs in the RS and by Bosniaks in the BiH Federation. That is the greatest injustice brought about by these constitutional amendments," Merdzo said. According to Merdzo, the euphoric mood of the international community and the parties which are close to it will not last long and the imposed solution will prove to be negative. "A great opportunity has been missed for a deeper and more rational reorganization of BiH and the system will become even more bureaucratic with the aim of making the stay of representatives of the international community as long as possible in their role of "masters" of crisis. No imposed decisions, especially on the constitutional amendments, represent a good way forward for BiH," Merdzo said. (*FENA*)

Sunday's Jutarnji List: Interview with Dr. Zdravko Tomac, the President of the Croatian Parliament's Foreign Policy Committee

Interview conducted by Kristina Turcin (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Tomac stated that in his opinion the HR did not have the other way out of this situation but to impose the amendments. He added that it would have been good that all peoples could agree to change the amendments by themselves and to take over responsibility, because the constitutional changes are just a paper if there is no will of the people to implement that paper in practice. He says that it is good that the IC has

made the move, which pulls down a taboo subject that Dayton is a holy word. Tomac believes that this is a positive but insufficient step towards new changes. These changes would have been better if symmetric solutions were made, because, practically, the RS remains a country of one people. Tomac says that as far as the Croat people is concerned, their position has been improved especially in the RS, however, this is not a definite solution and the struggle for equality should continue. Asked as to what message he would send to HDZ BiH, Tomac said that they should not obstruct the imposed Constitution, and, within its framework, it should be tried to find the ways to realize the full equality of the Croats. Each obstruction and general conflict with the IC damage the Croat people because then Croats become scapegoats and the focus is on the problem of the Croats, while the RS remains aside and gradually it is being legalized in its current form. Tomac concludes that HDZ and all other parties, Croat(ian)s in BiH and Croatia should work on it.

HSS' Simic says, following Petritsch's decisions, BiH is on a way to be established as a normal state

The President of the BiH HSS Ilija Simic believes that, following the Friday's decisions made by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, BiH is finally on a way to be established as a normal state, with authorities and sovereignty on its entire territory. (*Jutarnje Novine*)

Kalinic and Ivanic on constitutional amendments

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski quotes RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, as saying that the High Representative did not make substantial changes to the RS NA amendments. "This tells us that the RS and the RS NA made smart moves which is more than I can say for the BiH Federation whose politicians shouted from the rooftops that

they would pass the amendments and, in the end, they did not do anything", said Ivanic. He also said that Petritsch's praises to the Alliance for changes are a little bit hypocritical. Both Banja Luka dailies quote Speaker of the RS National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic, as saying that the RS opened a new leaf in its future and that the parties, which participated in negotiations, have improved its image and credibility with the IC, which is very important for the Serb Democratic Party (SDS).

Cavic on constitutional amendments

The Republika Srpska (RS) vice president and vice president of the RS Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Dragan Cavic, has estimated that the passage of the amendments to the RS Constitution had been the most difficult political decision since the Dayton Agreement. "Since this was a national issue, namely the constituency of the peoples in BiH, the RS had a consistent position on that," Cavic told the RS Radio-Television on Friday. He pointed out at the "discriminatory provisions in the Constitution of the BiH Federation, particularly regarding the position of Serbs in the cantons." (*Oslobodjenje*, *ONASA*, *FENA*)

Dodik welcomes constitutional changes

The chairman of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), Milorad Dodik, said in Banja Luka on Saturday that the party had no reason to be unhappy about the amendments to the Constitution of the RS, imposed by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch. "The SNSD has always said that the term 'Bosnian language' should not be introduced into the RS' Constitution, which Petritsch supported by stipulating that the official language in the RS is the language of the Serbs, the language of the Croats and the language of the Muslims," Dodik said at a session of the SNSD main committee. Dodik pointed out that in the process of the adoption of amendments the division between "patriots and traitors" disappeared, and

that the RS parties took a united stand. According to Dodik, the Social Democratic Party of BiH is now trying to prove that the SNSD is the same as the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), while on the other hand the SDS wants to preserve the support of the SNSD, which it enjoyed during the procedure for the adoption of the constitutional amendments.

“I must say that the parties united under the name of the SNSD are strong enough politically, they have their own platform and their own stands, and do not need to join any coalitions,” he said. (*Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, SRNA, ONASA*)

Mikes claims RS has changed its policy

The international community should understand that the Republika Srpska has changed its policy, got democratized and will be an equal partner in BiH and Europe, Vice-President of the RS Socialistic Party and President of the RS Constitutional Commission Miroslav Mikes told ONASA. Reacting to the decision of High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to partially correct the constitutional amendments in the RS, adopted on April 4, and to impose them completely in the Federation, Mikes said he was glad the process of implementing the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of peoples is finally over. “I hope this is the last time that someone from the international community had to directly request the implementation of the decisions of any court in BiH, and that we will do that on our own in the future,” Mikes said, adding that Petritsch has confirmed that the constitutional amendments were brought legally and legitimately by the RS National Assembly. Regretting that “the Federation politicians did not have enough strength to end the process,” Mikes said this shows that the “signature itself does not mean anything if they do not have political strengthen to finalize the agreement.” The RS politicians have signed the Agreement with two reservations, but they have implemented it because of the authority they have in their parties and the National Assembly, and this should also be

taken into consideration," Mikes said. (*Oslobodjenje*, *ONASA*)

SGV hails Petritsch's decisions

The BiH Serb Civic Council (SGV) – Movement for Equality describes the High Representative's decision to impose the amendments to the Constitutions of the Entities as the biggest step forward in the implementation of the Dayton Agreement in the sphere of the civil, human and national rights protection. The NGO emphasized that Wolfgang Petritsch deserved to be praised for his decisiveness and persistency. (*Dnevni Avaz*, *FENA*)

BiH State-related Issues

The BiH Election Commission announces holding of the next elections on October 5 this year

All media report that the President of the BiH Election Commission, Lidija Korac, on Friday announced that the next general elections in BiH would be held on October 5 this year.

Oslobodjenje: Elections without HDZ, SDA, SRS and Croat Christian Democrats

If they fail to remove from their leaderships persons who were banned from holding public office by the High Representative by 1700 hrs on May 19, the BiH Election Commission will prevent all candidates of BIH Croat Democratic Union (HDZ), BiH Party of Democratic Action (SDA), RS Serb Radical Party and BiH Croat Christian Democrats from running in the next general elections. In a statement with *Oslobodjenje*, the Chairman of the Commission, Lidija Korac, confirmed that the BiH Election Commission would fully implement the decision banning the removed officials from being put on their respective parties' candidacy lists, which had been made recently by the High Representative.

BiH, Macedonia sign the inter-state agreement on free trade

BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Azra Hadziahmetovic and Macedonian Minister of Economy Besnik Fetai signed in Skopje on Saturday the agreement on the free trade between BiH and Macedonia, according to Sunday's Oslobodjenje. By this agreement, BiH concluded the free trade agreements with all states in the area of the former Yugoslavia and enabled the participation of BiH producers in the markets of that countries. On the list of BiH foreign-trade partners, Macedonia was at the 15th place according to the value of the realized exchange in the year of 2001, and it is expected that the signed agreement will improve the bilateral economic cooperation.

Preparations in final phase for a ceremony of BiH's admission into the Council of Europe

According to Monday's Dnevni Avaz, the preparations for a ceremony of the BiH's admission into the full membership of the Council of Europe are in final phase. The ceremony will be opened at 0915 on Wednesday by the Council General Secretary, Walter Schwimmer, who is then expected to sign the accession protocol with the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija.

Federation

Bicakcic says will not run in the next BiH elections

In an interview with Monday's Oslobodjenje, former BiH Federation Prime Minister Edhem Bicakcic, who had been banned from holding public office by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that he would not be on any candidacy list for the next general elections in BiH. "This is also stipulated by the decision on my removal and even if I would

want to do so (to run in the elections), I could not do it. However, the truth is that, by this, my human right have been abused, but that will be a subject of a longer legal proceedings I have launched before the Geneva-based UN Committee for Human Rights against the High Representative," Bicakcic said.

Jutarnji List: Tokic requests Croat Republic in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Jutarnji list reports that Marko Tokic, as President of Croat self-rule, addressed to delegates of HDZ convention in Zagreb saying that if Serb and Bosniak Republics exist in BiH, there will be Croat Republic as well. Tokic accused the current authority in Croatia for being the main bar for the pressures on Croats in BiH. The daily says that Tokic led a delegation of HDZ BiH, in stead of Ante Jelavic. Tokic condemned the Decision of the High Representative in BiH to proclaim the constitutional changes in the country, saying that the international community has divided BiH on the Serb and Bosniak part.

Republika Srpska

RS Prime Minister criticizes RS judiciary

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Monday's edition of Glas Srpski reports that the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, criticized the work of the RS judiciary. "It is outrageous that people, indicted for smuggling of 184 kg of heroin, are still not punished. It is also outrageous that court proceedings last so long, that none of the corruption cases has still not been brought to an end, that RS citizens set aside so much money so that salaries of

judges and prosecutors are around 2,500 KM and some of them have even more than that and that in spite of all these things the RS judiciary is still so inefficient", Ivanic told the Bijeljina-based STEP Television. The RS Prime Minister said he regretted a fact that the RS Government does not have an opportunity to change much in the RS judiciary. "Some of our moves made some things changed and some judges have been removed:", Ivanic said. He also said that public has to criticize the work of judiciary, and added that composition of the Judicial Council would be changed in order to make the work of judges more transparent. The paper also reports that the RS High Judicial Council appointed Jovan Spajic an acting head of the RS High Judicial Council.

Zivko Radisic forms a new party

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report that a new party – the People's Party of Socialists(NPS) – was formed in the RS on Saturday, April 20th. According to a press release from the party, it will fight for the social justice, national equality and rule of law. Other details or the names of people involved were not disclosed, but the Tanjug news agency reported that the NPS was formed by Zivko Radisic, the former president of the RS Socialist Party (SPRS) and member of the BiH Presidency. Nezavisne Novine learns from a source close to the SPRS, that people who joined the NPS are SPRS members who are dissatisfied with results of the last SPRS Congress and the new SPRS leadership which was elected at the party Congress. The paper learns that current RS Minister of Urbanism and Civil Engineering, Nedjo Djuric, SPRS deputy in the RS NA, Krsto Jandric, SPRS Spokeswoman, Biljana Rodic-Obradovic and SPRS Secretary General, Drago Vucic might join the NPS. Jandric told Nezavisne that he was not founder of the NPS nor he knew who the founder was. "I am not a NPS member nor I will be", said Jandric. Member of the SPRS Executive Board, Zeljko Samardzija told Nezavisne that he did not know whether Zivko

Radisic is the founder of NPS or not. He said if someone from SPRS, including Radisic, is the founder of NPS then that person will have to explain it to the SPRS.

A Croat to become a head of SRNA news agency, a Bosniak to become a head of Glas Srpski

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Monday's edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that it seems that the implementation of the constitutional amendments has already started in the RS media. According to Nezavisne Novine, new head of the SRNA news agency will be a Croat, while a new head of the Banja Luka-based daily newspaper, Glas Srpski, will be a Bosniak. Head of Radio Television of the RS (RTRS) will be a Serb as it has been the case so far. According to the paper, this distribution of positions would satisfy the leading parties from the BiH Federation and their partners from the RS.

International Community

Lagumdzija, Behmen and Ivanic to meet with Ashdown in London on Wednesday

Dnevni Avaz learned that the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, the BiH Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the Republika Srpska Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, are expected to meet with the future High Representative of the international community in BiH, Paddy Ashdown, in London on Wednesday. This meeting, which is the first Collegium of the future High Representative, will be, according to the newspaper, very important because it will also be attended by the representatives of UN, OSCE, World Bank, IMF and IPTF, and which is in compliance with the future principles of the international community's work in BiH.

Blair refocuses his Balkans policy on Bosnia

Britain may withdraw most of its troops from Kosovo as Tony Blair refocuses his Balkans policy on Bosnia where Lord Ashdown, the former Liberal Democrat leader, takes over next month as the senior international official, the Sunday Times reported (the report carried by ONASA, Monday's Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz). Government sources said the move could help to secure Britain a pivotal role in the economic development of the main Balkan countries in years to come. However, Nato officers said it would threaten to undermine security in Kosovo while police sources complained that it could hinder a fight against organized crime. British troops are the mainstay of the peacekeeping operation in the capital, Pristina. Their withdrawal would interrupt the flow of intelligence on the local Albanian mafia and weaken the struggle against criminal rackets dealing in drugs and prostitution. The British have an outstanding reputation for internal security, said Klaus Reinhardt, a German general and former commander of the Nato-led Kosovo protection force (Kfor). Pulling them out would be disastrous. The Ministry of Defense said Nato was reviewing force posture in the Balkans, which might affect the UK's future engagement in the region. Military analysts believe Nato plans to withdraw at least 10,000 troops from the former Yugoslavia, a move on which alliance foreign ministers are expected to agree in Reykjavik, the Icelandic capital, next month. Britain has almost 2,500 troops in Kosovo and 1,700 in Bosnia. Under plans that are being drawn up by the defense ministry but have yet to be approved, numbers in Bosnia could be increased with only a few hundred left in Kosovo. Government sources indicate that Blair wants to take a policy lead in the region and regards Ashdown's appointment in Bosnia as an opportunity to redress mistakes made by the international community during that country's civil war between 1992 and 1995.

NATO's Robertson says military reforms a priority of the international community in BiH

NATO Secretary General George Robertson on Friday told the presidents and vice-presidents of both BiH entities that military reforms were a priority of the entire international community, including NATO, in BiH and that BiH would not be able to join Partnership for Peace Program without these reforms. "BiH will access to the Program only when the reforms are carried out," Robertson told journalists before leaving BiH. Asked about the view of the Republika Srpska representatives regarding military reforms, which include the establishment of joint command over the armed forces and the state defense ministry, Robertson said that RS President Mirko

Sarovic had reminded him about the historical reasons for existence of two entity armies. "I told him that at some point he will have to forget history and start thinking about the future if he wants this country he lives in to be a member of the Partnership for Peace," Robertson said.

Nezavisne Novine: Interview with PDHR Donald Hays

Monday's edition of Nezavisne Novine carries an interview with Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Donald Hays, in which he explains his views on activities of the RS Tax Administration and the reform of judiciary. (Full translation to follow)

FRY extends deadline for surrender of ICTY indictees by April 22

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

BETA news agency quotes Nebojsa Sarkic, assistant to the Yugoslav justice minister, as saying on Friday evening that the Yugoslav citizens indicted by the Hague tribunal will be allowed to surrender until Monday, April 22. Sarkic told the 20 April issue of Glas javnosti that there were "a couple of

indications of a voluntary departure by war crimes suspects to The Hague,” but that “no one has yet come to the ministry for talks”.

Former FRY Army Chief Ojdanic: “I am packing my suitcase” for The Hague

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Belgrade-based B92 radio quotes sources close to the former Yugoslav Army’s Chief of General Staff, Dragoljub Ojdanic, as saying that Ojdanic will depart for The Hague during the course of next week. The sources, however, do not believe that he would depart on Monday or Tuesday as Ojdanic himself announced for today’s edition of Frankfurt’s Vesti (diaspora’s daily in Serbian). Ojdanic said that he was packing his luggage for The Hague, but slowly.

Serbian premier says Serbia cannot arrest Karadzic, Mladic because it fears of unrest

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic has said that Serbia cannot arrest former Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, because the risk of unrest is too great. “Should we, in order to set right a past injustice, create chaos again, which will in turn give rise to injustice,” Djindjic asked in an interview to the German daily Frankfurter Rundschau. In the opinion of the Serbian prime minister, the arrest of the leaders of Bosnian Serbs is the task of international forces in BiH, because Serbia only has 20,000 ill-equipped policemen, while the peacekeeping force in Bosnia, with 50,000 troops, has been trying without success for five years to arrest Karadzic and Mladic. Djindjic said that the Law on Cooperation with the Hague tribunal should enable the swift extradition of war crimes suspects.

Former Serb Krajina leader will not surrender to The Hague voluntarily

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Milan Martić, former president of the so-called Republic of Serb Krajina (former Serb enclave in Croatia) who is charged by the Hague war crimes tribunal with a mortar attack on Zagreb in 1995, will not respond to the Yugoslav government's request to surrender voluntarily, the Frankfurt -based Vijesti newspaper quoted "a close relative who wished to remain anonymous" as saying, HINA news agency carries. Vijesti, a Serbian-language newspaper, claims that Martić's exact whereabouts are not known. There had been talk that Martić was mostly in hiding in the Prijedor area in BiH and only occasionally visited Serbia. Vijesti reports that a former Yugoslav Army chief of staff, Dragoljub Ojdanić, who is charged with war crimes in Kosovo in 1999 together with Slobodan Milošević, is almost ready to "contact the Justice Ministry". The Yugoslav government on Wednesday gave war crimes suspects a three-day deadline for voluntary surrender. After the deadline expires, arrests will begin. Both interior ministers, the federation's Zoran Živković and Serbian Interior Minister Dušan Mihajlović, confirmed that once the deadline expired, arrest warrants would be issued. The decision concerning extradition to The Hague is made by the Federal Justice Ministry, while the Law on Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal is under the jurisdiction of the Serbian and Montenegrin Interior Ministries.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Jutarnje Novine

In the Monday's Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Ibrahim Prohić wrote that the decisions on the constitutional reforms made by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, probably

represented the most important political act in the post-Dayton BiH. Prohic concluded that, judging by the statements coming both from the RS and the BiH Federation, which meant acceptance of the new political realities, the mental and political de-blockage of the country was being started. As a guest-commentator in Monday's Jutarnje Novine, the Sarajevo University professor, Salih Foco, wrote that the constitutional changes were a bit below the Constitutional Court's requirements, but that they were more than the political parties had actually been prepared to accept.

Vecernji List: Civic entities and abolition of cantons

Written by Stjepan Kovac (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The author of this editorial says that difficulties that will come out from the imposed decision of Wolfgang Petritsch on constitutional changes are visible in reactions of the political parties: ruling Bosniak parties emphasize strengthening state BiH, Serb parties talk about stronger dignity and credibility of Republika Srpska, and Croat parties are dissatisfied and they talk about national discrimination. So, the author concludes, the most important issue for Bosniaks is state BiH, for Serbs it is RS and for Croats it is equality of national rights. The author says that Petritsch's statement that SDA and HDZ are political dinosaurs that should become extinct is very interesting, while in the same time he says nothing for SDS, which hides war criminals, and puts it on the same side as SDP. Petritsch's criteria was only one – do political parties support his decision or not, says the author. The author finishes by asking what will be the consequences in two mixed cantons with special regime (Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva), saying that if entities are becoming more civic, and less national, it is perhaps a way to abolition of cantons and centralization of Federation BiH.

Headlines

Saturday

Oslobodjenje

- The High Representative made the ruling – Amendments to the Constitutions of the Entities imposed

Dnevni Avaz

- Petritsch made decision on changes of the Entities' Constitutions – A victory of the state of BiH

Jutarnje Novine (weekend edition)

- Petritsch imposed constitutional amendments
- Lidija Korac, the President of the BiH Election Commission – Elections to be held on October 5

Dnevni List

- Petritsch imposed constitutional solutions
- Sad present time of Herzeg's country: Petritsch does not even allow dead people to rest in peace

Vecernji List

- The HR completed passing of constitutional changes: Constitution has been imposed, elections on October 5
- Vecernji List analyses: OHR has removed 73 civil officials so far

Glas srpski (weekend edition)

- Office of the High Representative – Serb amendments accepted;

Nezavisne novine (weekend edition)

- Petritsch issued decision on constitutional changes after several month-long discussion on constitutional reform in BiH + Big picture of Wolfgang Petritsch;
- Elections on October 5

Sunday

Oslobodjenje

- Elections without HDZ, SDA, SRS and HD?

Dnevni Avaz

- Following the decision on change of the Constitutions of the entities – Path towards the European future of BiH

Dnevni List

- After visit of Carla del Ponte to Sarajevo: 13 new bills of indictment from The Hague arrived in Sarajevo
- Josip Merdzo, reacting to amendments imposed by Petritsch: It is not good to talk about equality of peoples in percentages
- Sad present time of Herzeg's country (2): Is Petritsch higher than God?

Vecernji List

- Reactions to Petritsch's imposition of constitutional amendments: Alliance exults, opposition embittered
- Importers demand change of law on export of goods: SFOR drinks millions marks of tax
- Yugoslavian Government prolonged deadline for possible volunteers: The Hague defendants can turn themselves in by 12 o'clock tomorrow
- Mario Brkic, OHR Spokesperson: Kresimir Zubak was the toughest nut to crack

Monday

Oslobodjenje

- The Dutch Parliament will be asked about the truth related to the (Srebrenica) crime

Dnevni Avaz

- Wolfgang Petritsch: The Agreement will be implemented by the end of the year

Jutarnje Novine

- Interview with Beriz Belkic, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency – We are a natural part of Europe

Glas Srpski

- 600,000 refugees from BiH currently live all over the world – One third acquired citizenship of host countries;
- RS Prime Minister criticizes RS judiciary: High salaries, bad results;

Nezavisne Novine

- Izetbegovic approved BiH passports to foreigners;
- PDHR Donald Hays – Milica Bisic is Eliot Ness;

Dnevni List

- Muhamed Sacirbegovic was illegally controlling state money? BiH General Consulate in Washington is closing down
- Interview with Ivo Zivkovic, the Vice President of NHI: By its signature on Agreement Zubak did not oblige all Croats

Vecernji List

- With Lord Ashdown British soldiers from Kosovo arrive in BiH: Britain wishes to become chief mentor in BiH
- Traumatized members of Dutch battalion that were in Srebrenica in 1995: Ten Dutch soldiers committed suicide
- Inter-entity border is gone: Bridge over river Ugar is stolen