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BiH State-related Issues

The London Economist brings investors in BiH

Oslobodjenje reports that IBM, Microsoft, McDonald's, City Bank and Deutsche Bank are just some of the large-scale global companies whose representatives should arrive in BiH on February 22. They expressed their interest to take part in a round-table discussion on investing in the country to be jointly organized by the London-based The Economist and the BiH Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA). "it will be the beginning of the this year's promotion of the BiH economy. Bosnia will be presented to the world business in a completely new way, in compliance with a new image. The round-table is supposed to be the economic event of the year," FIPA Director

Mirza Hajric told the newspaper.

BiH House of Representatives Collegium members say the general elections and Road Map conditions fulfillment main tasks in 2002

According to Oslobodjenje, the BiH House of Representatives Collegium members emphasized on Thursday that, in the course of 2002, the country would face very important tasks including the general election and the Road Map conditions fulfillment, BiH has thus far fulfilled only nine out of 18 conditions. At a press conference in Sarajevo, Chairman of the House Zeljko Mirjanic and his Deputies Sead Avdic and Mariofil Ljubic assessed that both BiH state institutions and the country's international position had been strengthened during the last year. Mirjanic said that a fact the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, had imposed not a single law at the state level in 2001 confirmed a progress had been made in work of the BiH state institutions.

Heavy trucks still banned from using Gunja-Brcko bridge/border crossing

The situation on the bridge over the Sava River has not changed since the Croatian side still does not allow the functioning of the traffic of vehicles over six tones, including buses, over the border crossing Gunja, Brcko Mayor Sinisa Kistic stated on Thursday, ONASA reports. According to Kistic, this ban, which was introduced on December 22 last year, mostly affected citizens who work in the Western Europe and who arrived in BiH for the New Year's holidays. Kistic added that the Brcko District is also affected with a decision of the BiH Federation Government that only 28 companies from both entities may import high-excise goods over the border crossing in Orasje, out of which no one has been registered in Brcko. On this occasion, authority representatives of the District have sent letters to Chairman of the BiH Presidency

Jozo Krizanovic and Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Zlatko Lagumdzija with a request that these bans be abolished as soon as possible. Kistic said that the District Assembly has adopted the law on the excises, which is harmonized with the entity laws, but that "the BiH Federation and the Republika Srpska (RS) cannot agree on this issue. "The District is not an obstacle for the harmonization of the tax policy in BiH, but a motive around which both entities should gather. Unfortunately, the entities are not ready for an agreement on this problem," Kistic said.

The BiH Chamber for Human Rights decision on military apartments to be reviewed?

Oslobodjenje reports that the Office for the Legal Representation of the BiH Federation before the BiH Human Rights Chamber will on Friday officially request the Chamber to reconsider and review its decision on the military apartments. "At the same time, an analysis of the decision will be delivered to the BiH Federation Government with a proposal that the Government, the BiH Federation Parliament, BiH Council of Ministers and the BiH Parliamentary Assembly take steps in accordance to their authorities in order that the disputed decision of the Chamber is abolished," Seada Palavric, the BiH Federation legal representative in the Chamber told Fena news agency. Sead Avdic, the deputy chairman of the BiH House of Representatives, Ivo Komsic, Chairman of the BiH House of Peoples, and Ivan Brigic, the deputy chairman of the BiH Federation House of Representatives, told Dnevni Avaz they were prepared to initiate legal proceedings regarding the Chamber's decision before the BiH Constitutional Court if they are requested to do so.

The BiH Council of Ministers fails to agree draft Budget for 2002

According to Oslobodjenje, at its session in Sarajevo on

Thursday, the BiH Council of Ministers failed to adopt draft Budget for 2002. The Ministers could not agree on the increased demands for funding the BiH state institutions, return of refugees and general elections. What is known is that the state need 292 million marks to pay foreign debts, and that there will be no increase of salaries and new jobs in the state institutions. BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet said following the session that an approximate amount of the state Budget for the year might be determined in seven days, when the Council of Ministers was expected to forward the draft to the BiH Presidency for consideration.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Dossier – How do international administrators violate human rights in BiH (part 2)

Written by Marijan Puntaric (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Marijan Puntaric says that there have been warnings coming several international addresses, which warn of violation of Annex 3 of the DPA, which deals with free elections failing to name the addressers. The author writes that the OSCE and OHR have put a restriction on the free competition of candidates, restricted the right to vote and to be voted for, taken away mandates from political parties and that the HR, contrary to the Annex 3 and OSCE documents adopted in Copenhagen in 1990, relived political officials. With regards to the HR's mandate in BiH, the HR being the final authority in the interpretation of the DPA, Puntaric says that there is nothing wrong with that but adds that the problems occurred when the Madrid and Bonn Conferences practically extended the HR's authorities thus suspending all the DPA's Annexes which guarantee BiH citizens all the human, civic and political rights. By extending the authorities, says Puntaric, a situation was created in which the final authority (the HR) can violate the human rights and not be held responsible. That's what happened, warn the Helsinki boards for human rights and groups such as the ESI (European Stabilisation Initiative). It is

clear that Petritsch must not do anything against the SDS, assess foreign analysts, whilst he can impose drastic sanctions and violate human, civic and political rights of the Croats, preventing the HDZ from getting into power after they took the commanding victory. Petritsch did not find the strength to sanction the RS President, **Mirko Sarovic**, after he went to Moscow in the capacity of an official, without the knowledge of the BiH Presidency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the usual diplomatic procedure. The Helsinki Board admit that the OHR encourages political persecutions and the "Sarajevo processes" against the Croat officials. "The Jelavic case" has become an interesting case to international organisations dealing with protection of human rights. The question is – if Petritsch can replace Jelavic from the BiH Presidency for alleged violation of the constitutional establishment how is possible to deprive him of all civic and human rights without the valid decision reached in the court of law (...)

Federation

HNS parties say RS cannot be exclusively Serb entity

The political parties belonging to the Croat National Assembly (HNS) said in their New Year's message that they could not accept Republika Srpska as an exclusive entity of the Serb people, as well as the transformation of the BiH Federation into an exclusive Bosniak entity through the application of the principle of civic majority. "We want both entities to be established in the same way, since the international community is not prepared to transfer the entity's authorities to the state," the message read, according to Oslobodjenje.

BPS dissatisfied with its position in the Alliance

for Change

According to Dnevni Avaz, Sefer Halilovic's Bosnian Patriotic Party (BPS) expressed dissatisfaction with its position within the Alliance for Change at a session of the Alliance's Coordination Body in Sarajevo on Thursday. It therefore rejected to take over the chairmanship position in the Body.

Dnevni List: Pictures from Stolac – A Mosque guard

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List says that Edo Festic, a guard of the mosque site in Stolac, is one of the major extremists who is always in town, provoking Croat students and passers-by. He often throws rocks at Croat students passing by. He says they provoke him and he has to do it. Festic stated that he gets a daily wage of 50 KM for guarding what the daily calls illegal construction site and 70 KM for the night shift.

Dnevni List reads that Festic and his colleague Nedžad Cerkez are the major extremists in town. Cerkez often gets drunk and walks round the town, shouting, "Stolac is Allah's town." If it goes on like this, there will be no peace for a long time to come, comments the daily.

Dnevni List: Neven Tomic, the Mostar Mayor, stated in a HTV Oscar C news broadcast that he does not expect that this year will be brighter than 2001

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Neven Tomic stated: 'When we started to hope that the holidays passed rather quietly and without problems this bomb attack on the building of the Public Company 'Herceg Bosna Forests' took place.' He judged that this attack is obviously a reaction of those to whom the normalization of the situation in Mostar does not suit. 'I am sure that the resolving of this case will be a good test for a new City Police and it would be extremely

important for the creation of the atmosphere of security in Mostar.'

Neven Tomic, the Mostar Mayor, judged that, among the other things, 2001 was marked by the consolidation of the Mostar City Administration. 'We have sent clear signals from Mostar saying that a critical mass, that is ready to build the city according to modern European standards, exists in Mostar.'

Asked as to what the Mostar City Administration expects from this year, he stated that, first of all, it is the city budget adoption and many other decisions of the City Council with regard to the implementation of the announced programs. 'That is the creation of the Mostar city institutions, from the Mostar Urban Planning Bureau, the city Public Transportation Company, the Agency in charge of the Old Bridge and Mostar Old Town, to the City Police, the project whose implementation has already started. At the end of this week the meeting should take place in Sarajevo and we expect that the issue of the city Tax Administration should be resolved during this meeting. This is the year in which we expect the implementation of the Constitutional Court decision on the constituency of peoples and it will certainly cause some reactions. Also, the fact that this is the year of the elections will influence the atmosphere in BiH and Mostar. In this year I expect making of considerable steps in the functioning of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, and it will contribute to the further development of the City of Mostar. By all accounts, a very difficult year, marked by many political issues, is ahead of us. We shall need a lot of patience, skill and hope, that something good will come out of it.'

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Mijo Brajkovic, the CEO of the Mostar Aluminij

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an interview with the CEO of the Mostar-based "Aluminij d.d.", Mijo Brajkovic, in which he mostly talks about the events that marked the year 2001 that had an influence on the company. Speaking about the results of it, he said that the company made another stride forward by producing 96.500 tons of the metal, which is the all-time high. As far as the wages are concerned, Brajkovic said that the average salary in the "Aluminij" is 1300KMs adding that the workers got a Christmas bonus amounting to 70% of their salaries. Speaking about the pressures applied against the "Aluminij", Brajkovic said that Lagumdžija, during his tour through Europe, was told that the company was a strategic partner to some German companies and should be treated differently. When questioned about the privatization of the company and why the privatization was not carried out in it, Brajkovic said that the Aluminij was a company of the Cantonal importance and that according to the current legislation it was in the competence of the Cantonal Privatization Agency (CPA) and not the Federation one adding that the company had already submitted all the relevant documents to the CPA but nothing was initiated as yet. "Somebody is stalling it and we are afraid that our privatization goes into the pre-election grind so everyone will start to claim us unduly for their purposes and manipulate with us. That would be detrimental to all the peoples and our region. We have been told that they were awaiting a report from the OHR on the work of the "Aluminij" and even it was completed three months ago still nothing is happening. We wonder how the companies, which submitted the documents after us, went into privatization already and we are still waiting for it. Somebody should tell us what is going on when the law clearly says that the privatization should go ahead two months after the documentation is submitted and if there were no objections to it", said Brajkovic, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Republika Srpska

RS Premier in the RTRS Radio program

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

“The presence of representatives of peoples living in the RS in its authorities and institutions can objectively be implemented only on the basis of the electoral results”, said RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, during an RTRS Radio program last night. He pointed out that key political parties in the RS agreed with this to a great extent and that a realistic compromise should also be made at the BiH level and international level.

Speaking about the forthcoming constitutional changes in the RS, Prime Minister Ivanic said that a compromise in regard to this issue should be made within key political parties in the RS and BiH. He is of the view that this is a realistic framework, which will be accepted by representatives of the international community in BiH.

“I think that a large part of the international functions in Sarajevo is centralist, that they are in Sarajevo for too long and too often, that they are not fully aware of the entire situation and circumstances, that they are very often exposed to big pressure by the media in Sarajevo in regard to only one side of the truth. I also believe that if we accept the fact that we also have to change in one part, that some things have to be a bit different, then our arguments will be strong enough and the majority of international institutions will respect that. I have not so far come to an impression that there have been any major reactions to the constitutional changes by international representatives. I believe that they will retain the only possible principle – it is a matter to be dealt by politicians, political parties and the assemblies in the RS and Federation. I do not think that international representatives will jump in to become the creators of the

constitution, because that would be a unique case of imposing solutions to the constitution and I am almost 100% convinced in that.”

Answering a question on the fate of the RTRS, in regard to the lack of the respective law, Premier Ivanic responded: “You know that the High Representative has brought a decision on the Federation TV. According to this decision, the founder is the Federation Assembly. We are requested that the decisions should not read that the founder of the RTRS is RS NA. International representatives request that instead the decisions should read that no one is the founder of the RTRS. I do not quite understand that. The time we gave them to prove that the situation in the Federation has changed is running out. If the law proposed by the High Representative is not changed we will come forward with our version and adopt the decision according to which the founder of the RTRS is the RS NA. We will also request in this decision that the RS NA should appoint the members of the Steering Board. However, the RS NA is fully responsible for the situation in the RTRS.”

Premier Ivanic also said that he expected that the RS NA would adopt at the next session the RS budget for this year. He announced that the RS treasury would start to function as of 10th January.

RS president denies having contacts with war crimes suspects

Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic does not know the current whereabouts of Generals Vinko Pandurevic and Dragomir Milosevic, indicted for war crimes by The Hague Tribunal, Tanjug (FRY news agency) has been told in the president’s office. According to the same source, the RS president has not had any contacts recently with the RS Army generals, sought by the ICTY, nor does he know where they are. Citing anonymous sources close to the RS president, the Banja Luka Nezavisne novine reported on Thursday that Sarovic had contacts with

Generals Pandurevic and Milosevic, and that he had persuaded them to hand themselves over voluntarily to the ICTY.

RS President says constitutional changes are nothing spectacular

Nezavisne Novine quotes Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic as saying that the RS is stable and that the upcoming constitutional changes will bring nothing spectacular and dramatic. "We shall find the best solutions that will be in line with the BiH Constitution and that is – equality of all peoples, fair representation and removal of all discriminatory provisions from the RS Constitution", said Sarovic. He also said the RS system could not be changed, although there were such initiatives and wishful thinking.

Kunic on constitutional changes

Republika Srpska Deputy Premier Petar Kunic assessed that the members of the Constitutional Commission of the RS National Assembly could make a compromise in regard to the constitutional changes. He pointed out that certain factors from the international community should leave the local authorities to agree on this issue on their own. Kunic stated to the Bijeljina-based BN television that he was not satisfied with the pace of the privatization process in the RS. He noted that foreign investors did not have any interest to invest in companies that were devastated.

ICTY rules five war crime suspects can be tried in the RS

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski reports that the RS Prime Minister's Advisor for cooperation with the ICTY, Sinisa Djordjevic, yesterday told SRNA that the ICTY so far had ruled that the trials of five indictees accused of committing war crimes against the BiH

Serbs should be held in the RS."As far as the charges against Alija Izetbegovic are concerned, we have gathered additional evidence which will be handed over to the ICTY, with a written request that the Tribunal voice its stand on the charges within 10 days," Djordjevic said. The Prime Minister's adviser on cooperation with the Hague tribunal reiterated that in connection with the case of the indicted Gen Vinko Pandurevic (former commander of the Zvornik brigade who was indicted in November 1998; the indictment was unsealed on 14 December 2000), the only information he still had was the unofficial announcement by the Yugoslav authorities that negotiations on his surrender were under way. "I have been told by very reliable sources that the lawyers representing Gen Pandurevic will contact me, but as that has not happened yet, I am beginning to doubt that he is willing to surrender to the Hague at all," Djordjevic said. He did not confirm media allegations that RS President Mirko Sarovic was in negotiations with the Serb generals, Pandurevic and Dragomir Milosevic, on their surrender to the ICTY. "The government will have the last word, but I welcome anybody's attempt to mediate between war crime suspects and the tribunal", Djordjevic said in an interview to SRNA.

International Community

OHR aware of alleged gun treat against Tihic but waits police investigation results

All Sarajevo dailies quoted OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic as saying on Thursday that the OHR was aware of the alleged gun threats against Republika Srpska National Assembly Deputy Speaker and SDA BiH President Sulejman Tihic, but that it was waiting to see the police investigation results in this matter. "I understand it is for the police to follow up and look into this matter of course. Any kind of threats or violent behavior certainly especially against an elected

representative are unacceptable and we are following closely what is happening. But as I said, if the matter is to be investigated, it has to go through the proper process, which is through the local police, Milisic told journalists in Sarajevo.

UNMIBH says progress made in 2001 in establishing a multi-ethnic police

According to Oslobodjenje, UNMIBH Spokesman Stefo Lehmann told a press conference in Sarajevo on Thursday that a significant progress had been made in minority and women recruitment within the police force in BiH in the last year. "One of the successful programs has been the training of new cadets at the police academies in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Last year, a total of three classes were matriculated into the two academies with a total of 329 cadets. Additionally, a total of 390 cadets started their field training last year. Basically field training is a period of six-months which follows a period of six-months of classroom instruction. One of the most notable successes regarding cadet training was the increase in female recruitment and representation. The current class at the Federation Academy, which is the 5th class, is composed of 75% women. There are 114 cadets in that Academy, 78 of them are women. Additionally of the 114 cadets in the Sarajevo Police Academy 75 are minority cadets. The last class of the Republika Srpska Academy consisted of 121 cadets of which a total of 96 were minorities, so these are pretty good numbers. The last class of the Republika Srpska Academy, the 5th class, has now entered into their six-month field-training period prior to becoming professional police officers. The testing of the next generation of cadets in the Republika Srpska Academy, which will be the 6th class, was conducted last December. Of the 558 applicants tested for entry into the Republika Srpska Academy, 179 passed the required tests. Of these 179 qualified applicants, 108 will matriculate as police cadets. Of these

108, 93 are minorities and almost 50% are women cadets," Lehman said. He added that it was important to emphasize that many of the minority officers had been deployed to senior positions, such as Station Commander, Deputy Station Commander or Chief of Criminal Investigations Unit as a minority.

CRA send bills to the BiH telecommunication companies for using frequencies

Dnevni Avaz reports that the Communication Regulatory Agency (CRA), at the end of last year, sent bills to the GSM operators in BiH for using the mobile phone frequencies. BiH Treasury Minister Ante Domazet told journalists in Sarajevo on Thursday that the state would earn 6.6 million KM after the BiH Telecom, Eronet and Telecom RS paid their 2.2 million bills each.

OHR says it is premature to say how the vital national interests will be protected in the RS

Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine report that the OHR has neither confirmed nor denied the Sarajevo media speculations, according to which it has proposed the establishment of a commission and not the House of Peoples for protection of vital national interests in the Republika Srpska. OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic told HINA Croatian news agency that it was still premature to say whether the commission and not the House of Peoples would be established in the RS as an instrument for protecting vital national interests.

Four SFOR soldiers arrested by RS Police – Troublemakers returned to UK

Four SFOR soldiers that were arrested by Police in Gradiska because they attacked and disturbed citizens of Gradiska at the New Year's Eve, have been returned to the UK, said SFOR Spokesman Toby Strong. He also stated that the joint investigation had been carried out by the local Police, SFOR and IPTF. After the investigation is done, it will be decided

whether they will be punished and how.

Vecernji List: The gas station located near the OHR Sarajevo started to work again

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Energopetrol's gas station located near the OHR Sarajevo was reopened, although the dispute between the OHR and Energopetrol has not been resolved yet. One of a few gas stations located in the center of Sarajevo was closed due to 'security reasons' after terrorist attacks in New York and Washington and at the direct OHR request. The Energopetrol Management decided to reopen the gas station one month after its closure, although the agreement with the OHR has not been reached yet. Hasan Grosic, the Head of the Energopetrol's Public Affairs Department, stated: 'The gas station has been reopened and we have not had some new problems with the OHR.'

He confirmed that the promise, given by the OHR that they would cover a financial damage that this company suffered due to a one-month closure, has not been fulfilled. 'They even mentioned the possibility to purchase the gas station, however, at the end we did not reach the agreement.' He reminded that it is still possible that they will have additional negotiations with the OHR.

However, according to the present situation it seems that the OHR decided to withdraw from the whole case, that is, to stop the obstruction of the work of the gas station. Obviously, at the moment, the danger of terrorist attacks is not so big as it used to be three months ago, and for this reason it seems that the OHR is not ready to allocate millions of Marks to compensate Energopetrol's damage or purchase a disputable gas station, located in its neighborhood.

Vecernji List: The Communication Regulatory Agency

to issue the concession to the third GSM operator in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

If 'the Eronet case' comes before the court, and all prerequisites for it have been met due to inflexible stands of parties involved in this case, some other company might get the concession as the third GSM operator on the BiH territory. Naturally, the question as to what kind of stand the Agency, that issues the concession, will take and whether it will be patient to wait for the end of the story, remains open. Ten days ago Jerker Torngren, a Head of this Agency, resigned and it has been speculated that he did it exactly because of this case. Asked whether they have had an insight into the report of the Privatization Agency, that according to the claims coming from the HPT Management, revealed that the whole operation of transferring of the ownership over Eronet to three private companies was illegal, Amela Odobasic, a CRA Spokesperson, briefly answered that she does not know whether they are supposed at all to get the reports from that Agency. On the other hand, Toby Robinson, the Hercegovacka Bank Provisional Administrator, who also gained 'control' over Eronet, wants to make HPT to buy off the package of shares (40% of them) that this Bank has. If the whole case ends up before the court it might happen that the strongest GSM operator in BiH remains without the concession and collapse and this would be really tragic.