

# BiH Media Round-up, 26/10/2001

## BiH State-related Issues

1. BiH Parliamentary Assembly adopts set of CIPS laws
2. Reuters: Fresh funds for Balkans but donors demand reforms
3. Mikerevic says BiH goals correspond to the goals of the Stability Pact
4. BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet says terrorists have no accounts in BiH banks
5. BiH State Border Service to move from Lukavica to Novo Sarajevo

## Federation

1. HRT and Federation TV finalizes agreement on the transfer of ownership over transmitters
2. HRT says cessation of its signal in BiH premature decision
3. Local Croat officials in Herzegovina send open letter to Petritsch in regard of announced shutting down the HRT signal
4. HKDU says shutting down HRT signal unpopular move
5. Dnevni List: Interview with Marija Topic Crnoja, the Editor of the Informative Program at the Federation Television

6. Dnevni List: Does the establishment of the Federation news agency FENA mean a loss of another Croat national media
7. Local Police Chef denies four foreign citizens identified in Sanski Most linked to terrorism
8. BiH Federation House of Representatives holds session
9. Federation House of Representatives interrupts discussion on proposed amendments to the defense law
10. Party for BiH request BiH Federation Defense Minister and his Deputy to urgently draft amendments to the entity defense law
11. Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Mijo Anic, Federation Minister of Defense
12. Slobodna Dalmacija: **Twenty Croat high-ranking officers before Sarajevo Court!**
13. Tuzla Canton Governor Selim Beslagic resigns
14. Reuters: 1,000 Srebrenica victims said exhumed this year
15. Croat police officers in Zepce receive threats
16. Donji Vakuf Mayor accuses the international officials in the region of hating Bosniaks
17. Slobodna Dalmacija: **Ten electrolyte cells were put in function in Mostar Aluminij**
18. Dnevni List: **Interview with Stefo Masatovic, the President of the**

## **Association of Croat Refugees and Displaced Persons in BiH**

### Republika Srpska

1. Bijeljina authorities prepared to allow construction of two mosques in the town
2. RS Government held session to discuss difficult situation in the health sector
3. RS Banking Agency did not take away payment operations license from Banja Luka Kristal Banka

### International Community

1. NATO says cuts al Qaeda links in Bosnia
2. Reuters: NATO says detains al Qaeda militant in Bosnia
3. US diplomats request BiH Federation authorities to unify intelligence services in two months
4. Croatian Government and OHR welcome the launch of the Federation Television
5. The Palics versus RS case: OHR concerned about RS financial problems

### Editorials

## **BiH State-related Issues**

### **BiH Parliamentary Assembly adopts set of CIPS laws**

All media report that both Houses of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly on Thursday adopted set of laws related to the CIPS, which is a crucial project in bringing the country closer to the European integration. Oslobođenje emphasizes that the laws on the BiH ID card, central evidence and exchange of data, residence of the BiH citizens, central registration number and on the protection of the personal data have been in the parliamentary procedure for three years. However, thanks to a reached compromise, the laws were finally passed by the BiH legislative bodies and it was avoided that they are imposed by the High Representative. Since the laws on the ID card and the central evidence were adopted by the parliamentary Houses in a bit different version, they are going to be harmonized by the authorized commissions appointed by the Houses.

### **Reuters: Fresh funds for Balkans but donors demand reforms**

International donors unveiled a package of 27 Balkan rebuilding projects worth 2.4 billion euros (\$2.2 billion) on Thursday but stressed Europe's most unstable region had to attract more private investment. The funding is already being channeled to the construction of transport links and overhaul of energy and water management plants by the European Union's Balkan Stability Pact, designed to deliver prosperity to the

impoverished region. "We've provided emergency assistance in the past and reconstruction assistance," European External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten told a news conference. "Now I think we're building and planning for the longer term."

About two thirds of the money is earmarked for transport projects, which have been difficult to get off the ground due to bureaucratic hurdles and continuing conflict on the territory of old Yugoslavia, causing frustration in many recipient countries. Romania, chairing a two-day Stability Pact conference on investment in the region, is the biggest beneficiary with more than 530 million euros. Its smaller southern neighbour Bulgaria, a fellow candidate for EU membership, is to receive 390 euros. Yugoslavia, a major focus for aid and investment since the overthrow of Slobodan Milosevic, will obtain 430 million euros. Croatia and Bosnia can expect about 300 million each, with Albania due to secure 250 million and Macedonia 60 million. The remainder is being spent on projects across the region. Delegates attending the opening session of the Bucharest conference were reminded, however, that donor aid alone could not transform a region which has yet to recover fully from half a century of communist rule and a decade of crippling wars.

However, officials said this was unlikely to mean an end to annual aid of more than 6.5 billion euros in loans from large multilateral lenders, topped up by soft loans and grants.

But institutions from the World Bank to the European Commission hope that increased commitment to market reforms throughout the region's young democracies will secure greater private sector investment if governments improve cooperation. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which has made the Balkans a top investment target under its brief to help finance transition from communism to capitalism, says tax reforms, anti-corruption strategies and freer trade are vital. The growth of small businesses has to be encouraged as part of sweeping reforms to make the investment climate more

attractive, donors said. A crackdown on the organised crime that is endemic in the region is an essential step, Patten added. But officials were at pains to stress that they remained committed to the region, seeking to allay fears that the war on terrorism being waged since September 11 would not distract the West from efforts to integrate the Balkans with western Europe. "Either we export stability to the Balkans and South-East Europe or it exports instability to the rest of Europe, and perhaps the world," Patten told delegates.

## **Mikerevic says BiH goals correspond to the goals of the Stability Pact**

BiH Minister for European Integration Dragan Mikerevic, who is leading a BiH delegation at the Regional Conference for Southeast Europe in Bucharest, said on Thursday at a plenary session that the BiH goals correspond to the goals of the Stability Pact, the BiH Ministry for European Integration said in a statement. "BiH is devoted to the Pact not only because it was formally founded in Sarajevo (in 1999), but primary because the Pact's and our long-term goals correspond," Mikerevic said. According to ONASA, in a part of the expose on the fight against terrorism, Mikerevic said that BiH will continue to strengthen the State Border Service to take control over the remaining 25% of the border. On the first day of the conference, the EC presented the Process of Stabilization and Joining, and the WB a document on the overall economic development of the region since the establishment of the Stability Pact. Mikerevic, as the co-chair of the Working Table II, on behalf of eight countries, also submitted a report on the progress in the realization of social and economic reform and the priorities of the countries in the coming period. The priorities of the activities of the working tables I and II of the Stability Pact will be discussed on the second day of the conference.

## **BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet says terrorists have no accounts in BiH banks**

Nezavisne Novine carries a statement of BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet in which he said that there was not a single account in BiH banks which could be brought into connection with financing of international terrorist activities. "Check of the accounts is continued and will be continued in cooperation with the BiH Central Bank and competent entities' financial institutions", says Domazet.

## **BiH State Border Service to move from Lukavica to Novo Sarajevo**

Nezavisne Novine carries a statement of the UN Mission's Spokesperson, Stefo Lehman, according to which the BiH State Border Service is to move from Lukavica in Srpsko Sarajevo to Novo Sarajevo in the BiH Federation by the end of the year. He could not state the reasons for this move but said necessary political support for realization of this plan was expected.

## **Federation**

## **HRT and Federation TV finalizes agreement on the transfer of ownership over transmitters**

Early on Thursday, Federation TV and HRT have finalized a contract transferring ownership of HRT transmission assets in Bosnia and Herzegovina to Federation TV, Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer told journalists in Sarajevo on Thursday. She added that, "the Government of Croatia is discussing concrete support for the development of Federation TV and PBS; more specifically: financial assistance for the purchase of Croat language programming, and technical support and equipment to further improve the coverage of the

Federation TV signal in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Stiglmayer emphasized that the OHR very much welcome the constructive engagement of the Croatian Government in the matter. She also said that, on Saturday, Federation TV was scheduled to start broadcasting. “The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, wishes the managers, program makers and other staff at the station, as well as the Federation RTV Council, good luck in this challenging task, and will attend the launching ceremony at the station on Saturday. He is aware of the great expectations which have been placed in Federation TV, and is confident that it will reflect the interests of the Bosniaks, Croats and all other citizens of the Federation and over time become a broadcaster of which all the Federation citizens will be truly proud of. The management is taking all the necessary steps to enfranchise the Croat community by improving the footprint of the new broadcaster and producing Croat-oriented programming,” Stiglmayer concluded.

#### [HRT says cessation of its signal in BiH premature decision](#)

The Croatian Radio Television (HRT) welcomes the beginning of the broadcasting of the BiH Federation Radio Television (FTV), but believes that the Office of the High Representative to BiH (OHR) should not have made the decision on the stoppage of broadcasting of the HRT in the area of BiH until the FTV starts qualitatively satisfying the needs of Croats in BiH with its program, HRT Spokesperson Kresimir Macan said on Thursday, HINA reported.

#### **Local Croat officials in Herzegovina send open letter to Petritsch in regard of announced shutting down the HRT signal**

All Federation media report that the mayors of the Municipalities of Stolac, Capljina, Citluk, Ravno, Neum, Prozor-Rama, and of the Mostar Municipalities South-West, South and West, as well as the Governor of Canton 7, Dragan



Vrankic, and the Prime Minister of the same Canton, Josip Merdzo, on Thursday sent an [open letter](#) to the High Representative in BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, in regard of the announced shutting down the signal of the Croatian Radio-Television (HRT) in the Federation BiH territory following the start of the Federal Television broadcast on Saturday.

## **HKDU says shutting down HRT signal unpopular move**

BiH Federation agencies report that the BiH Croat Christian Democratic Union (HKDU) has sent an [open letter](#) to the High Representative in BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, regarding the announced shutting down of the HTV signal on the whole BiH territory. In the judgment of the Party, this is an unpopular and inefficient decision.

## **Dnevni List: Interview with Marija Topic Crnoja, the Editor of the Informative Program at the Federation Television**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview for Dnevni List, Marija Topic-Crnoja, the Editor of the Informative Program at the Federation Television, says that the Federation Television (FTV) has four editorial offices run by Ivan Kordic, Belmin Karamehmedovic, Sukrija Omeragic and herself. She says her colleagues are professional journalists and intellectuals who are famous in BiH for their profession.

In answer to the question about the extent of the Croat(ian) language, culture, events from Croat areas and representation of Croat journalists on the FTV, Topic-Crnoja said: "The lack of the aforementioned information is evident due to the lack of Croat staff on this media outlet, and the representation of the Croatian language and events from the Croat-majority territories depends on the engagement of Croat journalists,

who, in my opinion, are either afraid or politically scared away from participating in the creation of the FTV.”

Asked to say whether she thinks Croats will find themselves in an even worse position with the shutdown of the HRT, she said: “Croat people in BiH can recognize their media through the journalists joining this project, and the HRT is the state television of the Republic of Croatia. However, the HRT and the FTV have agreements about the exchange of educational, documentary, children’s, music and film programs.

It is still uncertain as to how the new Television will be serving the Croat people in BiH considering the hitherto work of the BHT, where the Croat(ian) language, culture, events from Croat territories and the staff in charge of creating media products, have existed to an endemic extent.

I would take this opportunity to appeal to the Croat journalists not be in fear and to be the heralds and informers of their people who are afraid of media blackout,” said Marija Topic-Crnoja.

## **Dnevni List: Does the establishment of the Federation news agency FENA mean a loss of another Croat national media**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List says the Federation news agency Fena, which was created by merging BH Press and Habena news agencies, started working on 23 October.

Marko Dragic, the Director of the Habena news agency, says that Habena transformed itself through its organizational part to become a part of the Federation news agency Fena. According to Dragic, Habena, after the dissolution of Herzeg-Bosnia was not a part of any secure budget, and all they were getting from the Croat-majority cantons was a symbolic monthly amount

of 6,300 DEM, which was insufficient. Dragic says because the BH Press nominated Zeljko Ivankovic, a Croat, to the position of Deputy Editor-in-chief, there are three Croats and one Bosniak in the leading positions of the news agency, which means that Croats are currently better represented.

## **Local Police Chef denies four foreign citizens identified in Sanski Most linked to terrorism**

According to ONASA, Chef of the Sanski Most Police Station Nurija Jakupovic confirmed on Thursday that, on Tuesday, two Iraq, one Sudan and one Libyan citizens had been identified in the town's area. However, he added that the police was not aware of their links with terrorists. "The Sanski Most police does not possess any evidence or information linking these persons with terrorists. It is about foreign citizens having BiH passports for eight years," Jakupovic said.

## **BiH Federation House of Representatives holds session**

According to all federation media, the BiH Federation Parliamentary House of Representatives believes that it is necessary to include November 25 – the BiH Statehood Day among the state holidays such as New Year and May 1, said a statement adopted by this house on Thursday in Sarajevo. The statement was offered for the adoption by a delegate of the BiH Social Democratic Party (SDP), Esad Zgodic. The appointment of Ramo Maslesa at the position of the BiH Federation Interior Minister and appointment of Rifet Skrijelj at the position of the BiH

Federation Minister of Social Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons are expected to be confirmed at Friday's session of the House. The agenda also includes several other proposals and draft laws.

## **Federation House of Representatives interrupts discussion on proposed amendments to the defense law**

The BiH Federation House of Representatives on Thursday discussed the changes and addenda to the law on defense. The text of the changes and addenda was put on the agenda on proposal of councilor of the Bosnian Party (BOSS) Mirnes Ajanovic. After long discussions, Ajanovic withdrew the draft amendments saying that "the course of the discussion indicates that the law will not get the necessary majority." Ajanovic proposed decreasing of the military service to six months.

## **Party for BiH request BiH Federation defense Minister and his Deputy to urgently draft amendments to the entity defense law**

The Party for BiH and the Alliance for Changes request BiH Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic and his Deputy Ferid Buljubasic to urgently draft amendments to the entity defense law or resign from offices. Party for BiH Presidency Chairman and BiH Federation Vice-president Safet Halilovic told Oslobodjenje that the Alliance had adopted an action plan to abolish parallelisms at all levels and in all sectors including the military.

## **Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Mijo Anic, Federation Minister of Defense**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The joint Army in BiH primarily depends on financial possibilities. (...) I have had consultations with the Prime Minister and his Deputy and their proposal was to reduce the present number of soldiers to the number of 13 200 soldiers, that can be financed. (...) At the Federation level, we have agreed that the joint BiH Army should be formed. There are

only some details that we have to agree upon. Having in mind the present circumstances, I, as a realistic and pragmatic person, am advocating the organization of the Army which will have joint Ministry and Headquarters, but also three components. However, if the other two peoples agree that they do not want to have separate components within the Army, Croats will also accept such a proposal. The Croats will certainly not make obstacles with regard to such a decision. (...) I still support the plan to erect the monument for the killed defenders from Sarajevo, who were fighting as members of the HVO brigade Kralj Tvrtko. (...) With regard to the trial against the Zepce group, Mijo Anic stated: 'If there was a demand to transfer the competence of the Court with regard to the process against the organizers of 'the Croat self-rule', and according to my opinion it is completely benign compared with the Zepce case, then I do not see any reason as to why they want to process the Zepce group before the Zenica Court at all costs. I tend to believe that this trial has political connotations and I understand fear of the people from Zepce. (...) The arrests of the suspects, in a way that the Cantonal Court in Zenica is planning to make it, could have very damaging and negative consequences for the complete inter-ethnic relations in the Federation.

## **Slobodna Dalmacija: Twenty Croat high-ranking officers before Sarajevo Court!**

Written by Milo Jukic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

If Minister Anic earned (and he did) 80 000 Marks by selling the flat, that exactly Croats had given to him, how come that it is possible to process those who gave back official cars and mobile phones (although with a delay), and even after the promise was made that the advocates of the self-rule will not be processed. The HDZ BiH leaders, who first called on the HVO members to leave the barracks and then called them back and formed the so-called self-rule, disastrously played their

role. At the last Convention of the party they stated that someone should be hold responsible for this situation, which was characterized as a mistake. However, the same day the same people who led the self-rule were elected the party leaders. This disastrously played role should be at least some indication for the voters, but not an argument for new Croat representatives in the Authority bodies (no matter if they are (not) the real representatives of the Croats) for the continuation of groundless persecutions of the other Croats.

## **Tuzla Canton Governor Selim Beslagic resigns**

All media report that Tuzla Canton Governor Selim Beslagis on Thursday offered his resignation to the governing Alliance for Changes due to a lack of the BiH federation Government's support to the Tuzla Canton economy, particularly to its chemical industry. Commenting on the move, BiH Federation President and Chairman of the SDP Main Board Karlo Filipovic said that Beslagic had just intended to turn BiH federation Government's attention to all the seriousness of the problem.

## **Reuters: 1,000 Srebrenica victims said exhumed this year**

Bosnian experts have this year unearthed the remains of over 1,000 Bosniaks killed in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, bringing the total to nearly 5,000, and they expect to find more, an official said on Thursday. Murat Hurtic, head of the northern Tuzla department of BiH Federation Commission for Missing Persons, said his team had found the remains of 200 Srebrenica Muslims over the past two weeks at a site near the eastern town of Zvornik. "They are all Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) from Srebrenica," Hurtic told Reuters by phone. Up to 8,000 Bosniak men and boys are believed to have been killed by Bosnian Serb forces after they overran Srebrenica, a U.N. designated "safe area", in July 1995 – widely seen as Europe's worst atrocity since World War Two. So far, the bodies of

nearly 5,000 victims have been found in individual and mass graves or scattered in woods in eastern Bosnia. Only a few have been identified. Hrtic said exhumations at the site near Zvornik, which ended this week, had been completed relatively quickly thanks to assistance by the International Commission for Missing Persons and forensic experts from the U.N. war crimes tribunal. The U.N. investigators had asked that they be closed to the public as evidence unearthed might be used in court cases linked to the Srebrenica massacre. Wartime Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander Ratko Mladic – both still at large – were indicted in 1995 for their role in the mass killings. Hrtic said his team on Wednesday began work at another mass grave in the region, the fifth found there this year, but declined to reveal the location or estimate the number of bodies. “This will be our last job this year,” he said. Hrtic said identification of the bodies would most probably start next year after they had all been transferred to the town of Tuzla for identification at a specialized DNA laboratory. Six years after the 1992-1995 war between Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs ended, some 20,000 people remain unaccounted for – most of them Bosniaks.

## **Croat police officers in Zepce receive threats**

Most of the leading Croat employees in the Zepce Police Administration and Interior Ministry (MUP) of the Zenica-Doboj Canton received in the night between October 24 and 25 the serious telephone threats to stop arresting Croats belonging to the Zepce Group at the court's order, ONASA quoted a statement from the Interior Ministry of the Zenica-Doboj Canton as saying on Thursday. According to the statement, the streets of Zepce were full last night of proclamations “of the coordination board for protection of Croats of the Zepce's region, by which Croats are invited to come on Friday at 1100 hrs in front of the Culture Home at a protest meeting dedicated to the protection and survival of Croats in this area.” At 0315 on Thursday morning, unknown perpetrator or

perpetrators fired several bullets on a house of the deputy chief of the Zepce Police Administration in Brankovici, but there were no injured persons. The MUP of the Zenica-Doboj Canton has undertaken all necessary measures to identify and arrest persons which have threatened and attacked on the house of deputy chief of the Zepce Police Administration. The police failed to apprehend Niko Jozinovic, another Zepce Group member, because he was not on the given address. The so-called "Zepce's Group" comprises 15 Bosnian Croats, including the war-time president of the Presidency of the so-called Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna, Perica Jukic, and war-time commander of the Zepce's Brigade of the Croat Militia (HVO), Ivo Lozancic, who have been accused of war crimes committed against Serbs and Bosniaks in the area during the war.

## **Donji Vakuf Mayor accuses the international officials in the region of hating Bosniaks**

According to Oslobodjenje, Head of the Donji Vakuf Municipality Kemal Terzic accused officials at the OHR and OSCE regional offices in central Bosnia of expressing an open hatred towards Bosniaks and himself, after the two international organizations had sent a letter to the municipal councilors. In the letter, the OHR and OSCE recommended deputies to the Donji Vakuf Municipal Council to consider whether the municipal leadership, which they believed to be in hands of Mayor Terzic, was working in the best interest of all Donji Vakuf citizens. Such the OHR and OSCE recommendation was caused by inappropriate photos with an insulting text put on a prominent place at the entrance to the Third Primary School in the Donji Vakuf village of Oborci. The contents of the text refers to the "Chetnik massacre over the Bosniak civilians in the village in September 1995." According to the international organizations, it was not appropriate to present such a text to the children, who might not be able to put the mentioned 1995 event in the context of the entire conflict in BiH. "A fact Terzic did nothing to remove such text from the Oborci



school doors is bringing into question capability of the Donji Vakuf leadership to promote a climate, which would improve process of the return to the municipality," read the letter signed by Christine Zandvliet from the OHR Central Bosnia and Leos Javurek, a Bugojno-based OSCE official.

## **Slobodna Dalmacija: Ten electrolyte cells were put in function in Mostar Aluminij**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Managers of the German factories Daimler Chrysler and VAW Aluminium AG, that are investing in Aluminij, were present at the ceremony, as well as, representatives of the Swiss and German Embassies in BiH together with Bernard Bajolet, the French Ambassador in BiH.

Volker Schmidt, a Manager of the German Company Daimler Chrysler, stated that Zlatko Lagumdžija, the President of the BiH Council of Ministers, stated during the meeting in Berlin that the stability of the Mostar Aluminij and BiH will not be put in question. He added: 'I told Lagumdžija that all companies, which are engaged in the Aluminij project, will withdraw if there was no stability in this country and this company.' He also stated that Lagumdžija convinced him that it will not happen.

During the ceremony Mr. Schmidt handed over Ivica Ovcar, the Head of the Croat People's Theater, a check that amounts to 100 000 Marks for the construction of the theater.

## **Dnevni List: Interview with Stefo Masatovic, the President of the Association of Croat Refugees and Displaced Persons in BiH**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview for Dnevni List, Stefo Masatovic, the

President of the Association of Croat Refugees and Displaced Persons in BiH, said that very few Croats have managed to return to their homes and that every other Croat is a displaced person. Because they are not happy with the current situation, the Association will re-organize themselves and try and exert pressure on all the authority institutions in BiH and IC representatives to make them change their attitude to Croats. He says Croats should be given more assistance in their returns, and those who decided to stay in their current places of residence should be enabled to stay.

In answer to the question as to what stands in the way of Croat returns, Masatovic said "the newly elected authorities in BiH above all. The Alliance for Changes, in their pre-election campaign, promised the implementation of Annex 7 and mass-scale returns, by which they admitted that Croats were in an inequitable position. They promised it would change, but nothing has been done in this respect. The rate of Croat returns is still disastrous."

He said another important element return-wise is "anti-Croat campaign," led by individual international representatives and some authority institutions in BiH. It can be considered a sort of statement, says Masatovic, because if Croat officials can be treated that way, what could an ordinary returnee expect. Another problem he points out is material assistance, so that they will think about which party to vote for at the next elections.

In his words, the IC and Bosniak representatives talk about coexistence, but there is least coexistence in the Bosniak-majority territories.

**Republika Srpska**

## **Bijeljina authorities prepared to allow construction of two mosques in the town**

The Bijeljina municipal authorities are ready to issue construction licenses for the reconstruction of the Salihbegovica Mosque in the town and for the construction of another mosque in the Novo Naselje suburb, the Bijeljina's mayor said in a statement on Thursday. "We do not accept this offer, because we demand the permission to reconstruct all five mosques. That was ordered by the BiH Human Rights Chamber, which is binding and above all local and entity laws," President of the Islamic Community Majlis in Bijeljina Sead Berberovic told ONASA. The municipal authorities in Bijeljina decided not to grant the zoning approval and construction license for the reconstruction of the five Bijeljina mosques devastated during the 1992-95 Bosnia war. The RS Ministry for Urban Planning abolished the decision and returned to the case to the municipal administration for another procedure.

## **RS Government held session to discuss difficult situation in the health sector**

The Republika Srpska Government on Thursday adopted a set of measures, proposed by the RS Health Ministry, which were to assist in overcoming a difficult financial situation in the sector and remove reasons for continuation of the entity health workers protest, according to the RS Health Minister Milorad Balaban. The Health Ministry and Health Insurance Fund should pay out all outstanding debts to health institutions. The Government plans to present the adopted measures to the Trade Union, and Minister Balaban expects that these measures could stop the strike.

## **RS Banking Agency did not take away payment**

## **operations license from Banja Luka Kristal Banka**

Glas Srpski, on the cover page, carries a statement of Slavica Simikic, the Director of the Kristal Bank from Banja Luka, in which she denied Wednesday's media reports that the RS Banking Agency had taken the bank license for conduction payment operations. Simikic said that activities on privatization of the bank were underway and that six potential buyers had submitted their applications after the announcement of the privatization tender.

## **International Community**

### **NATO says cuts al Qaeda links in Bosnia**

NATO-led peacekeepers said on Thursday they had disrupted links in Bosnia to the al Qaeda network of Saudi-born Islamic militant Osama bin Laden. "We do believe that thanks to excellent cooperation between Bosnian officials, SFOR and NATO, the links in Bosnia-Herzegovina of the al Qaeda terrorist network have been disrupted," spokesman Daryl Morrell of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) said. "We are not going to comment on any intelligence, specific threats or operational details associated with the actions that have been taken," Morrell told a news conference. On Wednesday, Morrell said some actions by SFOR and police, which included arrests of Bosnians and people from Middle Eastern countries suspected of links to or support for terrorism, "have in fact disrupted a terrorist organization". He said at that time SFOR was investigating whether the organization was linked to bin Laden.

### **Reuters: NATO says detains al Qaeda militant in Bosnia**

At least one person detained in a crackdown in Bosnia by

peacekeepers has links to Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden and threats of attacks remain, NATO Secretary-General George Robertson said on Friday. He said the Balkan country's NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) had made a string of arrests and deportations of people suspected of terrorist activity in recent weeks. "At least one of the detained people is known to have direct links to al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden," he told a news conference. Al Qaeda is a network linked to bin Laden, Washington's prime suspect in the September 11 attacks on the United States. NATO had disrupted "a number of terrorist networks, not all of them al Qaeda," Robertson said, adding: "The threat has not gone."

## **US diplomats request BiH Federation authorities to unify intelligence services in two months**

The US diplomats in BiH have requested BiH Federation authorities to complete work on the unification of the intelligence services in the entity in two months at the latest. A senior BiH Council of Ministers official told Oslobodjenje that the American had in this way show more agility in this matter than the OHR, which believed that at least six months were needed for the integration of the AID (Bosniak-controlled) and SNS (Croat controlled) into a single intelligence service.

## **Croatian Government and OHR welcome the launch of the Federation Television**

[The Government of Croatia and the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday](#) welcome the launch of the new Federation Television on Saturday, 27 October 2001, FENA news agency reported .

## **The Palics versus RS case: OHR concerned about RS**

## **financial problems**

OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan told Oslobodjenje that the representatives of the OHR and the UNMIBH had met this week to discuss certain unresolved cases including the case "Avdo and Esma Palic versus Republika Srpska." The newspaper reiterates that all deadlines expired for the implementation of the BiH Chamber for Human Rights' decision, according to which the RS authorities were obliged to say the truth about the apprehension of the wartime Zepa Defense Commander Avdo Palic, and, if he was killed, to hand his remains and pay compensation to the family. "OHR has many times discussed the issue with the representatives of the RS Government and it will continue with pressures," Sullivan said. According to Sullivan, OHR will also continue exploring possibilities how the compensation could be paid, regardless of well-know RS financial difficulties.

## **Editorials**

### **Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz**

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Oslobodjenje Editor-in-Chief Senka Kurtovic quoted Head of the BiH Islamic Community Mustafa Ceric as saying in an interview with the Zagreb Globus that "our Sultan is in Brussels and not in Istanbul." Kurtovic concludes that this Sultran from Brussels had to pay much more attention to a poor Bosnia, which was, following September 11, again experiencing how hard was to prove its innocence and commitment to the world-wide fight against terrorism. Hamza Baksic wrote in another column on the Oslobodjenje second page about the phenomena of global terrorism in a factual and partly historical (with background) way. Indira Catic commented in the Avaz Commentary of the Day on the announcements coming from the international organizations, which were related to putting things in order in the housing

area. Such actions would, according to Catic, affect hundreds of corrupted local officials. However, Catic concludes, the time has come for clearing things in a story about politicians, apartments and corruption. The investigations to be conducted by the local authorities with an assistance of the international community will be a lesson for all, that in a democratic society personal interests should not be put in the first place.