

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 30/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Federation Prime Minister supports Finance Police action in the Defense Ministry, asks Anic and Buljbasic to cooperate; BiH Presidency hold open session

Dnevni Avaz: Pensions in Federation by August 1

Jutarnje Novine: Ivica Misic on granting BiH citizenship

Blic: Croatian experts fail to come to Kostajnica; RS Army with 6,600 soldiers

Glas Srpski: Srebrenica leaders lose support; New elementary school opens in Ljubinje

Nezavisne Novine: Highway between Banja Luka and Jajce officially opened; Greece donates 19 million EURO to BiH

Vecernji List: SDP preparing to take over West Herzegovina

Dnevni List: Process against officials in Kralj Tomislav company is a politically fixed process

BiH Foreign Relations

The **Greek government** is to donate more than 19 million Euro to BiH as part of a project to support the countries in southeastern Europe. Greek Deputy Foreign Minister **Andreas Loverdos** and his BiH counterpart **Ivica Misic** signed in Sarajevo an agreement on the 19.53-million-Euro grant aimed to support modernization of BiH's energy and transport infrastructures and to assist the country's institutions in the 2002-2006 period. *"If Bosnia manages to implement this fast, Greece will provide additional funds,"* Loverdos said during his visit to Sarajevo on Monday. (**Nezavisne Novine** f.p., **Dnevni Avaz** p.2, **Glas Srpski** p.3)

Representatives of Croatian companies and ministries of

finance and foreign affairs crossed on Monday the bridge between **Hrvatska and Bosanska Kostajnica** and started preparations for the construction of a joint border crossing on the right bank of the River Una. **Croatian Radio** reported last night that by starting the construction of the future joint border crossing, *"Croatia finally reintegrated this part of the country in its constitutional and legal system after seven-year dispute and after 11 years of occupation."* The head of the Croatian Foreign Ministry's commission for border crossings, **Filip Vucak**, explained that this was only a "symbolic crossing" and that the Croatian Police could not cross the border. *"The police will not cross to this part of Croatia yet, only because BiH opposed it and set as a condition the signing of these two documents [Protocol and Annex Agreement]. As we said in our official note to BiH today, we will go ahead with this once we assess it necessary..."* (**BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje** p. 6, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Blic** front page, **Vecernji List** p. 9, **Slobodna Dalmacija** front and page 5, **Jutarnji List** front and page 9, and **Vjesnik** front and page 2 also report about official crossing of the bridge by Croatian Foreign Ministry)

Croatian Foreign Ministry slammed on Monday the move of the **BiH Foreign Ministry** to condition the arrival of the Croatian police to Kostajnica border and the commencement of construction of the joint border crossing with the signing of the Annex Agreement on joint locations and the protocol on the final resolution of this dispute. *"The Croatian government is prepared to sign the annex to the agreement on joint locations prior to the opening of the border crossing with a note that this cannot be set as a pre-condition for Croatia's border police to take up their positions on the site of the future border crossing which is located on the Croatian territory. We will on time notify the BiH Council of Ministers of the deployment of Croatian border police at the site of the future border crossing."* (**Hina** news agency, **RTRS**)

Glas srpski quotes (p. 3) reports that after the initial tensions, which marked the past ten days, the situation in Kostajnica is calming down. *"After BiH and Croatia exchanged diplomatic notes, both sides have agreed to resolve this issue through dialogue and negotiations,"* notes the daily, quoting the Kostajnica mayor, **Drago Bundalo**.

Belgrade's **Nacional** also reports that Croatia's Foreign Ministry experts have crossed the border at Kostajnica, and note that the border agreement signed by the then presidents of BiH and Croatia, **Alija Izetbegovic and Franjo Tudjman**, cannot be valid because it has never been ratified by the BiH Parliament.

Dnevni Avaz and **BHTV 1** reports that the BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Azra Hadziahmetovic**, will present today to the **PIC Political Directors** a program of economic reform in BiH. Hadziahmetovic: *"What will be presented to the participants is a set of economic reform, including the economic reconstruction, reform in all sectors...We will present a report about what had been done so far, what we are presently working on and our plans for the future."*

Federation Issues

Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** asked on Monday the entity Defense Minister, **Mijo Anic**, and his deputy, **Ferid Buljbasic**, to cooperate with the Financial Police, which is conducting an audit of MoD accounts, and submit all the necessary documentation to its inspectors. **Oslobodjenje** (front page) reports that Anic also asked the Financial Police to undertake a chronologically equal control of financial documentation belonging to Bosniak and Croat components of the Ministry. Anic warned the two Ministry officials, as well as the chief inspector in the FP, **Zufer Dervisevic**, to settle all further disputes in mutual discussion, rather than via media.

Federation TV reports that the report on last year's audit of Federation's institutions, including the **Defense Ministry**, has

been completed and forwarded to the Parliament. The report indicates that, apart from numerous unclear entries and loans, the Federation Ministry overspent more than 73 million KM. However, Federation Defense Minister **Mijo Anic** rejects any possibility of irregular spending during his mandate. *"There is already an audit for 2001, but it hasn't been done for those three or four years I regard as controversial and key. You should know that we came to power in April. So, there was three or four months before us. What was done in that period is a different question. I say responsibly that we, I have done nothing wrong,"* Anic told the FTV.

Vecernji List (page 2, signed by Zdenko Jurilj) and **Dnevni List** (page 5) report that **Jacques Paul Klein**, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, met yesterday in Siroki Brijeg with officials of the West Herzegovina Canton in order to "personally commend" the Law on Internal Affairs. One of the most dominant topics journalists from Croat media were interested in during Klein's visit was the ongoing trial in the Leutar case. Dnevni List and Vecernji List note that Klein was not ready to answer the numerous questions pertaining to this case.

In a commentary on Klein's visit and the Leutar case in **Dnevni List**, Marko Markovic draws a parallel between Klein's "futile" statements about the resolution of this case and **Ashdown's** recent actions in the combat against corruption: *"Everybody in BiH will commend the introduction of law and order to judiciary, the removals of corrupt judges, putting an end to the rigged political processes but no removal will make sense and Paddy Ashdown will not be able to keep his credibility and authority if he does not remove judge Salem Miso who is running the Leutar case. And release the wrongfully accused for murder of Jozo Leutar. The fish should be cleaned from the head down,"* concludes Markovic.

Dnevni List (front page 2, by Snjezana Marijanovic) reports that the process against the leading officials of the

Foundation Kralj Tomilsav in Capljina is going to commence today before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court. In an interview with the daily, **Jakov Jaksa Simovic**, the President of the Central association for protection of identity and Croat national interests of the Herzegovina Neretva Canton, said that this trial is a *“rigged political process, by which SDP starts its pre-election campaign in Capljina.”*

State-level issues

The **BiH Presidency** stated on Monday, after its first session opened for public, that significant progress in establishing a single defense policy could be achieved in the Standing Committee for Military Matters (SCMM). Member of the Presidency **Zivko Radisic** told the press that the Presidency discussed yesterday the views of the entity parliaments on Presidency's initiative that entity authorities transfer some of their competencies to the institutions and defense structures at the state level. Radisic: *“This initiative has received support in the competent bodies in the BiH Federation, while the Republika Srpska authorities said that this initiative has no support whatsoever in the Constitution, and that a higher level of coordination and consent on defense issues must be ensured within the framework of existing constitutional regulations.”* (**BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje** front page, **Dnevni Avaz** p.2, **Glas srpski** p. 3, and **Nezavisne novine** p. 5)

Refugee/Return Affairs

Federation President **Safet Halilovic** asked in a letter on Monday the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, to exert pressure on responsible bodies in the RS in order to ensure consistent implementation of regulations banning the construction of homes on socially-owned land in Kotorsko area. Halilovic: *“I am very concerned with the failure to implement these regulations, which directly obstructs the process of return to Kotorsko and annuls a basic right to dispose with one's own property. Construction of homes for the Serbs from the neighboring municipalities on the illegally allocated land which belongs to Bosniaks from Kotorsko, has been one of the*

main obstacles to return.” (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 4, **Oslobodjenje** p. 6, **Slobodna Dalmacija** p. 19)

International Community

In a short interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 5), **Erhard Busek**, the Coordinator of the Stability Pact, said that one of the greatest problems in BiH is the fact that its government does not have any real powers. Busek: *“This is only but one example: we are in a phase of creating a single market space for electric energy. In BiH, there are three electric companies. If you want to create a common market in the region, the fact that you have three electricity providers is not at all enviable. It is a task of BiH authorities to reach the necessary changes and strengthen the BiH government.”*

Pre-election Campaign

Vecernji List (front page, by Robert Bubalo) reports that the **SDP** seriously counts on voters in West Herzegovina and is hoping on gaining seats in West Herzegovina Assembly after the October elections. **Karlo Filipovic**, the President of the SDP Election Headquarters, says that SDP has Municipal Boards in Ljubuski, Posusje and Grude and the SDP Municipal Board in Siroki Brijeg will be established by the elections. SDP also expects that other parties that belong to the Alliance will strengthen their positions in this region. **Velimir Jukic**, the President of the West Herzegovina HDZ Municipal Board, stated for VL that he is certain that the SDP and left wing parties do not have any chance in this region.

RS-related Items

The RS Minister of Defense **Slobodan Bilic** and the Chief of the IOM mission in BIH, **Nadia Kasati**, signed yesterday in Banja Luka the Memorandum of Understanding, which is to resolve the problem of reduction of the number of professional soldiers, as well as employees in the RS Ministry of Defense, **Blic (p17)** reports. Demobilization should start on September 1. **Bilic** notes that, according to the new formation, the RS Army would have 6,600 soldiers and 500 employees in the Ministry of Defense.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Trials to perpetrators of Ferhadija incidences in Banja Luka postponed once again; BiH Human Rights Ombudsman says postponement unacceptable
- Kostajnica: Croatia starts construction works at the joint border crossing
- BiH Presidency says it achieved a significant progress in establishing a single defense policy
- Greek government donates 19 million EURO to BiH

FTV

- Trials to perpetrators of Ferhadija incidences in Banja Luka postponed once again; BiH Human Rights Ombudsman says postponement unacceptable
- For the first time in history, the BIH Presidency session opened for public; BiH Presidency says it achieved a significant progress in establishing a single defense policy
- Croatian Foreign Ministry slams BiH for conditioning the arrival of Croatian police with signing of the annex agreement on joint locations

RTRS

- BiH Presidency says it achieved a significant progress in establishing a single defense policy; RS authorities do not support the initiative that the entities transfer some of their competencies to defense institutions at the state level
- Croatian Border Commission expert team crossed to the right bank of the Una River near Kostajnica to complete all technical measurements necessary to open to border crossing
- Greek government donates 19 million EURO to BiH