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BiH State-related Issues

High Representative to meet representatives of state, entity leadership

Dnevni Avaz reports that the High Representative, Wolfgang

Petritsch, will meet later today (Monday) with the leading members of the BiH Presidency, Council of Ministers, and entity governments. The daily writes that the main focus of discussions will be the economic situation in BiH as well as the harmonization of entity constitutions with the Constitutional Court decision on the constituent status of all peoples in BiH.

Bosniak member of Presidency seeks common army command

The Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, has announced that he will try to launch, through the Presidency and the BiH Council of Ministers, an initiative for adopting a law regulating the military command control at the level of BiH as a whole. "This initiative did not win support in the Standing Committee for Military Matters (SCMM) for the very simple reason that decisions in this body have to be adopted by consensus," Belkic told Dnevni avaz, adding that the other way to probe this initiative would be to put it through parliamentary procedure. Elaborating further on the reasons behind this initiative, Belkic said that the constitutional position of the Presidency as a civilian commander of the armed forces in BiH was not followed up by developing an operational plan to ensure the practical implementation of this command function. "The proposed law would not at this moment challenge the current position of the entities' armies but would ensure that there is a vertical link throughout the BiH armed forces, beginning from the Presidency down to the lowest command level," Belkic said.

Federation

The High Representative confirms his Decision on

Zepce; Bosniak parties protest

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, confirmed on Friday his final Decision integrating the Municipality of Zepce, with new borders in place, in the Zenica-Doboj Canton. Friday's Decision also requested by the Zepce Interim Board, confirms and leaves unchanged his announcement in Zepce on 17 September that the conditions set in his initial Decision on Zepce of 6 October last year have been met. With this Decision, the 17 September announcement must now be entered into the Official Gazette of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, easing electoral boundary changes and other administrative functions. (The press release was carried quite prominently by all news agencies in the Federation as well as print media. Electronic media paid significantly less attention to the Decision: BiH Radio 1 and the Federation TV – the last item in the domestic section)

Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodjenje report that the **SDA** (Party of Democratic Action) will continue to insist on the annulment of the Zepce Decision and object to the change of borders in this municipality. "Our party feels that the decision to change the Zepce municipality borders was a concession made by the High Representative to demands of the Croat nationalist block, which would artificially create a municipality with a majority Croat population out of a municipality previously with predominant Bosniak population," said the SDA

Party for BiH from Zepce also objected to the Decision, adding that such a move simply ignores basic human right of citizens, in particular of Bosniak and Serb nationality, and cements discrimination in this municipality. "The decision of the High Representative is a reward for concentration camps, expulsion and ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks and Serbs," says Zepce Party for BiH in a statement for the press.

Federation leaders form Commission for Integration of Intelligence Services in the entity

Oslobodjenje reported, quoting the press statement of the Federation President's office, that the Federation President, Karlo Filipovic, and his deputy, Safet Halilovic, have made a decision to establish a Commission on integration of two existing intelligence services in the entity and appointed members of this commission which will co-ordinate all important activities.

Provisional Administration to start paying small depositors in Hercegovacka Banka on December 7

Spokesman for the Provisional Administration in Hercegovacka Banka, Johan Verheyden, said the PA will begin paying deposits up to 5,000 KM to the bank's small depositors on December 7. The first payments will be made in branches of Hercegovacka Banka in Kupres, Prozor-Rama, and Zepce, and other branches will follow suit. "The Provisional Administrator has developed a plan which will secure the payment of all 40,000 small depositors within a few weeks," said Verheyden, adding that all interested customers can call a hot-line number and find additional details about the payment.

Dnevni Avaz: Jasmin Durakovic, the director of the Federation Television

The December 17th will be the last working day for the majority of the staff in the John Shearer's office, the PBS transfer agent.

Namely, as Dnevni avaz learned, this is the day when their contracts expire, and there'll be no new ones.

OWN PRODUCTION

The Federation Television by and large has an independent editorial policy, and according to the signed documents, OHR

staff will withdraw from the those parts of the PBS which have been successfully transformed. As far as I've been informed, Shearer, along with a few associates, will continue working on the PBS structuring – says the FBiH TV Director Jasmin Durakovic for Dnevni avaz.

FTV is, according to a number one person in this house, preparing new shows in support of the trend noted in the last two months. Namely, the research has showed that among the 50 most watched shows, the entire 48 have been broadcast on this TV. Remark that these are mainly foreign series and sports events, Durakovic refutes with data on popularity of the shows made in their own production – “Sta je tu je” quiz show, Elvis J. Kurtovich Show and Fresh show.

REGULAR PAYMENTS

Durakovic claims that, with regular payment of the subscription fee, the viewers will get a better program. A proof for that is the latest fact: a few days ago the FTV had to pay a million marks in lieu of the rights to broadcast the World Football Championship, taking place next year, to PBS, on whose network will the viewers be able to watch this sporting event.

The RTRS said that they didn't have the money and we had to pay the entire sum, otherwise we would have lost the right to broadcast – Durakovic says.

Several Hundred Mostar residents stage protests against the launching of the Federation Television

ONASA news agency reported that several hundred residents of Mostar on Friday staged a protest rally against the ban on the broadcast of the Croatian TV HRT in BiH, against depriving the war veterans of their rights, and against, as they said, “turning the Croats into the Bosniak Catholics”. The rally which took place at the Rondo square in Mostar was organized by the Association of Croat War Veterans (HVIDRA) and the

families of fallen and missing soldiers, as well as the Croat Christian Democratic political party. The leader of the Croat Christian Democrats, Petar Milic, told the rally that the aim of the ban on Croatian TV broadcast in BiH and the establishment of the Federation TV dominated by the Bosniaks was "a destruction of the Croat national identity".

Deadline for transformation of JP PTT and HPT Mostar approaches: Division of companies to telecommunications and postal services

According to the Federation Government's decision, the final day for the transformation of the PTT BiH (BiH Postal Service) and the HPT Mostar (Mostar counterpart) is December 31. With regards to that, the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the Federation Minister of Traffic and Communications, Besim Mehmedic, talked to the Chairs and members of the Steering Boards appointed by the Federation Ministry of Traffic and Communication, and CEOs and Deputy CEOs of the PTT and HPT Mostar. One of the conclusions of the meeting is that the Steering Boards of the two companies are obliged to enact precise decisions on division to telecommunication and postal services, and that the plan of re-organization has to be forwarded to the (competent) Federation Ministry for checking and verification , reads Dnevni List.

Republika Srpska

OSCE head warns RS leadership about their ties with indicted war criminals

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz, the head of the OSCE mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft, said that, during his recent visit to Banja Luka, he warned the SDS RS leadership, Dragan Kalinic, Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Cavic about their ties with the

incited war criminals. "I think the SDS is in a lot of trouble. It still keeps contacts with the indicted war criminals, especially with the two most famous ones," said Beecroft alluding to Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. He also said that the OSCE is very concerned about the so-called Board of about 150 senior SDS members whose identity is unknown.

Belgian Ambassador to BiH Robert Devriese – SDS Is Facing Sanctions

Today's edition of Nezavisne Novine carries an interview with the Belgian Ambassador to BiH, Robert Devriese, in which he says that the banning of the SDS in the RS is not a solution since nationalists could gather around some other, new party. According to Devriese, it is quite possible that some SDS officials might suffer consequences for obstructionism at the state and the entity level. "It is possible that some of them will be removed from office", said Devriese.

Dnevni Avaz: Karadzic being treated for cancer in Moscow?

Dnevni Avaz reports, quoting international diplomatic sources, that the indicted war criminal, Radovan Karadzic, is in Moscow undergoing a treatment for late-stage cancer and that doctors are apparently losing any hope in improvement of his health. The same source said that the reasons behind the most recent visit of the RS leadership to Russia were the desire of the senior SDS officials to see their former president. The daily did not verify this information with any other sources.

B-92 Radio reports: Ratko Mladic Living in Serbia

Belgrade-based independent radio station B-92 quotes an unnamed source as saying that former RS military chief, Ratko Mladic is living in Serbia under the protection of the Yugoslav Army. "He is in Serbia and staying in military facilities", claimed the same source. The ICTY Chief

Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte told the UN Security Council last week that they had good reason to believe that Mladic, who faces genocide charges at the ICTY was living in Belgrade, "shielded" by the Yugoslav Army. The Yugoslav authorities, including the President, Vojislav Kostunica, have categorically denied the allegations, insisting they know nothing of his whereabouts.

RS President denies that Karadzic is hiding in the RS

Serbian independent news agency FoNet has reported over the weekend that the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, rejected claims by some international institutions, in particular the ICTY Prosecution, that the entity authorities have not been cooperating with The Hague Tribunal. "We have told Tribunal representatives and other international organizations that the RS institutions are constantly checking the Hague reports but our investigations show that not a single publicly indicted suspect in the RS," Sarovic explained. He categorically rejected claims that some RS institutions, including the RS Army, are protecting or in any way helping the publicly indicted war criminals.

Commenting on the recently marked anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Sarovic said that the Agreement constitutes a framework "which currently satisfies both entities and all three peoples in BiH," but he allowed the possibility of some changes in the future, in agreement with all sides. "The DPA has indeed stopped the war in BiH after three and a half years and in this respect has achieved a tremendous success, but everything can be changed, nothing is sacred, and this is also true of the DA. However, this can only be done in agreement with all three sides in BiH," he stressed.

Premier says his government willing to arrest

Hague indictees

The RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, said on Sunday that the authorities of this entity would arrest any person from The Hague's publicly announced list of war crimes suspects "the very moment they become available to the authorities". During a guest appearance on the Altermedia programme of the Banja Luka-based Alternative TV, Ivanic said that the RS leadership was totally united on this issue and underlined that this entity could not become an island in comparison to its neighbours, the Federation, Serbia, Montenegro and Croatia. "This is a painful decision but a decision which opens a door for the arguments of the RS to be adequately received and accepted," Ivanic said. He urged representatives of international organisations in BiH to give any information concerning the whereabouts of the war crimes suspects to the RS authorities and only then to judge whether this entity was capable of meeting its legal responsibility. (All Sarajevo media carried excerpts from this reports) In addition, in the last night's interview with the Federation Television, Ivanic stressed, once again, that no publicly indicted war criminal is hiding or being sheltered in the RS, and added that he would like to see those responsible for committing war crimes on all sides before the ICTY. Refusing to directly answer as to whether he would like to see Radovan Karadzic or Ratko Mladic in The Hague, Ivanic said that if he were in their position, he would turn himself over to the ICTY voluntarily and stand for the ideas they fought for and believed were right. (see next item)

RS Prime Minister says Karadzic, Mladic should surrender

RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic said Sunday that the UN war crime tribunal's two most wanted fugitives, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, should surrender themselves for trial. "If I were either of these men, I'd put myself at the disposal of

the Hague court, because when you believe in something you should defend it to the end," he told the Federation Television. Ivanic insisted that his government did not know where the men were and called on the public to come forward with any information regarding them. He also criticised what he said were "cynical" suggestions from the West on how to arrest them. Ivanic said he had ordered his police to search for Karadzic and Mladic and to hand them over to the ICTY along with eight other publicly indicted war crimes suspects.

Brcko District

Supervisor Clark visits Sarajevo

Onasa news agency reported that the Brcko District Supervisor Henry L. Clarke is visiting Sarajevo to attend a series of meetings on the economic and political issues in the District in the Office of the High Representative (OHR).

He told reporters on Friday that the task of his office is to establish "efficient and fair relation with the entities," and to harmonize two groups of entities' laws in the District. Clarke added that disputes occur often between the entities and his office.

According to Clarke, the problems in the District are most often of economic nature.

He said another problem is the privatization process, which develops separately from the entities. Most public companies are located in the area that used to be under the control of the Republika Srpska, so this entity had tried to privatized several companies, but Clarke has issued an order to stop the process, because the companies can be privatized only by the District.

"If they were willing to consult us, we might have allowed the

RS to privatize certain parts of the companies,” Clarke said, adding that the main request was that the privatization be realized in line with the District interests, but such an agreement has not been realized.

Clarke, however, said that he was pleased with the progress in the education system and solving the problem of the Arizona 2 marketplace.

International Community

The High Representative calls for an urgent reform in education

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, called on the BiH education authorities at every level to sweep away “the unacceptable habits which have accrued during a long and trying period of war and stagnation” and make reform of the education system a matter of the utmost priority.

Addressing administrators and academics at a conference on the future development of Sarajevo University, the High Representative noted that one of the reasons young people want to leave Bosnia and Herzegovina is the inadequacy of an education system plagued by poor facilities, old-fashioned teaching methods, and inadequately standardised qualifications, and cut off from research and teaching developments elsewhere in Europe.

(Media reported on the [HR speech](#) – Dnevni Avaz on the front page, Zagreb’s Vecernji List also carried a lengthy article. Dnevni List reported on the HR speech, but noted that the educational system reform is the last on the list of the alleged Roman Defence Plan, which seeks to integrate two Mostar universities in a non-transparent fashion. More details in the Media round-UP). See the [Press Release](#). See also Editorial section for commentary...

Federation Minister of Education: Reforms indeed needed

Commenting on the High Representative's call for the reform in the educational system, Federation Minister of Education Mujo Demirovic said that a comprehensive reform is indeed needed in order to ensure that BiH keeps up with world standards. Demirovic stressed that the Federation Ministry has undertaken a number of steps in this direction, including the formation of a Coordination Board and signing of the Common Strategy for Education document. Referring to Petritsch's proposal to reduce the number of universities in BiH, Demirovic said that this issue needs to be discussed in detail before any concrete decisions or steps are taken.

High Representative: BiH economy needs to draw foreign investments

Speaking at the Fifth session of the Stability Pact Working Table on the Economic Reconstruction in Sarajevo, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said it was time that the Southeast Europe becomes a region which will not draw international attention because of problems, but because of the accelerated economic growth. "More private investments, both domestic and foreign, are a condition for economic growth and stability," he said, adding that the countries in the region need to improve legal regulations in the field of trade and make them compatible with European standards. (Dnevni Avaz and Nezavisne Novine report)

High Representative appoints members of the CRA Council

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issued on Friday a Decision appointing members to the Council of the Communications Regulatory Agency. The Council consists of four BiH members and three international members. Its role is to give guidance to the CRA on strategic issues of broadcasting

and telecommunications policy and to serve as an appellate body for CRA decisions. It will play a crucial part in the future development of the communications industry in BiH, says OHR in a press release which is carried by all print media in the Federation: Avaz on page 2 and Oslobodjenje on 3, Glas Srpski and Nezavisne Novine). See the [Press Release](#).

ICG Report: Reshaping the International Machinery in BiH

Media in the entire BiH carried excerpts from the most recent ICG report on BiH, which addresses some of the problems plaguing the role of the IC in the country and calls on international organizations to adopt a comprehensive reform plan and the PIC (Peace Implementation Steering Board) in Brussels on December 6. For the full text of report, you can visit the <http://www.crisisweb.org/>.

New Initiative for the Southeast Europe: Will Stability Pact grow into new Union?

Oslobodjenje's correspondent from Berlin reports that the German CDU (Christian Democratic Union) proposed the creation of the Southeast European Union, which would be an addition to the existing Stability Pact. This new Union would include all countries formerly belonging to the SFR Yugoslavia, Albania, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Greece. The daily notes that the last two would function as a stabilizing factor and a positive example to other member-states. The Union would have its own Parliament and Advisory Board and would be self-financed with the small help of the European Union.

Oslobodjenje notes that this proposal is taken very seriously by German political circles.

Bodo Hombach: BiH is no longer in the last train

car for Europe!

In an interview with Monday's Oslobodjenje, the Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact for the Southeast Europe, Bodo Hombach, said that BiH is no longer in the last train car for Europe, but is firmly sitting in the train which will take it there. He stressed that BiH has achieved a significant progress in the past few years and local authorities have become immensely more cooperative. Asked if the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will be his successor in the Stability Pact, Hombach said that he likes Petritsch very much, but denied the information. "I like Petritsch very much and I think he could do this job. However, his government proposed a different candidate," said Hombach.

Editorials

(all editorials provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List: What's behind High Representative's speech on reduction of number of Universities in BiH: Petritsch abolishes Croat University in Mostar

Written by Leo Plockinic

Dnevni List already wrote about the IC's plan entitled "The Roman Defence" aimed at finding a lasting solution for BiH which foresees assimilation of the BiH Croats into Bosniaks-Catholics. The Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo has not yet denied claims published in the papers. A few diplomatic sources told us that they have got instructions "to treat Croats differently" in comparison to other two peoples. According to a reliable source close to the OHR Sarajevo, four phases of the plan have already been implemented and there is only one that needs implementing: Higher Education System. The first phase was installing of the Alliance to power with

“suitable” Croats, the second phase is assimilation of police, successfully done by the UN-IPTF. The third phase is “blending” of the Federation Army, which is influenced that much by the Bosniaks that there is not a real Croat component. The fourth phase of the Roman Defence is the media. The fact is that only one Bosniak media has been shut down whilst the rest continued working under different names and the Croat media are being systematically shut down. The last in the series of Croat media getting shut down in the Croat radio Zepce which programming was deemed “excellent” but the station “is not financially well off” (...) Nobody from the international organizations knows the plan in its entirety but everybody knows its bits which are arranged in forms of diplomatic instructions. During his speech before the academics in Sarajevo, Wolfgang Petritsch talked about the seven other Universities, which is not the OHR’s task at all, but is a part of his aspirations to “take away” the Croats’ only higher education institution thus depriving them of their constituent status. During the speech Petritsch announced reduction of number of Universities in BiH. There are two options as to how to abolish the Croat University, which is covered by the reduction of higher education institutions. The first option is the abolishment of the University “Dzemal Bijedic” from east Mostar and transfer of its professors and students to the University of Mostar (west), which name would be changed accordingly. In that case the Croat University would lose its autonomy and all Croat(ian) features. Other option is the shut down of the Croat University and transfer of students and professors to the University “Dzemal Bijedic”. In both cases, both options would be implemented by the HR’s decision. The OHR would justify such a decision by the lack of funding transparency. Petritsch himself says that his authorities include implementation of the DPA and that “he has no time to waste”. “Your students will not forgive you if you do not succeed in that”, says Petritsch. The final aim is creation of the lasting peace solution in BiH because the IC would not pay for the expensive peace in BiH, reads Dnevni

List.

Dnevni list: Meeting on “New positioning of BiH Universities”

When questioned about the students' objections, according to which some professors who are politically active do not give lectures for month, Wolfgang Petritsch said that students are not the only ones who have to show dedication and good work but the professors too who have to improve the schooling system.

The High Representative's speech carried unnecessary claims, such as the one that the situation at Universities is bad because some students have to walk for kilometres to some schools just because of their nationality!? In fact, Petritsch and his office have never donated a computer or some gear to a school, and in the same time the HR says that some principles do not allow students to use computers because of their nationality. It is obvious that the HR uses students for manipulation. Perhaps the best illustration towards the reforms of Universities is non-appearance of the Federation Minister of Education Mujo Demirovic.

Vecernji List: How much and in what aspect is BiH ahead of others in modernization of the financial sector, as Wolfgang Petritsch claims

Written by Frano Vukoja

Vecernji List says the business world has received a New Year greeting card, which announces a new shock therapy. All transfer accounts of the budget beneficiaries are to be closed in the beginning of 2002 and the public finances will see the start of the so-called treasury operation. The Federation Government, Ministries, Bureaus and Funds will have a single Treasury account in the BiH Central Bank and the ten cantons will have their treasuries in the Central Bank as well. (...)

The daily quotes the High Representative as saying in the 5th session of the Second Roundtable on the Economic Reconstruction, Development and Cooperation with the Stability Pact, that BiH is ahead of other countries of the former Yugoslavia when it comes to modernization of the financial sector! Indeed, BiH is in many aspects ahead of others in theory, but lags behind Slovenia and Croatia in practice, says the daily.

It is incomprehensible for instance that 95% the Federation Budget comes from the customs duties, that over 50% of the sales tax is concealed (by secret channels) and that the budget money is used for purposes other than those established. (...)

Federation and Cantonal authorities are heading for a big battle for collection of taxes and contributions. The Federation Minister of Finance, Nikola Grabovac, suggests that the sales tax be paid by importers and producers, with a reasonable delay deadline, so as to prevent tax "laundering." Will this be a transitional period until the introduction of the Value Added Tax (VAT)?

2001 started with the introduction of payment operations via commercial banks, 2002 will start with treasury operation, and 2003 might as well start with VAT, concludes the article.