

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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June 13, 2005

Humphreys: Return does not solely depend on the reconstruction of houses

FENA

June 13, 2005

Thanks to 71.000 Euro in financial assistance provided by the EU the Refugee Return Service (RRS) successfully implemented the “Know Your Rights” project which was aimed at helping and informing returnees in Glamoc, Drvar, Bosansko Grahovo, Bosanski Petrovac and Sanski Most municipalities.

RRS Executive Director Boris Delic told a press conference in Sarajevo on Monday that returnees were informed about procedures for receiving certain documents in order warn them about the consequences of not registering as unemployed persons, not receiving health insurance and not transferring pensions.

The number of people in the target groups is estimated at 20.000.

Head of the European Commission Delegation to BiH Michael Humphreys said that the receivers of this program are very important for the European Commission, which is actively involved in the return process and the development of civic society.

The European Union is spending large funds on the reconstruction of houses, but much more effort is need for the success of the return process because it does not depend solely on the reconstructions of houses and this is why initiatives such as this one are so important, Humphreys said.

He said that the “Know Your Rights” project was aimed at helping returnees use their rights in ensuring that they stay in their communities.

Sarajevo Catholics waiting more than 50 years for church

Dnevni list

By Ivana Rozic

June 13, 2005

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, stated that there a so-called public town hall meeting was 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

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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.

Grbavica II inhabitants do not want a church nearby

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

Vecernji list
By Miso Relota

June 13, 2005

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.

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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)

Analysis: How does the government function in BiH

Vecernji list
By Miroslav Vasilj

June 13, 2005

The partnership between the ruling parties of SDA, SDS, HDZ, Party for BiH and PDP faces another crossroads due to the reform process and undefined relations among the parties.

No coalitions

Although in every democratic country cooperation among parties making up a parliamentary majority is considered a coalition, there allegedly is no coalition in BiH because the party leaders do not wish to cooperate with one another, but they all want to participate in government together, so they came up with a new form of political cooperation among ruling parties, unknown to political science, and termed it partnership for government.

Comedians

This is cooperation is long-term, primarily made up of SDA, SDS, and HDZ, just like in pre-war 1991.

Relations among the ruling parties have varied, with SDA and HDZ tying their flags together, proclaiming SDS a terrorist party on behalf of the wartime BiH Presidency headed by Alija Izetbegovic, and only three years after the first post-war elections these three parties were in government together.

Ten years later statements by representatives from these same parties lighten up on a daily basis the lives of citizens living in the poorest European country. The role of the main comedian belongs to Council of Ministers Chairman Adnan Terzic, ever present in the media. The BiH Prime Minister first announced that, due to stagnation in BiH's path towards Europe and unsuccessful reforms, early elections would be called. Then he asked Ashdown to intervene in SIPA. Finally, he accepted Foreign Minister Malden Ivanic's resignation from six months ago.

Cowardice

6/8/2005 6:02:00

Page 3 of 5

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

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That same day Ivanic spoke of Terzic's cowardice. It is interesting that the Prime Minister does not know that in this case early elections are not possible because of legal regulations, and even if they were called, they would not take place until next year, as they are scheduled anyway.

Naturally, in this newest Bosniak-Serb debate, Croats draw the longer straw because a Serb is at the head of SIPA in spite of an earlier party agreement. All this has HDZ representatives dissatisfied over their partners' relation toward the strongest Croat party in BiH. This was recently confirmed by new HDZ President Dragan Covic who argued for rectifying HDZ's position in government.

Tearing at the seams

In addition, Covic announced the removal of certain ministers in the federal and state government, not naming them, which could also seriously reflect upon relations within the ruling partnership.

Everyday the partnership is tearing at the seams along ethnic lines. The most obvious examples are police reform and PBS law, which see unprincipled coalitions of one against the other being formed. It is now clear to everyone that the partnership of the five mentioned parties at the state level has not brought any good to BiH.

Change

Regardless of who will take up ministerial chairs after the next election, change must occur in both how politics is understood and carried out.

New Federal TV established in Mostar

Dnevni list

June 13, 2005

Croat Member of the BiH Presidency Ivo Miro Jovic met with Michael Humphreys in Sarajevo to discuss the initiative for including Herzegovina Television (HTV), with its technical, staff, and financial potential and Radio Herzeg-Bosna into PBS BiH for the program in Croatian. Federal TV Mostar would broadcast its program in Croatian, Federal TV Sarajevo in Bosnian, and TV RS in Serbian.

The joint state television would balance the program so that all three languages receive equal coverage. The Federation TV signal broadcast in Croatian would at first cover Herzegovina and Central Bosnia.

In order to implement the project it is necessary to construct a new building for Herzegovina TV which would satisfy all broadcasting conditions.

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The question remains how and to what extent current HTV employees and equipment will be used to produce educational, sports, entertainment and other programs.

Also, it is unclear to what extent leaders of BiH Croats are prepared to enter into the project, which is certainly achievable given the range of successful activities in Mostar in recent years.

Vlatko Menix, Director of Herzegovina Television, pointed out that since it was established HTV has suffered through various pressure, sanctions and problems. In the end, it has turned into a regional TV. Menix emphasizes that creating Federal television in Croatian will not be too difficult because the only public Croatian television, HTV, has established firm foundations upon which we only to upgrade the transmitter so that the signal covers the whole Federation.

At this point, everything is in the hands of Croat political representatives in government to solve this all important issue for BiH Croats. (Excerpt)