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BiH State-related Issues

Partnership Forum: Formation of a common economic space

Following the second consultative meeting of the Partnership Forum, the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdžija, said that the Council will make a long-term plan of action whose final goal is the creation of a single economic space and the self-sustainable BiH. The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, described the discussion about economy and entity and state budgets as very constructive and added that this form of partnership and

discussion was important for ensuring proper communication between the Council of Ministers and the International Community. The Wednesday meeting was also attended by the entity Prime Ministers, Alija Behmen and Mladen Ivanic. (All Sarajevo media reported on the meeting. Dnevni Avaz on the front page, Nezavisne Novine on page 3, and Oslobodjenje on page 6; RTRS started the morning news with this information)

Opposition Leader in Afghanistan: I do not believe Bin Laden has any people in BiH

In an exclusive interview with Oslobodjenje, the General Muhamed Arif Noor Zai, one of the most famous military leaders of opposition in Afghanistan, said that he does not believe that Osama bin Laden has any associates or supporters in BiH. "One should shy away from marking every country with Muslim majority as fundamentalist and terrorist," Noor Zai said.

BiH authorities, international bodies agree on measures to counter terrorism

Members of a co-ordination team of BiH Council of Ministers for fight against terrorism met on Wednesday in Sarajevo with representatives of the International Community in order to determine the concrete measures which need to be undertaken in the upcoming period. According to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs press release, participants in the meeting stressed the need for the change of the existing legal regulative in the field of judiciary, in particular that concerning the conduct of investigation and detention of persons suspected of being connected with terrorism. Representatives of the International Community expressed their satisfaction with the measures undertaken thus far by the BiH authorities and promised an expert help to BiH in order to enable it to become an efficient part of the international alliance in the fight against terrorism.

Beriz Belkic says no communication flow between entity and state institutions on arrests, terrorism

Beriz Belkic, the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, told Dnevni Avaz that he feels relatively incompetent to speak about the arrests of persons suspected of having ties with terrorists, as the Presidency has not been adequately informed about the activities or any other security issues handled by the entity Ministries of Interior. "At this moment, not a single entity institution, in particular the Ministries of Interior, does not have a legal or formal responsibility to keep the Presidency or the BiH Council of Ministers informed about the happenings in the country," said Belkic. He stressed that it is bizarre that the BiH Presidency, as the highest state institution in the country, at times has no idea what is happening in the state. "Absolutely no one is obliged to inform us, which is unacceptable. I will not stop fighting for the creation of the security policy on the state level," stressed Belkic, adding that in the present situation, the Presidency does not have basic tools to properly function.

Bosnia, Slovenia sign free trade agreement

In a statement for the press, the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations said that BiH and Slovenia signed an agreement on free trade in Zenica on Wednesday. The agreement was signed by Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Azra Hadziahmetovic and Slovene Minister of Economy Tea Petrin. One of the goals of the agreement is the creation of conditions for a new climate for economic relations between BiH and Slovenia, and particularly for the development of the mutual trade and investments. The agreement foresees the abolishment of all customs duties from January 1, 2002 which have been implemented in Slovenia for products of BiH origin, while Bosnia-Hercegovina will subsequently reduce from the same date the customs duties for products of Slovenian origin, and it will completely abolish them in 2005.

Federation

Alija Izetbegovic nominated for the president of the SDA

Oslobodjenje reports that the thus far president of the strongest Bosniak party – SDA – will nominate himself for the same post at the upcoming SDA Congress, which is scheduled for October 13 and 14. The daily writes that most serious candidate for the post of the vice-president is Amor Masovic and other deputies – Halid Genjac, Adnan Terzic, Sulejman Tihic, and Mirsad Kebo. At the Congress, the SDA will also propose to change its logo, the flag and other party symbols in order to make them less nationally visible. For example, the green crescent will most likely be replaced by a white lily.

Marko Tokic: If he nominates himself for the president of the HDZ, Jelavic will be elected

Speaking at a press conference in Mostar, Marko Tokic of the HDZ said that if Ante Jelavic decides to nominate himself, at the upcoming party Congress, for the post of the HDZ president, he will most likely be reelected. Asked if this could have negative repercussions, since Jelavic has been stripped off this post by the High Representative in March, Tokic said that Wolfgang Petritsch does not have a right to vote in the HDZ.

Vecernji List: Ante Jelavic President again?

Written by Zoran Kresic

Marko Tokic, the (dismissed) HDZ Vice President stated at the press conference in Mostar: ‘ I, personally, believe that Jelavic is the future HDZ President. I am convinced that if he puts forward his nomination, and I believe that he will, 90 %

of the party members will vote for him, regardless of who his opponent may be at the Convention.' He dispelled all doubts regarding the speculations on Jelavic's withdrawal at the coming Party's Convention, which will take place on Saturday, October 06, in Mostar. Tokic also added that President Jelavic himself will decide whether he will put forward his nomination for the position of the President of the strongest Croat political party in BiH for the third time.

The most popular Croat politician Ante Jelavic, whom the High Representative removed from the position of BiH Presidency Member, received his first mandate for the position of the HDZ President in 1998 when the HDZ BiH for the first time refused to confirm the name of the candidate for the position of the President, which arrived in an envelope from Zagreb. It has been judged that in spite of the weakening of his position due to the legal proceedings instituted against him and due to the destruction of the financial power Jelavic is still the only person who can hold all party strings in his hands. The High Representative has, also, opposed his election recently. At the press conference President Tokic reiterated that the party ignores the decision of the High Representative on the removal of Jelavic and HDZ officials. Tokic, who is the President of the Commission for the Drafting of the Program Declaration, stated: 'Mr. Petritsch is not a member of the HDZ and he cannot vote at the Convention. I understand his need and the decision on the ban on public and political activities for some people, however, I believe that contravenes the Human Rights Charters.'

According to the proposal of the Program Declaration, the HDZ BiH should be the party of the right political center 'in the best spirit of the West European Christian Democratic orientation'.

The Program Declaration will contain principles from the documents of the BiH Croat People's Assembly, the Declaration on the Rights and Status of Croats, as well as the Platform on

a Self-Sustainable BiH. Tokic concluded that in accordance with the Constitutional Court Decision the HDZ demanded the same organization of BiH in both of its entities, with the House of Peoples in the RS as well. 'If this fails to be done then we shall demand a complete cantonization of the country or establishing of a community with three Federation units.' He added that the Croats will not allow to be 'excluded as a political people who has a marginal influence on the events in BiH. We want to be equally responsible and have the same rights as the two other peoples in BiH have'. Barisa Colak, the President of the HDZ Commission for the Drafting of the Statute, informed the journalists that by the changes of the Statute it was envisaged to introduce the institution of the party's Office of the Secretary General as the main operative body. The changes also envisage the extension of the party's Central Board while the number of the members of the HDZ BiH Presidency would be reduced.

Answer to Croat issue

The 7th Emergency Convention was called in the mid of the year in order to pass possibly radical decisions of the party and recommendations for the Croat National Assembly if the constitutional changes pertaining to the constituency of three peoples do not guarantee an equal position of the Croats in both entities. The main slogan is 'Answer to the Croat issue'. Talking about the organizational details of the Party's Convention, Rade Bosnjak, a member of the HDZ BiH Presidency, said that everything 'is ready' for the holding of the Convention. 645 attendants have been invited. Apart from the President, they will also elect the Vice President, members of the HDZ BiH Presidency, Central and Supervisory Boards and the High Court of Honor. Numerous guests were also invited to attend the Convention. The organization of the Convention costs between 20 000 and 25 000 Marks.

Deputies in the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives ask for the dismissal of the Fed TV management

Deputies in the Federation Parliament's House of

Representatives ask for the dismissal of seven members of the Federation TV Council because they persistently ignored the HoR appeal to organize a live broadcast of sessions of the Federation Parliament. This request was initiated by the Bosnian Party (BOSS) and supported by all other deputies in the House. "We are also asking for the dismissal of the TV BiH management. They have done nothing positive to contribute to reconstruction in this media outlet," said BOSS president, Mirnes Ajanovic.

Deputies also agreed to schedule an extraordinary session of the House of Representatives for October 24 during which the Law on Federation TV, imposed by the High Representative, will be taken over by the House. Immediately following its publication in the Official Gazette, a news session will be called in order to introduce changes and amendments to the Law, in particular to Article 54 referring to the financing of the Federation TV from the entity budget and Article 61 about charging the subscription fee via electricity bills.

Federation governments bans journalists from attending its sessions

Oslobodjenje reports that the Federation government decided to hold all its future session behind the closed doors and without any media presence. It will communicate with the public via its public relations office and official press releases or individual press statements, as is envisaged by the relevant legal provisions which stipulates that the public must be informed about the work of the government. Oslobodjenje notes that this decision made by the Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, was expected and came as no surprise, as there have been numerous complaints recently about incorrect reporting by some media and frequent disturbance of sessions caused by obnoxious journalists.

Dnevni Avaz buys the biggest printing press in BiH "Oko"

All Sarajevo media report that Dnevni Avaz won the tender for privatization of the largest printing press in BiH "Oko", after the only other bidder, Oslobodjenje, was disqualified because of its debt to "Oko." Oslobodjenje immediately reacted expressing its concern that, by purchasing this printing press, Avaz will secure a complete monopoly in the market of print media. The oldest Sarajevo daily also said it will file a complaint to the Cantonal Agency for Privatization in Sarajevo and to all relevant local and international organizations.

Dnevni List: SFOR digs trenches at the entrance to the Mostar base? (full translation)

Big trucks and bulldozers are constantly on the move within the SFOR Multinational Division South base. We notice a reinforced number of soldiers at the entrance to the base, which was not the case before the attacks on the USA. Hedgehogs have also been put there recently and people who work near the base tell us that SFOR troops do not leave the camp much. The control at the main gate used to be carried out by Moroccan SFOR troops. We ask the SFOR PA office as to why they were not there any more but we were told that they were relieved by another shift and that they did not leave because of their confession. When asked about the works in the camp, the PA office told us that those works are being executed in order to have running water and electricity in the camp, and then we ask them whether they had running water and electricity before. As to the hedgehogs at the entrance: "It is because the northern entrance to the base is being shut down". Believe it or not we got the same answer as to why SFOR troops have not been leaving the base lately. When questioned if SFOR knows anything about stories that mujahedeens are "strolling" in east Mostar, that is populated mostly by Muslims, and whether SFOR is intending to do anything about

it, the duty officer of SFOR told us that he was not aware of it at all and that we should talk to Captain Morrell at the SFOR HQ in Sarajevo, but Captain Morrell was not in his office and his secretary did not know when he would be coming back, reads Dnevni List.

Milivoj Gagro, Chairman of the Aluminij's Steering Board – Brajkovic evades contacts

The Chairman of the Steering Board of Aluminij Mostar, Milivoj Gagro, announced that the Federation Supreme Court will soon mete out their ruling as to whether the change of the ownership structure in this company was conducted legally. Gagro called for compliance with the Court's ruling, which will be final.

"As legalists, we hold that the current Aluminij management is entitled to file appeals to the decisions that contest the ownership structure and we want to wait for the outcome of the court procedure," stated Gagro.

Gagro, a former Mayor of Mostar, was instated as the company's Steering Board Chairman three months ago, but he and the Board members have established no communication with the company's management so far.

"Director Mijo Brajkovic and his associates refuse to contact with us because they believe that the Federation is not authorized to appoint Steering Board members," said Gagro.

He said the auditing team that acted under orders from the OHR established illegalities in the process of privatization conducted in Aluminij.

Petar Milic, founder of Croat Christian Democrats: Criminal lobbies dominate HDZ (Dnevni List)

Croat Christian Democrats (CCD) are a member of the HNS BiH, and you are the Vice President of the HNS. Despite that you

often criticize some of its moves. On what standpoints do you agree with the HDZ and on what do you disagree?

First of all the CCD and myself personally do not accept any associations not even the HNS if it were to be guided single-mindedly. We have a political interest to be in the HNS but it does not mean that we have lost our political independence. Our interest is a Croat unity of political, church, cultural and other structures (...) Everyone who has the same goal can co-operate with us. I think that the CCD's and my position is specific and is different when compared to other members of the HNS. Me and my party are ready to be persistent in establishing of the Croat Republic which would be a basis for freedom of Croats in BiH. Every opposite activity within or outside the HNS will be revealed by the CCD.

Our aim is to form an alliance with the people, not the elite structures, groups and those who call themselves independent intellectuals. We are convinced that what we are doing is right. Because of that activity we have often been a target of anti-Croat(ian) elements no matter what political structures they come from. Neven Tomic and the HDZ, Robert Barry and the OSCE Mission wanted to destroy us prior to the last municipal elections, and now Wolfgang Petritsch is conducting a rigged process against me before the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo.

But we are ready to take on harder punches until our final goal is achieved. Our activity is aimed to surpass interests of criminal lobbies, opportunism and personal interests that are dominant in many structures of the society, especially within the HDZ. We are totally opposite to the HDZ in those terms, which does not mean that we do not have a common interest to solve the Croat national issue in BiH. You have to know that the process of unfolding of criminal activities committed during the HDZ reign has not started yet. Those who took part in crime use a thesis that during the fight for the freedom of the Croat people, the issue has to be put aside. I tell them that CCD will not support them there regardless of

their calls for unity.

At the hearing in Sarajevo you announced that a Croat Republic would be proclaimed by the end of the year. What did you mean by that?

When I said that a Croat Republic would be proclaimed, I meant its real content not the formal act. It means that a Constitution of the Croat Republic has to be enacted. I would be happy if it were to be enacted at a session of the HNS and later confirmed at a referendum of the Croat people. If there is not a consensus within the HNS BiH, then the CCD will enact a Constitution of the Croat Republic at its convention before the end of the year as the party's document which clearly shows guarantees of institutional freedoms of the Croat people within the state-forming community of BiH (...)

Scandalous graffiti in Mostar East: Invitation to bin Laden

Vecernji List reports that "scandalous graffiti" inviting the Islamic terrorist Osama bin Laden to send a suicidal plane against Croats, appeared in East Mostar.

"Bin Laden, brother, send a (Boeing) 767 against the Croats." The graffiti was written close to the historical core of the city. The Police of the Mostar Municipality Stari Grad could not comment on this on Wednesday. Such a graffiti is not considered to be a serious threat by the citizens of Mostar West, however, almost everybody remembers the auto-bomb that Arab terrorists planted in front of the Police Station in the part of the city with the Croat majority in 1997. Croats believe that this time, as well, it is about an extreme intolerance that, allegedly, culminated in the petition on the removal of the Jubilee Cross, situated on hill of Hum, organized by Bosniak intellectuals.

Republika Srpska

ICTY Spokeswoman Says RS Authorities Should Arrest Karadzic

Nezavisne Novine quotes ICTY Spokesperson Florence Hartmann as saying that after the RS National Assembly passed the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY, the ICTY expects the RS authorities to carry out first arrests. "If the RS really tends to cooperate then it has to arrest Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic immediately, given that indictments for these two persons were issued back in 1995", says Hartman. She also said that the RS authorities would send a good sign if they allowed the ICTY investigators to access all documentation the ICTY is interested in and not to be selective as the RS Government has approached this problem so far. She added that she also heard that the RS authorities are deliberately postponing arrests of Karadzic and Mladic so that the indictments against them become obsolete. "Indictment for war crimes never becomes obsolete, which practically means that requirements listed in it have to be met," Hartmann said.

Five SDS MPs Are Afraid of the ICTY

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" quotes an anonymous source close to SDS (Serb Democratic Party) that 5 SDS MPs did not vote on the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY. The source says that Tomislav Savkic voted against the Law whilst Vidomir Banduka, Dragomir Vasic, Milenko Stanic and Momir Umicevic abstained from the voting. "Nezavisne novine" also learns that large number of SDS deputies was not "very happy" when voting for the Law since the Law might be applied on them. However, they decided to support the Law hoping that local courts will take over low-profile cases, which would make things slightly easier for them.

RS Law on ICTY Passed, Arrests Postponed!

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" carries an article which says that the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY should enter into force eight days after the adoption. However, an anonymous source close to "Official Gazette" confirmed to "Nezavisne novine" that the Law will not be gazetted within 8 days. The source told the paper that the Law would not be published in the next edition of the "RS Official Gazette". "Nezavisne novine" quotes an anonymous source, close to the SDS, as saying that the SDS has already prepared a plan to postpone publishing of the Law in order to buy some time and postpone the application of the Law.

Former RS Prime Minister Says Government Shifting Responsibility by Adopting ICTY Law

The chairman of the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD, former Prime Minister), Milorad Dodik, said in Bijeljina that the deputies of his party had not supported the adoption of the RS Law on cooperation with the Hague Tribunal as they believe that the law was proposed "with the aim of shifting political responsibility for cooperation with The Hague from the government to other institutions". Ahead of the SNSD regional meeting in Bijeljina last night, Dodik told journalists that it was beyond comprehension that the SDS (Serb Democratic Party), which for the five years since the signing of the Dayton Agreement had been emphasising that cooperation with the Hague tribunal would be contrary to Serb interests, suddenly appeared as a proponent of the law.

SNSD Top Official Says the ICTY Still Dictates Conditions

"Nezavisne novine" quotes SNSD top official, Krstan Simic, as saying that the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY will not bring anything new because the RS is not in a position to regulate certain stipulations in it. Simic says that the ICTY

still dictates conditions and that a provision which says that person, indicted for war crimes, will not be extradited until the RS Supreme Court decides whether the request for extradition of persons, indicted by the ICTY, is grounded. "This is completely absurd if we bear in mind that only ICTY judge decides the validity of indictment. The adoption of the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY will not stop the ICTY from issuing sealed indictments. Only if the RS authorities are ready and determined to start arresting persons, indicted for war crimes, the ICTY can decide whether it is going to continue with that "sealed indictments practice" or not. The ICTY resorted to issuing of sealed indictments because there are 30 publicly indicted persons in the RS and the RS authorities have never even tried to arrest any of them", says Simic.

DSP Official Announces Merger of DSP and SNSD

Both Banja Luka dailies quote Democratic Socialist Party top official, Lazar Prodanovic, as saying that the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) will merge and thus create a new, modern, left-orientated coalition. He said that presidencies of the parties will meet in Laktasi very soon to discuss various issues such as name of the party, its president and status.

RS Ministry of Refugees Requests Changes of Property Laws

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" quotes Assistant RS Minister of Refugees and DPs, Drago Vuleta, as saying that the RS Ministry of Refugees and DPs sent a letter to the High Representative in which they ask the High Representative to change and amend property legislation, explaining this move with a fact the Ministry is facing with large number of very specific cases that cannot be resolved in a just manner. Vuleta stressed that this request especially pertains to the

Law on Execution of the CRPC decisions, which prevent people from lodging an appeal to court. "Only court can and should be competent for cases of property exchange, carried out after 1992. Court should also decide whether property exchange was carried out under coercion and if any irregularities occurred", says Vuleta. He emphasized that this is a big problem when it comes to BiH citizens who exchanged their property with Serbs from Croatia, because they can repossess their property in BiH and, at the same time, retain the exchanged property in Croatia after they register the actual property on their name. Vuleta also said that the RS Refugee Ministry requested the BiH Federation to enable tenancy right holders to repossess apartments, owned by the former Yugoslav Army (JNA). "There are 16,000 of these cases and the tenancy right holders cannot to repossess their property because of discriminatory laws in the BiH Federation", says Vuleta.

Beriz Belkic announces Presidency initiative about the "Palic case"

Member of the BiH Presidency Beriz Belkic told Oslobodjenje that the BiH Presidency may soon ask the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, and the entity president, Mirko Sarovic to finally resolve the Palic case. Referring to the decision of the Human Rights Chamber that the RS authorities need to pay compensation to the family of the abducted general Avdo Palic, Belkic said he is appalled that the RS has not complied with this ruling. He also criticised responsible international organisation who have not ensured that the decision was complied with.

International Community

Two Terrorist Suspects Released From Custody

Media in Sarajevo and Banja Luka report that two BiH citizens

who were arrested by the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) last week on suspicion of being involved in terrorism, were released from custody on Tuesday (2 October), the SFOR said in a statement on Wednesday. The statement reads that the two men, Nihad Karcic and Almir Harbas, were the employees of the Senior Saudi Committee for Assistance. The two men were arrested during the search of one of the offices of the organization in Sarajevo. During the search, documents, computers and about DM120,000 in cash were confiscated. The Senior Saudi Committee protested against this operation, stressing the two men were only guards of the organization's premises. A citizen of Egypt and a citizen of Jordan, who were arrested at the same time, also on suspicion of being involved in terrorist activities, are still in one of the SFOR bases and are being interrogated.

OHR welcomes CIPS laws

The OHR is pleased that the laws that form the Citizens Identity Protection System (CIPS) package passed the first reading in the State Parliament, stated the OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer at a press conference in Sarajevo, reports Slobodna Dalmacija.

The daily quotes her as saying: "Adoption of the CIPS laws in the first reading is a good move, but at the same time we are concerned about statements made by Serb delegates, which indicate that they might not adopt the law in further procedure."

Colin Munro, Head of the OHR in Mostar, at a press conference – Alarm to economy

At this Wednesday's press conference of the international organizations in Mostar, the Head of the OHR in Mostar, Colin Munro, appealed to all those whose main preoccupation is refighting the political and actual battles of the recent past to work with the Federation and State authorities to give this

country the economy which its long suffering people deserve.

Munro welcomed the recent visit by the Federation Prime Minister and his Deputy to Mostar, but also expressed his disappointment at their report, which he called alarming.

"The gross domestic product (GDP) per head in the Federation now stands at US\$ 1129, a decline even on 1999," stated Ambassador Munro. He stated the examples of GDP in Slovenia, which amounts to 11,000 and 4,500 in Croatia.

He said the gray economy is estimated at any grade between 50 and 70% of the total.

Meanwhile, since Dayton, said Munro, BiH has received more aid per head than any developing country anywhere since 1945.

New OHR Internet site: Better organization of the content

The Office of the High Representative has updated its web page which can be visited at: www.ohr.int. The newly designed site features up-to-date political priorities and organizational structure of the OHR whilst every Regional Office has its own sub page. The new web site offers better content organization including a full-text search engine and more than 6000 documents. Dnevni List carries the [press release](#).

Brcko District

Gerhard Sontheim, deputy of Brcko Supervisor: Political suicide of parties

"I am cautious when I use word crisis. I think that something like this results from ignorance of Brcko District conception. When it comes to the implementation of the Final Arbitral Award, that is not political option but obligation. I call on all councillors to avoid hasty, irresponsible and inconsiderate conclusions, but I cannot prevent political parties from committing political suicide if they wish",

Gerhard Sontheim, deputy of Brcko Supervisor, commented interruption of the Brcko District Assembly session when five SDS representatives withdrew from it.

The SDS representatives requested to include into the agenda an item within which a decision on self-dismissing of the Assembly would be adopted. Milenko Simikic, deputy speaker of the Assembly, said that reason for such a request was "permanent crisis of the Assembly".

After that the Serb councillors asked for a break. Since that during the break a proposal to discuss their request was not accepted, the SDS representatives returned to their seats, but after that they left the room immediately.

In absence of Supervisor Henry Clarke, Sontheim addressed journalists at the press conference. He spoke about the beginning of privatisation in the District, recent appointment of four new councillors and progress of new Arizona Market project.

"Main criteria of the privatisation will be investment, management ability and access to markets. Who offers the best conditions will be given maximum of attention. The second condition is guarantee for employment and we expect it will increase in comparison to previous years", Sontheim said.

He called on Mladen Ivanic, RS Prime Minister, to implement the agreement reached with OHR in Brcko on 27 August. The agreement was that the RS Government would provide complete information on what they have done so far with regard to the privatisation in Brcko District.

Regarding the appointment of four new councillors, who replace those who resigned due to "conflict of interests", Sontheim said two women and two men were appointed, and they are young which is important factor. He indirectly denied the parties' remarks that ethnic balance within the Assembly is jeopardise by the appointment of new councillors.

Deputy of Supervisor spoke about the SDS requests for elections in the District. He repeated Henry Clarke's message, who said that before elections he had to be sure that elections would create an Assembly and a Government that truly represent Brcko District.

Answering journalists' questions, Sontheim said that councillors of the District Assembly "are representatives of parties, but they are responsible to citizens".

Regarding the announcement of a group of Serb parents that they would sue Supervisor and the District authorities because of the Law on Education, which foresees equal use of Croatian and Bosnian language, "that their children sometimes do not understand", Sontheim said that while drafting the Law the human rights were taken into consideration, and that all Law's articles were explained in detail during the public discussion and to the legislative District bodies. He said that eventual charge would not postpone the Law implementation.

Editorials

Vecernji List: Behmen's generosity has burdened budget with 41,5 million Marks of debts

Written by Zoran Kresic

Mid September, by one move of a pen Alija Behmen released of obligation (wrote off debts) of 11 Bosniak companies which were supposed to pay contributions for the Pension-Disability Insurance. By this act the state was damaged for 41.5 million Marks. At the same time 41,556,711 Marks was allocated from the budget in order to pay out pensions to the beneficiaries of the BiH Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance (PIO). With this money the pensions for Bosniak pensioners that PIO owed them for the August of the last year, were paid out. Although Behmen's move was judged as a legal decision, it is a

double laundering of taxpayers' money. At the same time the Government did not give a single Mark for the Pension-Disability Bureau in Mostar through which most of the Croat pensioners receive their pensions.

The Prime Minister did not write off debts of a single company in the Croat part of the Federation. The Government completely wrote off debts of the companies 'Kombiteks' from Bihac and 'BH Steel Company' from Zenica (which is firing 2500 workers) to the amount of 6 million Marks and the debt of the BiH Railways that amounts to 3.6 million Marks. The Government partially covers debts of the Pension-Disability Insurance for mines Kreka from Tuzla that amount to 11.5 million Marks and the coal mines in Banovic, Djurdjevik, Kakanj, Zenica, Breza, Bila and Gornji Vakuf that amounts to 20. 3 million Marks. More than 5% of the Federation budget was written off and Prime Minister Behmen will refund it by the rebalance of the 2001 budget. Behmen has got so much carried away in his ruling that he forgot that the Parliament should confirm the rebalance of the budget that, just as an example, the Croats fill in with 60%. The Federation Government has given to the PIO Fund 64 million Marks so far, and to the MIO Fund in Mostar only 5 million Marks when, due to the blockade of Hercegovacka Bank, they could not pay out pensions for the Croat pensioners.