

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 28/8/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: August pensions to be paid out on Saturday

Dnevni Avaz: Lagumdzija radicalizing political scene, threatens to Orucevic

Jutarnje Novine: Safet Halilovic – Small parties will not make it into Parliament

Dnevni List: Ministry for protection of environment of Central Bosnia Canton: There is no danger from poisonous waste in Bugojno

Vecernji List: Hot election campaign in Mostar too: Misura to Lagumdzija: You just like Djuro Pucar Stari or Stolac: Bosniak prevented construction of waste dump

Glas srpski: Serb refugee from Sarajevo filed a law-suit against Bosniak member of BiH Presidency; RS Pension-Invalid Insurance Fund and Nova banjalucka banka signed the agreement on pension payment;

Nezavisne novine: Misunderstanding between the RS Pension-Invalid Insurance Fund and Serb Posts reached its peak – Postmen say they will not deliver pensions;

Blic: Lagumdzija will withdraw charges against Yugoslavia; The RS Post Service announces stoppage in payments of pensions

Federation Affairs

Pensions

Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** announced yesterday in Sarajevo that pensioners in the Federation will receive their August pension on time – on Saturday, despite the recent removal of the Pension Fund acting director Bozo Misura and his deputy. *“Pensions should be in the news only if their disbursement is delayed. But, I want to stress that they will not be late,”* said Behmen. (front page of **Oslobodjenje**, **BHTV 1**)

The Hercegovina-Neretva **NHI** county committee issued a public statement on Tuesday opposing the decision of the Federation government on the dismissal of the management board of the Federation Pension and Disability Insurance Fund **[MIO]**, calling it *"unlawful."* *"The dismissal is a direct attack on pensioners, and it legalises an unlawful action in a very sensitive area,"* the statement said. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, Croat Radio Mostar)

Draft Defamation Law

BH Radio 1 reported last night that the **Coordination of Journalist Associations in BiH** asked the Federation government to withdraw the **Draft Defamation Law**, arguing that it is not in line with the European Standards. The move came only a few days after the OHR and the Federation Human Rights Ombudsman strongly criticized the draft because it is trying to introduce additional restrictions, which could significantly hamper the freedom of media. BiH Radio 1 also quotes OHR spokesman **Mario Brkic** as urging the Federation Parliament to *"reject the adoption of the Draft Law at its session scheduled for Thursday."* Radio's Mirsad Bajtarevic noted that the Federation Ministry of Justice marked the reaction of the OHR as *"too serious."* (**Oslobodjenje** on pages 4 and 5 and **Dnevni Avaz** on p. 12 carry press statements of the Coordination of Journalist Associations and the Federation Human Rights Ombudsman)

Tax Administration Law

The new Tax Administration Law came into force on Tuesday in the Federation, which envisages greater power for inspectors and even enables them to bring into force debt payments from private property holders and directors of enterprises. The law prescribes fines amounting to 50,000 convertible marks for failure to comply with the law's provisions on auditing. The new provisions in the Tax Administration Law have been set to encourage regular payments and are aimed at those who evade

taxes. (**Hrvatski Radio Herceg-Bosna, BH Radio 1, FTV**).

Social-Economic Council

Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen**, president of the BiH Union **Edhem Biber** and president of the Federation Business Association **Tomislav Grizelj** signed yesterday in Sarajevo an Agreement on the creation of the **Social- Economic Council**, as the top tripartite economic body in this entity. Behmen explained that the Council will coordinate social dialogue between the three partner institutions and evaluate collective contracts. *“For the first time, we have an agreement which purports to regulate relations between the government, workers and businesses,”* said Behmen. (**Dnevni Avaz 2, Federation Radio, BHTV 1, FTV**)

RS Affairs

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas srpski (front page, p. 3) and Nezavisne novine (front page, p. 8)**, report that the RS Pension and Invalid Insurance Fund (PIO) and the Nova banjalucka banka yesterday signed the agreement on pension payment through this bank. According to the papers, similar agreements will be signed with some other commercial banks from the RS. The RS PIO Fund Manager, **Ostoja Kremenovic**, said there is no need to create any tension regarding the new payment system, because all pensioners who want to receive pensions via post offices will be allowed to do so. However, the Serb Posts General Manager, **Milutin Pejic**, said that the Serb Posts will not pay pensions on September 10 if the agreement with any commercial bank is signed, because according to him, the contract that the Serb Posts signed with the RS PIO Fund will be invalid in that case. On the other hand, Kremenovic thinks that the agreement, signed by these two institutions, is still valid and that the Serb Posts has to pay pensions to those who want to receive pensions via the Serb Posts. (also **RTRS, Blic, FRY Nacional, Oslobođenje**)

BiH State-level developments

Sense agency from Brussels reports that the adoption of decision on the establishment of the **Standing Committee on Military Matters** by the BiH Presidency was welcomed by the NATO Headquarters there. However, a senior Alliance official told the agency that this *“still does not change the fundamental requirements for joining the Partnership for Peace program”*. *“We would be happy to see that the SCMM is acting as required defense structures and joint command at the state level,”* the same source said, stressing that the NATO leaders have informed the Presidency about the necessity of the creation of *“democratic and civilian control over the country’s armed forces.”* (**Oslobodjenje** p. 8, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 3, **FTV** prime time news)

Pre-election activities

Dnevni Avaz (front page) argues that the SDP leader, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, is destabilizing the BiH political scene by frequently accusing the Party for BiH and persons associated with it of the alleged criminal activities. Daily’s reaction was provoked by the recent Lagumdžija’s interview with the **Studio 99**, in which he accused the former Mostar mayor, **Safet Orucevic**, of *“selling cheaply Bosnian treasures, such as the Elektroprivreda and BH Telecom”*. This statement triggered strong reactions by Orucevic himself as well as the Party for BiH, who said that Lagumdžija is simply *“continuing his dirty but failing political campaign.”*

Yesterday’s visit of **Zlatko Lagumdžija** to Mostar was one of the top stories in Croatian media (**Vecernji List**, **Dnevni List and Slobodna Dalmacija**). After opening a new branch office of the SDP, Lagumdžija said that *“the nationalist troika will lose the upcoming elections in the RS.”* *“It is clear that after October 5, nothing will be the same in the RS and that half of the government of that entity will be comprised of Bosniaks and Croats,”* said Lagumdžija.

Foreign Affairs/Regional Cooperation

Representatives of nine **South East European countries** talked

yesterday in Sarajevo about possibilities for joint activities on fighting against the organized cross border crime in the region. BiH Minister for human rights and refugees **Kresimir Zubak** highlighted that special attention should be given to prevention of human trafficking and noted the progress in this area achieved in the recent period. *"In BiH illegal immigration is reduced by 50 percent in comparison with the previous period. We believe that this is a result of the DGS (State border service) efficiency,"* Zubak said. (**Dnevni Avaz 2, Hrvatski Radio Herceg-Bosna, Federation Radio, BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni List, Slobodna Dalmacija**)

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Zoran Kresic) reports that numerous contacts between the BiH Foreign Minister, **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, and banks and corporations from the Islamic countries, which are willing to invest into BiH have resulted in an assessment – by the Islamic countries – that BiH is not an anti-Muslim country, as was believed after the change in power from SDA to SDP and the extradition of the so called 'Algerian group'. Kresic says that such policy by Lagumdzija resulted in Malaysia suggesting that BiH becomes a full member of the Organization of Islamic Conference.

Miscellaneous

Vecernji List (front and page 7, by Frano Matic) reports that some hundred Bosniak returnees from a Stolac village of Polplati stopped the construction of temporary waste dump in their village on Monday. The daily reminds of a decision (on the construction of the waste dump) unanimously taken by representatives of Croats and Bosniaks in the Municipal Council of Stolac according to which SFOR was to build the dump and UNHCR was to provide the material. VL notes that all the explanation offered by the Head of the Municipality, **Zeljko Obradovic**, were in vain because according to the local population *"nobody asked us whether the dump can be built here"*. The locals were also addressed by the Head of Stolac office of the UNHCR, **Giovani de Siervo**, who said that the UNHCR, following the protests and prevention of construction of the waste dump, will reconsider its position in Stolac thus putting the future projects in this municipality in question.

Glas srpski reports on its **front page** that a former resident of Sarajevo who currently lives in Bosanski/Srpski Brod, Bogdan Dimic, filed a law suit with the International Court in The Hague against the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic. (Note: The paper does not say which international court in The Hague it is referring to.) The paper reports that Bogdan Dimic filed the law-suit through the RS Government's Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY. Dimic is accusing Belkic, who was the Secretary of the National Defense Department during the war in the Hrasnica Municipality in Sarajevo, of being responsible for his sufferings and sufferings of his family. The paper quotes Dimic as saying that Beriz Belkic and the two of his associates, Jasmin Kopic and Dzemo Culum, kept him and his two sons in ghetto for almost three years and that every day they were taken away to do forced labor.

Kirsten Haupt, a UNMIBH Spokesperson, warned yesterday that about 1400 policemen might lose jobs if they fail to prove within the next 15 days that they resolved their housing status in a legal way. Vecernji List (page 2) also says that IPTF suspended one policemen while three policemen were denied work permits because of theft, human trafficking and inhuman arrests charges.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- BiH representatives among six thousands businessmen at the Summit in Johannesburg.
- Representatives of nine countries met in Sarajevo to discuss the ways of preventing human trafficking, illegal migrations, crime and terrorism.
- American Vice-President said the intervention against Iraq is inevitable.
- Pensioners in Federation will receive pensions by the end of this month.

FTV

- Union of independent Syndicates, Association of Employers and Federation

Government, signed agreement on establishment of the Social-Economic Council

- New Tax Administration Law in force as of today
- BiH hosts a meeting of nine countries- SEECEI members
- Despite the adoption of the decision on the SCMM, BiH still far away from Partnership for Peace.

RTRS

- First contract on the payment of pensions through banks. Postal Company announced to stop the payments.
- Countries of the region in the joint operation against illegal immigrations.
- Iraq fulfilled obligations from the UN demand, claims Saddam Hussein.