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BiH State-related Issues

CoE Committee for Legal Affairs and Human Rights recommends BiH for membership to the Council of Europe

All Sarajevo media reported that the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Committee for Legal Affairs and Human Rights recommended BiH for the membership in the Council of Europe. At Monday's session, the Committee's rapporteur for BiH, Anelli Jaatteenmaki, presented her report on the state of human rights and education in BiH expressing her satisfaction with positive developments in these spheres.

BiH and Croatian Border Commissions Met in Kostajnica – Border Crossing To Be Set Up in November

The Joint Commission for Borders between Croatia and BiH considered on Monday the site of the future border-crossing between Hrvatska and Bosanska Kostajnica, however, the final agreement was not reached, both Banja Luka dailies report. The border issue between Croatia and BiH has been contentious for full six years, with Croatia arguing that 42 hectares of land on the right bank of the Una river have not yet been restored to it. Although Monday's meeting was to pinpoint the site of the future border-crossing, only Croatian side came up with a finalised proposal. The final agreement on this issue should be signed on November 8 in Slavonski Brod.

Federation

Algerians arrested in Bosnia had links with Al-Qaeda: police

At Monday's press conference, the Federation Deputy Interior Minister, Tomislav Limov, said that the five Algerians arrested and charged with making terrorist threats on the United States embassy in Sarajevo had links with Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaeda network. The five, who are still in detention, have been charged with international terrorism. Limov said one was suspected of having used a false identity, while three others had Bosnian citizenship.

Limov also said that 17 foreigners possibly linked with terrorism were put under police surveillance. "We do not have enough evidence yet to arrest these people, but we can control their movements and activities, and prevent any possible action by them," he said. Information that these people "committed some terrorist act or are planning to carry it out" was received by the "US and some other foreign intelligence services," Limov said. He also noted that police could not exclude the possibility that there are "sleepers" – terrorists who lead low-profile lives until they are called upon to strike – hiding in BiH.

Croat media slam the new Federation TV programming

Whereas the launch of the Federation Television kept a lower profile in media coverage across BiH, Croatian media dedicated a good deal of space to the new broadcast and diligently scrutinized the quality of its program. Analyzing the first 48 hours of Fed TV programming, Zagreb's Vecernji List noted that such television could not satisfy anyone by offering poor reruns instead of first class programs, which are offered by the HRT (Croatian Television). The daily quotes Tihomir Begic, Ante Jelavic's Media Advisor as saying that the Fed TV is a

case of “intellectual terrorism”, while Dnevni List quotes Marko Tokic (one of dismissed HDZ officials) as complaining about “language violence” at the new television. Apart from expected objections of nationalist factors, most other Croatian media share the main criticism of the Federation TV – the absence of genuine Croatian language in its programming.

Two HVO Generals found refuge from Zenica Court in Croatia

14 HVO officers in Zepce will not turn themselves in, until the case is transferred from the Cantonal Court in Zenica. The Supreme Court of the BiH Federation refused to approve the request, however, the High Representative can still do it. He passed similar decisions before, for instance in the case of the Stolac group, charged with the attack on the members of the UN Police, because it was ruled that the Mostar Court would not be biased.

Kresimir Zubak, also, demanded from Wolfgang Petritsch to transfer the case. Waiting for the political solution, the suspects hide in Croatia because they all have a Croatian citizenship. The Zenica Court did not want to transfer the case to Croatia and for this reason Miroslav Anic, who had been detained for 6 months in Split, who has been charged with the war crime by the Zenica Court, was released.

Zepce priests send a letter to Wolfgang Petritsch

Zepce priests sent an open letter to Wolfgang Petritsch regarding the process against 15 Croats. “We want to say that the new circumstances could light an unwanted flame and get out of control”, says the letter of the Zepce priests in which they also thank Petritsch and the IC for everything that’s been done for preservation of peace and justice reminding him of difficult circumstances under which Croats stayed in their homes, reads Vecernji List.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Vinko Puljic, the Sarajevo Archbishop: I find Croats, indifferent towards their fellow-countrymen in BiH, miserable

(...) 'It should be stressed that BiH has to be a state in which just laws for all people will rule. Muslims should not be provoked. They should not be equated with terrorists. Their culture, civilization and religion should be respected in BiH, in which all three peoples will be constituent...(...) I believe that Americans should not leave BiH. Probably, they will reduce the number of their soldiers, because in any case the time has come that the IC reduces the number of its representatives and to be less the protector and more a supporter of the political, economic and legal development. If there was wisdom and a decreasing number of spheres of interests, then BiH will be a country in which Americans and Europeans will remain as a part of the community, in a struggle for the just peace on the BiH territory.

Q: How do You judge the announced removals of the IC representatives, who are the Heads of some programs?

A: I expect the responsibility from all people. The responsibility in terms that they have to increasingly support the equality and creation of legal regulations in order to make possible the rule of law in BiH. I expect that they will not have double standards, that they are not burdened with liabilities of any kind, that they are often burdened with, in terms of politics, and then they have double standards. There is a certain fear among the Croats. We are frustrated because we feel guilty for many things and now we expect this to be finally corrected. The one who is guilty, if there is evidence for it, should be prosecuted, however, the people should not be charged with the crime. It frequently happens that media, politics and even the moves of the most responsible people give complexes of guilt to the whole people.

Q: How do You judge behavior of the current Croatian Authority

towards BiH?

A: Croatia signed the Dayton Peace Agreement and it can not evade its responsibility. It is about the other state, however, the people are the same. So far, the Croatian Government has not helped the return of the Croats to BiH. Within the certain circles in Croatia, the opinion is being created that Croatia is not interested in the events in BiH. None Croat can say: 'We do not care about the Croats in BiH'. The one, who says it, is a very miserable Croat.

A VIP Ward opens in Sarajevo Clinical Centre, will treat only foreigners

Vecernji List reports that the Clinical Centre (CC) in Sarajevo has opened a VIP Ward that will offer its services only to foreign citizens working for international organizations in BiH. CC is of opinion that the international officials will go to them, motivated by lower prices, and not to some other European medical centres. The staff at the CC say that the services at the VIP Ward are second to none in the world.

Vecernji List say that this information should make internationals happy but the problem is that many of them found out about the ward from the Vecernji List. OHR spokesman, Kevin Sullivan, told the papers that he had heard about the VIP Ward from the Sarajevo-based written media. "We did not take part in the realization of the idea. Of course we will not influence our employees as to where they want to be treated", was the only Sullivan's commentary. Representatives of international organizations have signed a contract with the Belgium insurance company "J. Van Breda C International", and the Clinical Centre in Sarajevo signed a contract with the same company in September this year. It is known that the international officials have been medically treated at the SFOR base in Rajlovac so its is questionable what is going to

motivate them to be treated at the VIP Ward like, for instance, when OHR spokeswoman Alexandra Stiglmayer fell off the horse and was transferred to the SFOR base at Rajlovac and after that to Germany where she was operated on (...), reads Vecernji List.

Republika Srpska

Bijeljina authorities to issue permits for reconstruction of destroyed mosques

ONASA news agency reports that that Department of Urban Affairs in Bijeljina will urgently issue urban and construction permits for the rebuilding of all five mosques in this town which have been destroyed in March 1993. The agency notes that the head of the Bijeljina municipality, Dragomir Ljubojevic, sent a letter to the regional OHR office in this town promising that responsible authorities will meet all the requests of the Islamic Community and issue all necessary permits for the reconstruction of the destroyed mosques. ONASA comments that such a turn in the behavior of town's authorities came shortly after the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, strongly criticized the initial refusal of entity and municipal institutions to grant the needed permits and threatened Bijeljina authorities with sanctions.

RS National Assembly Withdraws Draft Law on Fight Against Corruption

Both Banja Luka dailies report at today's session of the RS National Assembly, the RS Government stripped the Proposal of the Law on Fight Against Corruption from the agenda. The Proposal Law was withdrawn after the RS NA had passed the amendment of the Socialist Party of the RS (SPRS), which questions establishment of the Anti-corruption Commission.

“Glas srpski” quotes RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, as saying that the amendment, proposed by the SPRS, is not acceptable since it changes the concept of the entire Law. “We shall see after this whether or not the proposing of the Law makes any sense at all”, said Ivanic. RS NA passed the Law on internal seamanship and the Law on the RS Railways. The papers report that an extraordinary session, which is to discuss conclusions on work of the Serb deputies in BiH common institutions and document titled “Defense policy”, will take place after the 10th regular session is finished. “Glas srpski” quotes RS NA Speaker, Dragan Kalinic as saying that the reason why the discussion on these issues has been postponed is that caucuses in the RS NA have different views on proposal of the conclusions.

SDP Deputy in the RS National Assembly Resigned – RS Power-brokers Control Judiciary

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the SDP deputy in the RS National Assembly, Dzevad Haznadar resigned yesterday. As the main reason for his decision Haznadar mentions the enormous pressure that the RS leadership applies on the RS judiciary. Haznadar also says that his further participation in the work of the RS NA is pointless as long as the system within which the RS NA works is corrupt to the extent that laws, passed by the RS NA, are not being implemented.

SDS Official Proposes Government Reshuffle – SDS Wants RS Finance Minister to Resign

Today’s edition of “Nezavisne novine” quotes member of the SDS Executive Board, Cvjetin Nikic, as saying that the RS Finance Minister, Milenko Vracar should resign since the real situation in the RS budget does not match with the RS Government’s report on execution of the budget. Nikic also told a news conference that the RS Prime Minister, Mladen

Ivanic should finally carry out the government reshuffle and especially the reshuffle of the Finance Ministry, which would enable more efficient collection of revenues. "SDS expects that the RS Prime Minister, Ivanic will soon carry out the government reshuffle", said Nikic.

International Community

French Ambassador in BiH : Europe will never leave BiH

In a shorter interview with Dnevni Avaz, the French Ambassador to BiH, Bernard Bajolet, said that this week's visit of the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdzija, to Paris is of significant importance, as it will be virtually the first official visit of one BiH senior leader to France. Bajolet said that one of the topics of talks between Lagumdzija and his French counterparts will be the new attitude of the Alliance and its efforts to become an equal partner to the International Community. Such efforts, stressed the French ambassador, are very welcomed by France. Bajolet also said that French and BiH officials will discuss the reorganization of international organizations in BiH. "We believe that the International Community should involve more BiH officials in work of the OHR and even SFOR. We will suggest that the IPTF is transformed into a European Police," said Bajolet in an interview with Dnevni Avaz.

World Bank grants 90-million-dollar credit to Republika Srpska

AFP reports that the RS President Mirko Sarovic has signed Monday an agreement with the World Bank for a credit worth 90 million dollars. Under the agreement, which was signed by the World Bank director for BiH, Joseph Ingram, the loan was

granted primarily for development of an electricity transmission system. Part of the credit will also provide support for an ongoing privatization process and for development of the poorest local communities throughout the RS.

Canadian governor general in BiH seeks to boost ties

All Sarajevo media report that the Canadian Governor General Adrienne Clarkson arrived on Monday in Sarajevo for a three day visit to BiH. Clarkson is to meet with members of the BiH Presidency and discuss the strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries.

High Representative: Politicians here still do not realize the importance of human rights

Speaking on Monday's graduation ceremony for students of the University of Sarajevo who completed graduate studies in the field of Democracy and Human Rights in Southeast Europe, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that too often, human rights are viewed as a desirable luxury, instead as one of the main pillars of a democratic society. Petritsch stressed that only comprehensive and effective protection of human rights could strengthen the state institutions. For the full speech, see the attachment below. (Most Sarajevo media, Nezavisne Novine and Dnevni List reported on the graduation ceremony and [HR's speech](#).)

Editorials

Dnevni List: Who is protecting Karadzic and Mladic?

Written by Milan Sutalo

Dnevni List editorial, written by the paper's Editor-in-Chief, reads that those who hold realistic and effective power, both political and military, i.e. the OHR and SFOR, are objectively responsible for the fact that the two most wanted war criminals are still at large. Their explanation that the physical presence of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic encourages hard-liners in BiH, whom they are trying to remove from the political scene, is simply hypocritical. However, the effective powers of SFOR and OHR in BiH do not free of responsibility primarily the police forces of the RS, or the Federation forces.

Therefore, unless Radovan and Ratko find themselves in The Hague soon, the serious suspicion, which is already taking on a public nature, that the international community and its most influential members are protecting criminals, will assume even larger proportions. Democratic countries in the West should not let such a suspicion get stronger, says Sutalo.

Dnevni List: Why does Sarajevo mind economic successes of Croat side: Brajkovic and who else?

Written by Ivica Simunovic

As early as during the Dayton time, there were rumors, and not only among Croats, about the weakening of the position of the Croat people in relation with the other two peoples. The Croats are being deprived by force of their right to watch electronic media in their own language and they are being forced to watch the ones that is only formally

'multi-ethnic ones', while in the reality they are exclusively the Bosniak electronic media. However, are some other people

responsible for all these things? No they are not, because there have been too many wrong judgments, moves and nonsense that some other people could be blamed for such a situation. However, probably, one of the biggest mistakes was a failed opportunity to strengthen the economic position of the Croats in the destroyed BiH. Failed attempt to establish the Croat self-rule the best illustrates the price of an insufficient, economic independence. During the good times, when the assistance was coming from the Republic of Croatia, it seemed that the Croats in BiH are economically superior. Aluminij is primarily the success of Mijo Brajkovic and his team. Why is Aluminij, as a successful exemption, being frantically attacked from Sarajevo? Why does the President of the Federation Government does not know the difference between the property and capital, and why does the Federation wants to take it away at all costs, when Aluminij is in question? The reason is simple, because with such Aluminij the Croats are a factor that is being respected. Representatives of the strongest world companies pay their respects and, also, the fact that such Aluminij can allocate some money for cultural needs of the Croats, such as the University, theater, should not be neglected. The President of the Federation Government knows very well what is the property and what is the capital. However, the only thing that matters to him is that the Croats lose Aluminij, as their economic support, so that they can offer it on the platter and not for free to let's say Kuwaiti KIA, that proved its benevolence towards Bosniaks by wasting about 80 million Dollars in BiH Steel. Finally, someone from the line of the Croats in BiH has to offer a real political but also economic strategy of the development.

Slobodna Dalmacija: The Hague is better than Zenica Court

Written by Petar Milos

It is interesting that that all Croats in BiH are against this

way of arresting of the Zepce Group. Zubak, Jelavic, the NHI and HDZ are against it, as well as, Herzegovinian and Bosnian Croats. (...) The IC, 'implemented' in a sad character of Wolfgang Petritsch, does not react, at all, to the Croat objections. The situation is such that Croats would rather go to the hateful The Hague than to the Zenica Court. It is really tragic and ridiculous that mujahedeens, that that the whole world is tracking down, are walking around the Zenica Court, that is detaining the Croats. In any case, I would not recommend the Kupreskic brothers to mill around Zenica.