

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



June 13-19, 2005

Sarajevo Catholics waiting more than 50 years for church

June 13, 2005 (Dnevni list)

The construction of a Catholic church in Sarajevo's Grbavica II neighborhood was forbidden at a recent town hall meeting.

Pater Vladimir Vasilj, chaplain in the St. Ignatius of Loyola Parish, described the so-called public town hall meeting held at the beginning of this month. His parishioners also participated.

Immediately before the meeting began one gentleman took down the urbanistic drawing of the church and surrounding buildings and wanted to destroy it, saying that Croats killed his wife and now they want to build a church. One lady shouted back: 'Croats did not kill her,' which caused a large discussion. The meeting chairman, a representative of the Grbavica II neighborhood community, attempted to calm the group, but was unsuccessful," describes Pater Vladimir.

According to the Pater, the shouting turned in insults and protests against the church's construction.

"A representative from the Cantonal Institute for Planning and Development tried to begin the discussion, but could not do so because of the noise," said Pater Vladimir. "I finally had a chance to speak and said it was my idea to build the church on this location. I said that we Catholics forgive all those who harmed us and still love them," emphasized Pater Vladimir and added that during the war this parish renovated more than 1500 devastated apartments, helped invalids, and until recently took care of more than 300 children and adults, mostly Muslims, who suffered damage from mine.

"During the hardest of times we had a public kitchen open to everyone and we carried food to those who were not able to come," added Pater Vladimir. According to him, the Parish of St. Ignatius of Loyola has been seeking a location for the church since 1972. "We wanted to purchase three connected old ground floor buildings from a state institution that had abandoned them long before. They agreed if we would find alternative apartments for those who had moved in. However, while we were looking for apartments, the local neighborhood group found out and cruelly protested against it. A representative from the state institution told us he could not give us the letter of protest because it was so degrading that we could sue them," said Pater Vladimir describing just one example.

"Since 1945 not one construction license has been approved for church construction, while a significant number of mosques have been built. We are seeking equal rights for ourselves and will not give up," concluded Pater Vladimir. (Excerpt)

Head of Croatian Chamber of Commerce in BiH Zulfo Robovic: Aluminum consortium to be established

June 13, 2005 (Vecernji list)

The head of the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in BiH Zulfo Robovic pointed out that he hopes an agreement will be reached between the BiH Federation Government and Mostar's Aluminij concerning ownership structure, compensation, and resolving the status of pre-war employees no longer employed there.

"Coming to an agreement creates the conditions for Aluminij's privatization, and Croatia's interest is to increase our capital in Aluminij. We propose establishing a consortium including TLM Sibenik, Aluminij Mostar, HEP. Such a group would also bring in FEAL Siroki Brijeg and Alloy Wheels from Jajce.

Based on these companies we would form a consortium in order to increase the percentage of Croat ownership in Aluminij. The consortium would thereby increase aluminum deliveries to TLM Sibenik which would thus increase its capacity, employment and productivity," stated Robovic.

The Republic of Croatia invested through TLM Sibenik nine million Euros in 1996 to restart Aluminij, and that is where the twelve percent of Croat capital in Aluminij comes from. (Excerpt)

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



June 13-19, 2005

Interview: Zlatan Luburic, head of the top insurance company in BiH

June 14, 2005 (Vecernji list)

Croatia Osiguranje (Croatia Insurance Co.) last year held on to its top post in the BiH insurance business. Croatia Osiguranje received the prestigious award Crystal Prism for best insurance provider and, according to data from the Office of Supervision, their payments for compensation are meticulous.

In 2004 the company's portfolio, under majority ownership of Croatia Osiguranje in Zagreb, increased its share of life and property insurance, which speaks to the company's stability.

"Although the new package of legal regulations was supposed to bring some order to the insurance industry, that has not yet happened due to incompatibility with other regulations. I am not satisfied with the fact that no one from the insurance field participated in drafting the law. I would be happy if BiH adopt any European insurance law. However, there are good things in the new law, such as unification of the insurance market in BiH.

VL: Are you prepared for the new market?

LUBURIC: Certainly. We have prepared a serious market entry into RS. Honestly though, because of non-compliance with the premium system and other anomalies, it will be difficult to do business there. That is why we will have to go with double taxation.

VL: Do you have another plan for entering the RS market? Perhaps the purchase of an insurance company there?

LUBURIC: The new law puts many insurance companies in an uncomfortable position because it calls for eight million marks as basic capital. That will force many companies out of business, thus consolidating the market. As far as our possible acquisitions, nothing is out of the question.

VL: Although you claim you are the top company, Croatia Osiguranje did not receive a single contract from federal and state institutions last year. Is this your fault or...?

LUBURIC: This country has plenty of powerful lobbying, not only in the insurance field, which takes advantage of such a chaotic situation. Croatia Osiguranje can only function in an ordered system. Not a single ministry is insured with Croatia Osiguranje even though we are the best.

VL: Is the problem then with the name "Croatia"?

LUBURIC: Our name is a recognizable brand to all those who appreciate quality. It is unfortunate that we need to exert twice as much effort as other companies. Their factious behavior towards Croatia lies in the political milieu of this country.

VL: Are you blaming the current government?

LUBURIC: Let me just give one example. We offered a certain ministry accidental insurance for 600 employees. The contract was awarded to a company offering a premium payout three times smaller than us. We offered 25,000 in case of invalidity, but it was not accepted. (Excerpt)

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



www.caausa.org/fpo

June 13-19, 2005

U.S. Ambassador Douglas McElhaney

June 14, 2005 (ONASA News Agency)

US Ambassador in BiH Douglas McElhaney said in an interview with the daily Dnevni Avaz that BiH is witnessing a crisis of the authorities when it comes to the Council of Ministers.

"This is something that happens everywhere in the world. People are appointed, released of duty, ongoing political debates of opposed sides. The BiH authorities have laws and procedures which must be respected in order to resolve the situation. The responsibility is on the Council of Ministers and the state parliament. I'm convinced that they will resolve that," McElhaney said.

Responding to the question of whom he considers the BiH foreign minister, given that Mladen Ivanic has been released of duty, McElhaney said that if wanting to contact someone, the Council of Ministers will have to say whom he should contact.

"Domestic authorities must resolve the issue who is the foreign minister. If I need to contact someone, the Council of Ministers will have to tell me who that is. I do not think that I should interfere in the issue. The responsibility is on the BiH authorities elected by its citizens."

Views of FBiH government and Aluminij harmonized

June 16, 2005 (FENA)

At this afternoon's meeting in Mostar a Task Force of the Federation BiH Government and representatives of Aluminij agreed to all elements of the Proposal for Starting Position for an Agreement on Solution of Open Questions and Acceleration of Privatisation of Aluminij – the FBiH Government Public Relations Office informs.

The harmonized proposal of this document will be forwarded to the FBiH Parliament and the Shareholders' Assembly of the Aluminij for verification and giving consent for conclusion of the Agreement. It is the document that got the support of the FBiH Government earlier and refers to the solution of the social status of 3413 employees of the Aluminij, and to the definition of basic suppositions for the privatisation of the Company.

The federal Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic and the general manager of the Aluminij Mijo Brajkovic have expressed their satisfaction that, thanks to the efforts of Aluminij workers who had repaired the plants and started the production in post-war conditions, all pre-war workers will be indemnified and the Aluminij brought to a stage acceptable for a strategic partner.

Funds for HVO weren't part of Federation budget

June 16, 2005 (Vecernji list)

During the trial against former BiH Presidency Member Ante Jelavic, former Federal Prime Minister Edhem Bicakcic denied allegations that funds sent from Zagreb for BiH Croats were part of the Federation budget. Bicakcic is the highest-ranking Federation official to testify thus far in the Hercegovacka Banka case.

Jelavic was defense minister for one year during the time Bicakcic was prime minister. The testimony given by Bicakcic refutes the basis of the indictment compiled by Canadian prosecutor John McNair, who heads the special unit for organized and business crime and corruption, and who already lost his first significant case against former BiH Interpol chief Asim Fazlic. (Excerpt)

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



June 13-19, 2005

FTV's attack on Herzegovina

June 16, 2005 (Vecernji list)

Federal television (FTV) sent out some 80,000 bills during the last ten days, mostly to Croats living in the area covered by HT Mostar, confirmed the FTV billing department. The station claims that the adoption of the PBS law just happened to coincide with sending out bills and that it has nothing to do with political pressure by FTV.

“We are responsible for following the law and the law clearly states that every citizens owning a radio o television receiver must pay for television usage regardless of whether they like the program or not,” stated Mahmut Jaganjac, deputy director in the FTV billing department.

We learned that the bills rained down on Herzegovina yesterday, while disappointed Croats argue that the law is discriminatory and that they will not pay for something that destroys the Croatian language.

“All international conventions, which are above the law, guarantee us the right to media in our mother tongue. I will never pay for television usage when that same station insult my people, which creates a new hybrid language, and which has nothing to do with Croats,” states one disappointed gentleman from Mostar who received his bill yesterday. He argues this is pressure from FTV coinciding with the effort to establish a Croat television channel.

Croats complain about the FTV program and state PBS program because they ignore the Croatian language, culture and events throughout BiH. Furthermore, a small number of employees are Croat (12%) and the broadcast signal does not reach some areas with a Croat majority. A large number of Croat politicians have also stated that in spite of the law they do not wish to pay the television usage fee. (Excerpt)

Hague investigators in Bugojno yesterday

June 17, 2005 (Vecernji list)

A group of Hague investigators including judges, prosecution staff, and members of Enver Hadzihanovic's and Amir Kubura's legal team were in Bugojno yesterday, after earlier visiting Zenica, Travnik, and Vitez.

They spent about two hours Bugojno and they were heavily guarded by numerous security personnel. The Hague investigators visited the most infamous of the twelve Bosniak concentration camps that were operating in Bugojno during the war: “Stadium” (which held 550 Croats; 294 of them for a full eight months), “Furniture store,” and “BH Bank.”

They also visited the monastery in Bugojno where a Croat national was allegedly murdered during the war. The reason for their visit, about which Croats in Bugojno were only unofficially informed, remains a secret, just like the information they gathered.

Only Bosniak representatives had the opportunity to meet with the Tribunal representatives.

Despite requests, we learned that no one from Croat associations of the Homeland War, including the Association of Croat POWs, had the opportunity to meet with the Hague judges and prosecutors, although they are the only ones who can legitimately speak of the horrors.

The Hague investigators cancelled their planned visit to the Bugojno rectory and the municipality informed us they did not meet with Bugojno municipal chairman Hasan Ajkunic.

The only ones given the opportunity to convey their version of what happened during the war were Bosniaks and people walking by (one of whom owns a kiosk near BH Bank), many of whom know of Croat casualties only what they learned from the media.

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



June 13-19, 2005

Fate of Republika Srpska unites Croats

June 17, 2005 (Vecernji list)

The recently held meeting involving all BiH Croat political parties, held in Club Lira in Sarajevo, concluded that BiH as it is organized today does not satisfy fundamental conditions necessary for the protection of basic Croat national interests or the country's stability in international affairs.

It is no secret that Croat parties are currently split over a national or citizen solution for the future structuring of BiH. Many political analysts argue that the parties gathered around NHI [New Croat Initiative] and HSS [Croat Peasant Party] support a citizen solution in an effort to please the international community, as was the case up till now.

It was unofficially concluded that, if Republika Srpska remains, Croat representatives will insist that Croats also receive a federal unit in BiH.

BiH's internal structure is unsustainable in political and security terms and does not guarantee protection of rights, interests, and the needs of its peoples and citizens, because it does not offer basic preconditions for employment, financing state institutions and all joint needs of the citizens, such as social protection, health, and education.

The current structure maintains BiH in a permanent crisis and such a country can only function under direct management of the international community. Experience has shown thus far that such a structure does not guarantee equality of the Croats.

It was concluded that fundamental constitutional changes are necessary in which all three ethnic groups and all citizens will be equal.

Izetbegovic comment at Konrad Adenauer Foundation meeting

June 18, 2005 (Vecernji list)

During the Konrad Adenauer Foundation meeting held two days ago in Sarajevo's House of the Army, representatives from SDA, HDZ, PDP, SDP and NSRZB discussed European charters and standards which need to be implemented in the domestic society as soon as possible.

Bakir Izetbegovic, vice-president of SDA BiH and son of the late Alija Izetbegovic, speaking of the Bosnian identity, pointed out that the concept "Bosnian" is generally accepted in BiH. Currently, between 80 and 90 percent of the people in BiH consider themselves Bosnians and identify themselves with the Bosnian identity.

"Herzegovina is a region and a part of this country, respectively, just like Krajina and Semberija, for example. It is normal that Herzegovina is, in fact, a part of Bosnia," said Bakir Izetbegovic at the meeting. His comments caused a fierce reaction among the audience, who argued that his claim was an absolute lie.

PDP president and BiH minister of foreign affairs Mladen Ivanic replied that that is incorrect, pointing out that Croats are currently the most vulnerable people in BiH. The Program Declaration of SDA BiH states that the party supports the protection of traditional values and Bosnian identity.

SDA promotes a Republic of BiH as a civil, decentralized state with three levels of government – local, regional and state. Furthermore, such organization presupposes local self-rule according to European standards, which would consist of municipalities and cities, with considerably more authority and financial inflows than currently exist.

The party supports organizing BiH into five economic regions, the affirmation of BiH identity and securing equality for the Bosnian language.

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Tel/Fax: +387 36 324 491 email: fpo@caausa.org



www.caausa.org/fpo

June 13-19, 2005

Bosnian nationalism

June 18, 2005 (Vecernji list)

The example of Bakir Izetbegovic, son of Muslim, Bosnian, and Bosniak magnate Alija Izetbegovic, shows that the Bosnian apple does not fall far from the Bosniak tree.

Following Alija's pan-Bosnian ideas, he stated that in Bosnia and Herzegovina the concept "Bosnian" has become a generally accepted phrase for all citizens. How does one reply to the numerous attempts by the political and state capital Sarajevo to impose a Bosnian identity as the state and national super-identity?

One does not need to be too bright to conclude that group labels heavily burden Bosniak intellectuals. When the medieval Bosnian identity was lost, Benjamin Kallay attempted to impose it by decree, Mehmed Spaho turned to Muslim paths, comrade Tito returned Muslims to the ethnic stage, and wartime 1993 again inaugurated the concept Bosniak.

Bosniaks today, Muslims yesterday, Bosnians tomorrow consider national identity to be like a windmill, turning this way and that. It is awkward that a state Bosnianism comes from the powerful vice-president of the most powerful Bosniak party. We can, thus, speak of Bosnian nationalism. It was long ago that academic Redzic stated, "BiH is all the stronger, as her nationalisms are weaker."

Accordingly, the Bosnianism of Bakir Izetbegovic is no connecting factor for BiH, but rather a disintegration factor. Whether or not pan-Bosnians admit it or not, Bosnianism can only be a geographic, regional or folklore attribute. Or, speaking in medical terms, Bosnianism is not a nation, but a diagnosis. ■