OHR SRT News Summary, 26 Jan. 1998

Headlines

- In Banja Luka: various diplomatic meetings concerning further implementation of the DA
- In Bijeljina: completed transfer from the old to the new Ministry of Interior
- In Banja Luka: 3rd session of the Government of RS
- European Union allocates 6mil.ecu of assistance to RS

The President of RS, Biljana Plavsic, met today in Banja Luka with the Supervisor for Brcko, Robert Farrand; representatives of the World bank; the Spanish Ambassador in BiH, Hose Angelo Lopez; and James Wright, the Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from Canada.
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The President of RS, Biljana Plavsic, talked with the Supervisor for Brcko, Robert Farrand, about the situation in this part of RS. According to Mr. Farrand they did not discuss the arbitration trial hearing on the status of Brcko which is due to start on the 5th February in Vienna. Regarding the Donor's Conference, he said that there were many positive signs for the economy of the area under supervision. "The European Union Commission is coming forward with four projects that we will be able to implement in very few months ahead. Many countries in Europe are now stepping forward to assist", said Farrand.
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The President of the RS, Biljana Plavsic, and the Director of the World Bank, Rory O'Sullivan, have signed a credit agreement worth $17mil. from the total of $65mil. allocated for the revitalisation of RS. This project will rebuild homes

which were destroyed by war, provide agricultural equipment for farmers, it will rebuild water supplies in the towns and it will also rebuild the power distribution system in Banja Luka.
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At a meeting of the European Commission in Brussels held recently, the normalisation of methods for the return of refugees was discussed, according to the Economic Advisor to the RS President, Mr. Rajko Tomas. The RS is prepared to implement the DA, but “economic conditions in the RS are very difficult, so that refugees simply have no place to return to, because people living in the RS face difficult conditions themselves. My opinion is that the IC has understood our problems and this meeting in Brussels has confirmed that the EC is working in that direction. Creating a better economic environment will make life easier for everyone and enable those who wish to return to find appropriate accommodation”, said Tomas.
1:00

The President of the RS, Biljana Plavsic, met today with the Spanish Ambassador in BiH, Hose Angel Lopez Lorin, who welcomed the democratic processes in the RS and expressed his satisfaction with the new Government of the RS.
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The President of the RS, Biljana Plavsic, afterwards met with James Wright, the Director General of the Central & Southern Europe Department of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. After the meeting, they both expressed their mutual satisfaction with the newly elected Government and President Plavsic stated that the Canadian Government was prepared to assist the RS; and she primarily stressed Canada’s offer of help in the areas of education, technical development and social policy.
1:00

The Prime Minister of the RS, Milorad Dodik, talked today in Banja Luka with the Brcko Supervisor, Robert Farrand, about Brcko and the normalisation of the situation in that town. After the meeting, Dodik stated that he had informed the Supervisor about the need for economic assistance to Brcko and the possibility of holding a seminar on privatisation in the area. “I have offered to look for candidates for the legislative institutions in Brcko, so that we can verify them at the next session of the RS National Assembly”, said Dodik. He added that the Government would not cause any obstructions, but would create various initiatives in order to normalise the situation in Brcko in favour of the RS. Congratulating Dodik on his mandate, Farrand expressed his satisfaction that there would be no obstructions, because he planned a rapid revitalisation of the economy, not only in Brcko, but in the whole of RS.
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The third session of the Government was held today in Banja Luka. A report will be broadcast after the TV news.
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The transfer of duties between the former and the new Minister of Interior was completed today in Bijeljina.
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Goran Jelisic, arrested last Thursday in Bijeljina, denied all accusations of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes in Brcko from 1992. “These are all lies and fabrications”, he said before the Hague Tribunal.
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The Foreign Ministers of the countries of the European Union decided today in Brussels to donate 6mil.ecu of assistance to RS immediately, for the payment of salaries to educational workers, police and officials, reports DPA.
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In a special brief announcement, the ICG stated that the election of Milorad Dodik as Prime Minister of the RS is the most significant event after the signing of the Dayton Agreement. The announcement appeals to the donors to assist Dodik's Government immediately, because without the significant assistance he will not be able to make any changes in the Serb Entity.
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The High Representative of IC for BiH, Carlos Westendorp, will present the new common registration plates for the whole BiH to the public on the 2nd February, report the Sarajevo media. It is expected that the Ministers of Interior from the RS and the Federation of BiH, The Council of Ministers, and both Governments will sign the final memorandum. The Sarajevo media report that these registration plates will not have any national symbols, but only numbers and letters. They would first be released in Sarajevo and the Central Bosnia Canton in the Federation and in Banja Luka in the RS. Vehicles without these registration plates after the 30th April will not be able to cross the border. After the 30th June all vehicles will have to have the new registration plates, any others will be considered illegal.
2:00

By the end of this year, the EU will provide humanitarian assistance for 250,000 refugees in FR Yugoslavia, which will be reduced by April, stated the Director of the EU Department for Humanitarian Assistance in Central and Eastern Europe, said Esco Kentricinsky at a press conference today.
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So far, Croatia has not fulfilled the basic regulations of the Agreement on normalisation with FR Yugoslavia signed in 1996, which concern the free return of all evicted Serbs, if they wish to return and to dispose of their property, reports Tanjug.
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In the capital of Australia, Canberra, the three-day All Serb Assembly ended today, where a few thousand Serbs from all regions of Australia had gathered.
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The former Prime Minister of the RS, Gojko Klickovic, informed the new Prime Minister, Milorad Dodik, that the transfer of duties would be carried out when the newly formed Government takes the oath at the 3rd session of the RS National Assembly on the 31st January in Teslic, reports SRNA.
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The President of the SDS, Aleksa Buha, stated today that the SDS will participate at the 3rd session of the National Assembly, scheduled for the 31st January in Teslic by the President of the National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic.
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The Vice-president of SNS, Svetozar Mihajlovic, stated today that the transfer of duties was delayed because of the obstruction of the former Government.
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The USA are prepared to assist in the reconstruction of infrastructure and the development of business management and to provide technical assistance for the reform of the RS economy, stated the Economic Advisor to the RS President, Mr. Rajko Tomas after a meeting with US financial experts.
2:00