

BiH Media Round-up, 31/7/2001

BiH State-related issues

- Lagumdžija calls on Petritsch to annul tender for the third GSM license
- *Vecerni List*: New 26 BiH ambassadors to be appointed in September

Federation

- Head of the HDZ BiH negotiating team Bozo Ljubic resigns from the office
- *Habena*: Tokic says draft Constitution of Croat Republic in BiH prepared
- Coordination of the Alliance for Changes leaders to discuss first 100 days on Thursday
- Izetbegovic says he will accept to testify before the Hague Tribunal if requested
- *Jutarnji List*: OHR Commission and BiH Federation investigating into privatization of Mostar Aluminij
- *Vecernji List*: Interview with Mostar Mayor Neven Tomić
- *Slobodna Dalmacija*: HN Canton Prime Minister received ECMM's Behan

Republika Srpska

- Ivanic receives Miller in farewell visit
- RS Vice President Dragan Cavic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to visit Belgrade on Tuesday
- Ostoja Kremenovic denies accusations suggesting he sold a part of the RS territory to Croatia
- Agreement on the cooperation between RS SDS and Serbian DSS signed in Belgrade

International Community

- International organizations still not paying

contributions for their local employees

Editorials

- ***Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz***
- ***Vjesnik: BiH Federation is facing bankruptcy***

BiH State-related State

Lagumdzija calls on Petritsch to annul tender for the third GSM license

According to *Oslobodjenje*, BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija called on High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch to annul tender for the third GSM operator and prevent further generation of damages. In a letter sent to Petritsch, Lagumdzija wrote that the BiH Council of Ministers had concluded that the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA) should be invited to together with the Council open a new tender in accordance to the international standards and usual business practice in this sector. According to Lagumdzija, the Council also concluded to urgently initiate all necessary activities in order that the CRA becomes an efficient body fully capable to act independently and with maximum participation of domestic experts.

Vecerni List: New 26 BiH ambassadors to be appointed in September

The names of the new 26 ambassadors who will be representing BiH in the world for three years, will be known early this September, says *Vecernji List*. The daily adds that the new ambassadors, unlike their predecessors, will not have so full safe deposit boxes and will encounter more rigorous rules of money expenditure. The BiH Foreign Ministry decided to take this action following the financial misuses involving some ambassadors and diplomatic staff who spent millions of Marks without being able to account for it, says *Vecernji List*.

Federation

Head of the HDZ BiH negotiating team Bozo Ljubic resigns from the office

Vice-President of the BiH Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) Bozo Ljubic submitted an irrevocable resignation to the position of the head of the HDZ negotiating team, ONASA learned from a source in the HDZ. The reason for the resignation is, according to the source, an increasing pressure of the HDZ hard-liners on Ljubic, because of his readiness to reach a compromise with the international community and other political parties in the Federation. The source said that the hard-liners in the party were using the negotiations just to buy time, but were really not ready for an agreement. The HDZ Central Office in Mostar confirmed to ONASA that Ljubic resigned, but did not want to talk about the reasons. According to the Habena news agency Ljubic himself confirmed that, at the last session of the Presidency of HDZBiH held on July 19, he had returned the mandate of the Head of the HDZ Negotiation Team. He added that there were several reasons for such decision which he had passed absolutely autonomously, without pressures and without consulting anybody from the party's Presidency. Firstly, Ljubic said that "from the very beginning the representatives of the International Administration did not accept part of members of the team as interlocutors, avoiding to discuss important problems, what, of course, I could not agree with." However, Ljubic added that he "had talks with relevant representatives of the IC and some countries wishing to point out to them the essence of the problem and the standpoints of the HDZ. Those contacts were very useful. Secondly, it is my opinion that, at the moment, unfortunately, most of the representatives of the International Administration, including the Federal and state authority, are of the opinion, that there is no problem about which they should negotiate with the HDZ. I am afraid that they are mistaken and they could realize this in the autumn.

Thirdly, I have come to the conclusion that part of members of the HDZBiH do not share same expectations as I do. " He concluded that, bearing in mind the aforementioned facts, he had decided to return the mandate to the HDZBiH Presidency.

Habena: Tokic says draft Constitution of Croat Republic in BiH prepared

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Marko Tokic, the (*dismissed*) HDZ BiH Vice President stated that a preliminary draft Constitution of a Croat Republic in BiH does exist, but that this Republic will only be established should the current constitutional reforms in BiH develop unfavorably for the Croat people.

Should the constitutional reforms prove acceptable to Croats too, Croat Republic will not be proclaimed, said Tokic.

In answer to the question as to whether one can expect a new conflict with the International Community in case a Croat Republic is established in BiH after all, Tokic said the conflict already exists and the aforementioned would only intensify it.

"Well, I do not suppose we should all die if they do not like it!," stressed Tokic.

In Tokic's words, Croat Republic in BiH is supposed to encompass the areas that were under the Croat control "the day after the Dayton Agreement was reached."

Commenting on the claims of some media that the Head of the HDZ Negotiating Team, Bozo Ljubic resigned, Tokic stated that they are incorrect.

'The truth is that at the session of the HDZ Presidency of July 19, Ljubic informed the Presidency that the negotiations were not taking place anymore because the IC believed that they should not negotiate with us,' said Tokic. He also stated

that Bozo Ljubic remains a Vice President of the HDZ BiH.

According to Tokic, the course of the next General Assembly of the Party, which is supposed to take place on October 6, 2001, will determine future actions of the HDZ BiH.

Tokic, as the President of the Working Group, has been tasked with drafting a new Program Declaration, together with Bozo Ljubic, Dragan Covic, Ivo Andric Luzanski, Martin Raguz, Dubravko Horvat, Slavica Josipovic, Dragan Vrankic, Slavko Matic, Zdenko Antunovic, Ms. Ivica Pasalic-Lhotak and Patra Majic, as members of the Working Group.

Coordination of the Alliance for Changes leaders to discuss first 100 days on Thursday

Sarajevo dailies report that a coordination body of the Alliance for Changes comprising the leaders of the political parties belonging to the Alliance met on Monday to discuss future payment of pensions in the BiH Federation. The leaders supported, in political terms, a project of payment of unreduced regular, as well as backlog pensions. The chairman of the body and the leader of the BiH Liberal-Democratic Party (LDS), Rasim Kadic, said following the meeting that the coordination's next session would be held on Thursday to discuss first 100 days of the Alliance's work and positions of the political parties on the issue.

Izetbegovic says he will accept to testify before the Hague Tribunal if requested

Former Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency and SDA leader Alija Izetbegovic told Dnevni Avaz that, if requested, he would accept to testify before the Hague Tribunal. He added that he had learned about his possible appearance before the Tribunal from media. The Zagreb daily Vecernji List said on Monday that Izetbegovic would be called to give his testimony in the upcoming trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

Jutarnji List: OHR Commission and BiH Federation investigating into privatization of Mostar Aluminum (provided by OHR Mostar)

The main legal problem that the Commission, in charge of the Aluminum audit was dealing with, is the legality of the transfer of 51% of the Company shares to the hands of the workers on the ground of overdue salaries for the period from 1993 until 1996. According to an unofficial information coming from the Commission, formed by the OHR and the Federation Agency for Privatization, the transfer of the state capital to hands of the workers is the most disputable transfer in terms of Law.

People from Aluminum refer to the Law on Companies from 1995, while people from the Ministry of Energy, Mining and Industry believe that this law does not have the legal ground for the transfer of the state property to the hands of the workers on the ground of the overdue salaries. The OHR is also investigating whether there was a national discrimination during the transfer of shares to the workers.

According to the source from the Commission, there were opposing opinions about important audit issues and for this reason along with the final audit results some members of the Commission handed over their own opinions.

Some of the Commission members dispute the transfer of the state capital to the workers based on the unpaid salaries for the period while the Aluminum Factory was not working, as well as the huge amounts that individuals received.

An unnamed source from the Commission claims that persons from the political life who had never worked in the Factory were also given big amounts of shares. Those are amounts of several hundreds of thousands DEM. The Aluminum Factory General Manager Mijo Brajkovic owns 248,657 DEM worth of shares, which is 4,700 DEM per month in the period from 1993 to 1996, and within that period of time, he was also receiving the salaries

as the City Mayor or the Cantonal Prime Minister.

One Pero Kolobaric owns 90,000 DEM worth of shares on the basis of the overdue salaries from 1993 to 1996. Kolobaric was receiving the HVO salary at the same time, and received privatization certificates as an army member.

According to the Commission report, which is now being analyzed by the OHR legal service, the pre-war value of the Aluminum Factory, according to the 1991 annual financial report, was 1.4 billion DEM, and the current value of the Factory has been estimated to 190 million DEM. The Commission wonders what about the 1.2 billion DEM difference in the Factory's value and what sort of impact it had on the ownership established at the competent court in Mostar back in 1997.

Vecernji List: Interview with Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic

By Zoran Kresic (provided by OHR Mostar)

Before the summer holidays, Neven Tomic, the Mayor of Mostar, was the main target and subject to numerous plots from both the east and west parts of Mostar. In spite of that, he is still in the middle, in the City District, on the position of the person number one in the city on the Neretva. The attempts of removing him by the HDZ City Board and the media imputations in East Mostar, the observers of the situation in Mostar claim, have even reinforced his position. All surveys conducted testify he indeed is a popular Mayor. The last survey, conducted by the State Department Research Unit, shows that 41% of the Croats interviewed across BiH have confidence in Tomic. Thus, Tomic managed to take the second place, right after the (*dismissed*) HDZ President Ante Jelavic. Although he rarely has time for interviews, Tomic agreed to speak for Vecernji List.

Will you, despite the attacks, remain the Mayor of Mostar until the end of your mandate?

The mandate is really long. Four years is much too long for this sort of work. My plans are to properly follow this mandate through to the end and we shall see how the things develop further.

Do you think you have the support from citizens?

When the HDZ City Board gave me the vote of no confidence, the reactions of the HDZ councillors, the City Council and HDZ Caucus Chairmen who rendered their resignations, are the best support as far as I am concerned because those are the persons who are HDZ members but who know what I am doing much better than those who raised the issue do. Another thing I find important is the analysis by the State Department Research Unit, which confirmed that I am the second most popular Croat official after Jelavic, although I am just a local official.

Many claimed the views of the HDZ City Board concerning your removal were not argued, especially when it comes to your policy in the city. Is your policy in Mostar contrary to that of the HDZ?

This policy of Mostar as a functional city unit is clearly expressed in the HDZ Program Declaration. This means that the city cannot function if, for instance, it has a fire-fighting unit consisting of six divisions. A functional city environment cannot have three traffic regimes in one street because the street runs through three municipalities, and this is also true for the public transportation. This is also written in the HDZ Program Declaration. This may have to do with two things: one is that those who raised this issue think what is written in the HDZ Program Declaration binds no one and that a private decision is stronger than what was passed by the HDZ Congress. The other possibility is personal relations, related to my engagement and relations with the International Community, the Bosniak side and others. My motto is – never reject but try finding a solution, and then you cannot be the obstructing one.

Daniel Simpson, the former Director of the OSCE Regional Center in Mostar, in his letter to Mostar Bishop Peric, stated, among other things, that it is time for the “civil engineers of the Dayton Agreement to leave?!”

There are no conditions for that, or for withdrawal of NATO forces. If we ignore the political connotations, we are still in an unsustainable economic position. We have only exchanged no one's property for someone's property in the privatization process. On the occasion of a meeting with the German officials in charge of Southeastern Europe, I said I was afraid that Croats would get into Europe sooner than BiH would, should this trend go on, alluding to the fear of the people who are running out of patience and wishing a better future for their children.

Slobodna Dalmacija: HN Canton Prime Minister received ECMM's Behan

Josip Merdzo, the President of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Government, received on Monday Tom Behan, an ECMM representative. During the meeting they discussed overall political situation on the territory of this Canton and the tasks of the Government in the coming period. Merdzo expressed his pleasure with the Herzegovina- Neretva Canton Government's appointment. Behan stressed that he expected that in the coming period the Government would successfully respond to all challenges it faced.

Republika Srpska

Ivanic receives Miller in farewell visit

Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic receives on Monday the outgoing US ambassador to BiH, Thomas Miller in a farewell visit. According to Oslobodjenje, Miller told journalists following the meeting that the entity's

cooperation with the Hague Tribunal did not require any special law. Republika Srpska dailies report that Ivanic thanked to Miller on the cooperation, and assessed that the mutual relations were basically fair, although there were certain pressures from the US Embassy during his mandate. Miller agreed with Ivanic that the changes in the RS and BiH were visible and that the situation was improving in general, stressing that it should be done more on the improvement of economic situation and in the refugee return process.

RS Vice President Dragan Cavic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to visit Belgrade on Tuesday

Glas Srpski carries a Republika Srpska Government's press release announcing that the RS Vice-president Dragan Cavic and Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic would visit Belgrade today. The press release said that the two officials would meet with the FRY President Vojislav Kostunica, Prime Minister Dragisa Pesic and Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic.

Ostoja Kremenovic denies accusations suggesting he sold a part of the RS territory to Croatia

Both Republika Srpska dailies carry a statement of Ostoja Kremenovic, current Director of the RS Pension Insurance Fund and former Chairman of the BiH State Commission for Border Issues, who says: "Claims by BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications Svetozar Mihajlovic that I sold a part of the RS territory in the Srpska/Bosanska Kostajnica area to Republic of Croatia through secret negotiations are nothing but pure lies." Kremenovic adds that the whole process was carried out transparently and that both BiH and Croatia took part in its implementation.

Agreement on cooperation between RS SDS and Serbian DSS signed in Belgrade

Both Glas Srpski and Nezavisne Novine carry a news that an agreement on cooperation between the SDS and the Democratic

Party of Serbia (DSS) was signed on Monday in Belgrade by presidents of the two parties Dragan Kalinic and Vojislav Kostunica. DSS said that the two parties had a cooperation for a long time and this protocol was only a contribution to its further development. Asked whether the agreement would make a damage to the DSS credibility bearing in mind the SDS bad international reputation, DSS Vice President Zoran Sami said that his party had cooperated with the SDS before, and this had not ruined its credibility.

International Community

International organizations still not paying contributions for their local employees

Glas Srpski, on its cover page, writes that the international organizations in BiH do not pay contributions for their local employees. However, the newspaper mentions that the OHR has announced it would start paying social security for local employees from July 1 and adds that the decision was based on a Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed with entities' Finance Ministries. Until the final agreement is reached, the money for that purposes will be paid on a separate account from which it will be transferred to the authorized Pension Insurance Funds. "A total of 468 local employees work for the OHR in the entire BiH. According to the Dayton Peace Accord, they are not obliged to pay taxes on their salaries", said OHR Spokesman Patrik Volf. Glas Srpski mentions OSCE and SFOR in the same context.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz

In the today's Oslobodjenje commentaries on the second page, Mirko Sagolj wrote about the financial affair related to the

BiH Embassy in Vienna, as acting Editor-in-Chief Senka Kurtovic compared rule of the SDA and SDP. Dnevni Avaz journalist Husein Orahovac wrote in the today's Commentary of the Day about the upcoming proceeding before the Republika Srpska Constitutional Court related to the statute of the city of Srpsko Sarajevo.

Vjesnik: BiH Federation is facing bankruptcy

Written by Alenko Zornija (provided by OHR Mostar)

Nikola Grabovac, the Federation Minister of Finances, has announced that they will start to struggle even more resolutely against tax evaders. They announced another desperate move: they will demand from the successful state owned Companies and Banks to redirect a part of their profit in order to patch up budget holes (pensioners, war invalids etc.), that is, for the 'purchase' of a social peace.

The only visible 'success' that the Alliance achieved refers to the 'disciplining' of BiH Croats. By the destruction of Hercegovacka Bank they broke a try to create the Croat autonomy. However, 'a collateral damage' is obvious in disastrous consequence of this action.

A try to start with a resolute showdown with crime and corruption came to a halt because, allegedly, more significant changes within the field of judiciary did not take place. However, the try of the Alliance to make 'radical changes' in the judiciary did not succeed. The refusal of Karlo Filipovic, the President of the Federation, and Safet Halilovic, the Federation Vice President, to sign the list of Judges, proposed for the Constitutional Court, turned into a scandal and it obviously showed the intention that the new Authority controls Courts in a similar way as their predecessors.

Still, the worst result of the five-month rule of the Alliance is reflected in a fact that citizens lost a hope that it could be better. Apart from this, they have started accusing each

other for bad results. Members of the Main SDP Board repeated at their session their criticism against parties within the Alliance accusing Silajdzic's party and Zubak's NHI that they opened up the space for the SDA and HDZ cadres to come in power again by changing party uniforms.