OHR BiH Media Round-up, 2/8/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: BiH Election Commission decides to entrust the printing of election ballots to Hungarian company and annul its contract with Zrinjski from Croatia

Dnevni Avaz: Ashdown stops the theft in public funds

Jutarnje Novine: Fed Defense Ministry – Government de-blocks, Fin Police blocked the MoD accounts

Glas srpski: RS Pension Fund Director says all pensions will be reviewed; Law on PBS Passed;

Nezavisne novine: Explosion in a mine in the eastern Ukraine – 19 miners dead; The "Zrinjski" printing house blackmailing BiH Election Commission;

Blic: Defective inhalers have been selling since November 2001; Cedo Volas: 8,000 KM for each soldier

Vecernji List: NHI temporarily withdraws from the government

Dnevni List: BiH political parties: Abdic should have been sentenced to life in prison!

Slobodna Bosna: A hysteric pre-election campaign of the nationalistic mafia announces tragic BiH's post-election perspective – Happy New Year of 1992

BH Dani: Now or never – the third Chetnik's offensive

Election Ballots

At yesterday's session, the **BiH Council of Minister** decided to ask **the BiH Parliamentary Assembly** to determine whether the decision of the **BiH Election Commission** to entrust the Croatian company Zrinjski with the job of printing the election ballots is legal or not. *"We would like to check whether the Law on Protection of Personal Data will be violated if one foreign company is allowed to have data about BiH citizens living abroad,"* deputy Minister of civil Affairs and Communication **Milan Lovric**

told the press. Lovric added that the Council has also asked the OHR to provide its legal opinion about the legality of this process, and noted that this body does not have the right to influence the selection of companies for printing the ballots. Lovric: *"The Election Commission is the only institution which has jurisdiction over the implementation of the tender for selection of companies."* (**Dnevni Avaz, Oslobodjenje, Nezavisne Novine p. 3**)

As the BiH Council of Ministers was discussing the legality of the selection process, **the BiH Election Commission** decided to annul its preliminary contract with the Zrinjski company and entrust the task of printing the election ballots to Allami company from Hungary. **Oslobodjenje** (front page) writes that the Croatian company was eliminated because it, allegedly, attempted to "break" the agreed price and ask for additional 100,000 KM for this job. *"We had to keep our dignity and we, therefore, decided to eliminate Zrinjski. We cannot accept such way of making agreements,"* **Vehid Sehic** of the Election Commission told the daily.

The **Trade Union of Graphic designers** announced yesterday that it will call upon the BIH citizens to boycott the upcoming elections if the job of printing election ballots and identification documents is not entrusted to a Bosnian company. Union's president **Amer Toskic** said he will ask the BiH Council of Ministers to stop the implementation of the CIPS project if domestic graphic workers failed to be asked to participate in it. (All Sarajevo media)

CIPS

Slobodna Bosna Editor-in-Chief Senad Avdic writes in this week's edition of the magazine that **Dnevni Avaz** attempted to create a spectacular political affair related to the CIPS project implementation only because its owner **Fahrudin Radoncic** had expected that the Sarajevo-based OKO Printing Firm (also owned by Radoncic) would be included in the job. *"After the officials authorized for the CIPS project implementation told him that the OKO machines in technological terms did not match the ones to be installed in the printing press in Banja Luka, which will be tasked to print the identification documents, Radoncic has launched media campaign against BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija,"* Avdic wrote. The weekly in general dismisses all allegations about the illegal tender and dubious selection of companies for the CIPS implementation, noting that the CIPS is perhaps *the "most important project in the history of BiH."*

The Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, **Dragan Mikerevic**, said in an interview with this week's **Slobodna Bosna** that, deliberately or accidentally, a big pomp had been created in the public with regard to the CIPS project. *"What the Council of Ministers has been doing is a discussion on the project implementation at each session of the Council due to its seriousness (high price, involvement of a large number of subjects). Thereby we have been giving a significance to the project and we have also wanted to have updated information on the execution of the project and following problems,"* Mikerevic said.

The **BiH Parliament's House of Representatives** adopted on Thursday **the Law on Public Broadcasting Service and System of BiH**. This law was one of the last conditions from the EU Road Maps for concluding the Stabilization and Association Agreement between BIH and the EU. At the same session, the House unanimously adopted the **Law on Veterinary in BiH** (second reading). **(Oslobodjenje p. 3, Dnevni Avaz p. 4, Glas srpski p. 3, and Nezavisne novine p. 6, BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS)**

At yesterday's session, the **BiH Council of Ministers** defined the **Draft Law on Changes and Addenda to the Law on BiH Citizenship**, and extended the deadline for conclusion of bilateral agreements on dual citizenship by five years. This will allow BiH citizens who hold additional citizenship to keep their BIH one for at least this period of time, or until BiH concludes an agreement regulating dual citizenship with that country. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **BHTV 1, FTV**)

*"The **Social Democratic Party** [SDP] will support a stable BiH and consolidation of the rule of law, of the BiH institutions, and economic development,"* said **Slobodan Popovic**, deputy chairman of the party and head of the list of the party's candidates for the RS National Assembly.

He added that the SDP would also insist on the BiH Council of Ministers getting the legal status of BiH government since, as he said, the fact that the macroeconomic policy was now conducted at the level of BiH while the tax policy was conducted at the level of the entities was unacceptable. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 3)

BiH Foreign Relations

Kostajnica

Oslobodjenje (p. 3) reports that the BiH State Border Service (SBS) prevented Croatian team of engineers from entering the disputed border area in Kostajnica and from starting the construction of the joint border crossing. An aide to the director of the SBS, **Radisa Samardzija**, told the daily that the construction team was not allowed to enter the territory between the rivers Una and Uncica because Croatia has not yet ratified the Annex to the Agreement on Kostajnica border crossing. (**Jutarnji List** page 5 and front page, **Dnevni List** page 15 and **Vjesnik) Oslobodjenje** notes that one of the aspects of the dispute over the contentions border is the attempt of the BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications, **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, to take over the State Border Service as a "shadow director" and compromise its current head, **Slavisa Vukovic.**

At yesterday's session, the **BiH Council of Ministers** said it expects that the dispute over the Kostajnica border crossing to be resolved in the coming days. *"We have adopted the annex which defines the zone in which will accommodate the crossing, however its measurements have not been determined yet. We are expecting that our experts will complete this task, together with Croat representatives, within the next five days,"* deputy Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications**, Milan Lovric**, told the press. Lovric explained the BiH SBS prevented the Croatian engineer team from entering the disputed territory because the construction plans were agreed to be conducted jointly by expert teams of both countries. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3**, Dnevni Avaz** p. 2)

In a statement for the press, the Croatian Foreign Minister, **Tonino Picula,** urged all responsible institutions in BiH and Croatia to, without delay, continue works on construction of the joint border crossing at Kostajnica and open it for traffic by the end of the month. *"It is indisputable that the joint border crossing will be located at the Croatian territory, however, the BiH side should resolve all the outstanding technical issues in a spirit of partnership."* (**HINA, Dnevni Avaz** p. 2)

IC/OHR's activities

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, issued on Thursday two Decisions establishing the office of Special Auditor in the Republika Srpska and extending the mandate of the Special Auditor in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The mandate of the current Federation Special Auditor, Dale Ellen Ralph, has been extended, and Ms Ralph has been appointed to serve concurrently as RS Special Auditor. Ralph will be responsible for examining the accounts of Entity and municipality institutions and public companies. (**Oslobodjenje** f.p. & p.8, **Dnevni Avaz** front page "Ashdown stops the robbery of public funds", **Nezavisne Novine** p. 5, **FTV** and **RTRS**)

At a joint press conference in Sarajevo, the BIH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Azra Hadziahmetovic**, and the Principal Deputy High Representative, **Donald Hays**, emphasized the importance of BiH's integration in the international and European civil aviation associations and urged BiH authorities to pass a law regulating the field of civil aviation. **Hays**: *"In the next six to ten months, BiH institutions will have to deal with a complicated task of taking over from the SFOR the control over the air space in BiH."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 3, **Oslobodjenje** p. 7, **Vecernji List** p. 4, **Dnevni List** p. 3, **BHTV 1**, **RTRS**)

Suzana Mijatovic writes in this week's **Slobodna Bosna** that, some two months ago, the representatives of the OHR, the OSCE and the UNMIBH had agreed in cooperation with the advisors for the US, British and German Ambassadors to BiH a common strategy of action towards Croats in BiH, and in the context of the upcoming elections. *"The Document for Croats in BiH, which is the official title of the pre-election guide, says at the very beginning that the formation of the third entity is not the solution for the Croat issue. A wise option for Croats is instead to actively participate in the state institutions supporting their work in terms of reducing the powers of the entities all until they become irrelevant,"* Mijatovic wrote.

In a column in BH DANI, Ivan Lovrenovic writes that Paddy Ashdown is not personally responsible for the policy of the international community in BiH carried out in the past years, which advocated for the solutions establishing ethnic-territorial divisions, but quite opposite, he deserves respect because he has been providing quite different personal example. *"However, by nature of his mandate in BiH, he cannot avoid to bear the burden of principle responsibility for the role played by the*

international community in its entirety – meaning equally for bright and dark sides of its engagement. That is why, in responding to the HDZ's political stupidities (Lovrenovic refers to the recent Ashdown's dialogue with a HDZ deputy at the parliamentary session in Sarajevo), Ashdown should express a dose of necessary criticism to be addressed on the international community, if he wants that his speeches and responses have full credibility," Lovrenovic wrote.

Vecernji List (page 2), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 18) and **Dnevni List** (page 13) report that Ambassador **Frédéric Baleine du Laurens**, Minister Plenipotentiary and Political Director at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and representative of the French Government at the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, visited Mostar yesterday and met with leaders of the city and the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. *"We want to help Bosnia and Herzegovina join European integration",* said Ambassador du Laurens adding that France would help establishment and strengthening of BiH state institutions.

Federation Affairs

The New Croat Initiative (NHI) said on Thursday that it was withdrawing from the work of the Federation government because of the failure of the BiH Parliament to appoint a new Finance Minister. *"The NHI will not take part in the work of the government until equality of Croats is established, pursuant to the constitutional and legal solutions,"* the NHI vice president**, Mijo Anic,** told the **FTV** late last night. Anic said that the NHI will, however, remain in all other bodies of authority at the state and the entity level, as well as in the Alliance for Change. *"It is outrageous that such an important post in the government, as is the Finance Minister, has not yet been filled."* **(FTV, Vecernji List** front page, **Slobodna Dalmacija)** In the meantime, **Anic** decided to postpone his meeting with the High Representative**, Paddy Ashdown**, which was scheduled for Thursday. Anic explained that this meeting was too politicized and was given an excessive media attention. *"For this reason, we decided to postpone this meeting until further notice, that is, until the present situation is overcome,"* Anic told the **FTV.** (**Oslobodjenje** p. 4)

Vecernji List (page 2, Srecko Stipovic) notes that *'Although Croats fill in the Federation budget two times more than their partner's, that is, the Bosniak-Muslim side, they do no influence at all spending and distribution of their money. Due to various behind-the-scene and dirty games, representatives of the Croat people almost remained without all*

important functions in the Federation and BiH.'

At the last session in Sarajevo, the **Federation government** marked unacceptable the recommendation of the BiH Commission for Refugees and DPs to devise new criteria for the legalization of the illegally constructed buildings on the socially-owned land. **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 9) reports that the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, will send a letter to the OHR and ask the High Representative to annul all decisions about the allocation of land for construction issued after April 6, 1992. According to the daily, the government will explain its request by stressing the need for having unique criteria for the implementation of property laws on the entire territory of BiH. *"Allocation of between 50 – 80,000 plots of land for construction in both entities clearly demonstrated the mass violations of the ban on construction on the socially-owned land, which shoild be a subject of restitution,"* Minister of Urban Planning and Environment **Ramiz Mehmedagic** told **FENA** news agency. The RS Minister for Refugees, Mico Micic, told the daily, however, that there is no need for annulling all the decision, as the process of allocation of socially-owned land has been suspended because of the *"very strict regulations by the OHR."*

Senad Pecanin writes in this week's BH Dani opening editorial that the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator, Toby Robinson, using the OHR authorities and powers, and, at the same time ignoring the BiH Federation Privatization Agency, has been exerting pressure on the management of the HPT Mostar to buy 4.48 percent of Eronet shares. These shares had once been illegally taken away and transferred to the Croherc thereby becoming a part of the ownership structure by Ante Jelavic (former HDZ leader) and his criminals. *"What stands behind a strange behavior of Mrs. Robinson? If the HPT Mostar would have bought these shares, the Eronet would have in its ownership structure 4.48 of the state capital. By this, the conditions would be fulfilled for Eronet to apply for the third GSM license without any tender, and it would actually become the third operator with the major private capital,"* Pecanin wrote.

RS Issues

Glas srpski quotes **(front page)** the **RS Pension Fund Director, Ostoja**

Kremenovic, as saying that all pensions in this entity will be reviewed. He said that the number of the invalid pension beneficiaries has been increased comparing to the number of ordinary pensions, which is a consequence of the war. *"We have launched an initiative to change the way of establishing of invalidity degree as a condition a person has to meet to be eligible for the status of a pensioner. The RS Pension Fund and RS Health Ministry have come up with a proposal to form a commission, which would decide on the invalidity degree of a person and that it should not be a doctor as it has been the case so far"*, said Kremenovic. The paper also reports on its front page that the RS Government fully supports the RS Pension Fund initiative on restructuring of the RS pension system and primarily the invalid pensions. The Government requested that the RS Pension Fund draft the pension system-restructuring program within 60 days.

The RS Defense Minister, **Slobodan Bilic,** and the President of the RS Trade Union, **Cedo Volas**, concluded at yesterday's meeting that 1,770 members of the RS Army and the RS Defense Ministry personnel should not lose their jobs because of the reorganization of these services. Bilic and Volas added that they must have the same rights, as the soldiers and officers, who are being dismissed in the BiH Federation. (**Blic p.11, FRY Nacional p.11**)

In an interview with **BH DANI**, the RS Vice-president and a senior SDS official, **Dragan Cavic,** said, after being asked about the "genocide in Srebrenica" that *"the word genocide is a too heavy of a qualification, but that it is indisputable that a crime against civilians indeed took place. A crime against civilians was committed in Srebrenica, and in many other places the crimes against civilians happened, and, if there is God and justice the people who committed them will be held responsible in a way foreseen by law."*

Fikret Abdic

All the Croat(ian) dailies render the issue of trials against **Fikret Abdic. Vecernji List** (f.p.), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p.7), **Dnevni List** (p.3), **Jutarnji List** (p.2) and **Vjesnik** (p.5) all report that the 20 years in prison sentence/verdict against Abdic will not affect his candidacy for the office of the Bosniak member of BiH Presidency as stated yesterday by a member of the BiH Election Commission **Hilmo Pasic.** *"The decision of Karlovac County Court is not valid yet. It is down to the Supreme Court of Croatia to deal with the appeal. Fikret Abdic remains in custody but that's not serving of the sentence",* says Pasic.

Zoran Kresic in **Vecernji List** draws a parallel between Abdic and the case

of **Ante Jelavic,** notingthat it is *"absurd that a man sentenced for war crimes can run for the BiH Presidency while Jelavic cannot even run for a position of Head of Municipality in Ljubuski."*

Slobodna Dalmacija's Zlatko Tulic wonders whether Abdic will be able to run the pre-election campaign fromprison"*ashe didbefore when he was in charge of the Agrokomerc Company"* and says that there is a possibility that even the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** might get involved. The daily, however, also quotes Ashdown as saying that the "*BiH has its Election Commission that needs to take a final decision in the issue".*

Dnevni List's Miso Pelota says that DNZ (Abdic's party) believes that the verdict is a part of the deal between BiH and Croatia i.e. **Zlatko Lagumdzija and Stjepan Mesic** and that a compensation will follow especially having in mind recent disputes between the two states.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- NHI says it is withdrawing from the work of the Federation government because of the failure of the Federation Parliament to appoint a new Minister of Finance
- BIH Parliament's House of Representatives adopts the Law on Veterinary Medicine in BiH and the Laws on Public Broadcasting System and Service
- BiH Council of Ministers defines the draft Law on changes and addenda to the Law on BIH citizenship, extends the deadline for conclusion of bilateral agreements on dual citizenship for five years
- Trade Union of Graphic Designers will call on BIH citizens to boycott the upcoming elections

FTV

- Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor's Office presses charges against Minib Zahiragic, the head of an Islamic charity, for espionage
- A minor with BiH passport arrested in bombing of a disco club in Austria

- Council of Ministers supports the decision of the BiH Election Commission to award the job of printing the election ballots to Zrinjski company from Croatia
- BiH Council of Ministers defines the draft Law on changes and addenda to the Law on BIH citizenship, extends the deadline for conclusion of bilateral agreements on dual citizenship for five years
- BIH Parliament's House of Representatives adopts the Law on Veterinary Medicine in BiH and the Laws on Public Broadcasting System and Service

RTRS

- High Representative issues a Decision on the establishment of the Office of Special Auditor for the Federation and the RS
- Council of Ministers supports the decision of the BiH Election Commission to award the job of printing the election ballots to Zrinjski company from Croatia
- BIH Parliament's House of Representatives adopts the Law on Veterinary Medicine in BiH and the Laws on Public Broadcasting System and Service
- Donald Hays: BIH authorities should in the next six months deal with the issue of taking over from SFOR the control of flying at the Sarajevo airport and urgently adopt a law regulating the civil aviation field.