

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 26/2/2003

BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Another robbery of citizens	Report on Elektroprivreda
RS Elektroprivreda	RS NA session
'Rad' company from Cazin	BiH HoP session
War against Iraq	Hays on CIPS project

Oslobodjenje	Zeljko Komsic refuses to leave the embassy; US Ambassador in Zenica - no return without jobs; FBiH government - February pensions same as in January; RS Elektroprivreda - the money from electricity for supporting Karadzic;
Dnevni Avaz	War invalids' pensions late again due to lists; Bond - returnees have the security, but have difficulties finding jobs; Lazovic - we will support the boycott against the CIPS project; Ivanic blamed for the scandal; The 'Interex' robbers arrested in Mostar; Everything was staged in Posusje
Dnevni List	RS Elektroprivreda was financing Karadzic
Vecernji List	EU soldiers instead of NATO
Slobodna Dalmacija	The HDZ supports unified Mostar
Glas Srpski	A sector for prevention of money laundering - 326 million suspicious; Hrvoje Sarinic on the trial against Slobodan Milosevic - no real hard evidence
Nezavisne Novine	The OHR on business dealings of the RS Elektroprivreda: Hays - millions were stolen from people; Special supplement - a report by Special Auditor on the RS EP transactions; Komsic accuses Ivanic of diplomatic scandal; A report on the privatisation of Kristal Banka
Vecernje Novosti	A trap for Djindjic; Warrant for Bagzi charged with an attempted murder
Blic	161 million-KM lost on the electricity export; Nikola Spiric - I will request the dismissal of the CoM; Those who survived Tuzla convoy accuse Selim Beslagic of crimes

CIPS	
Lazovic	Avaz pg. 1 and 5 - an interview with Miro Lazovic, Vice-President of the SDU. He assessed as unacceptable the reaction by the HR, which derogates a legitimate decision by the BiH CoM related to the cost of the new IDs. "We will, through our representative in the BiH Parliament, Sead Avdic, request the revision of such unrealistic price," said Lazovic. He added he hoped the suggested price by the CoM (10 KM) would in the end be accepted, and if not the SDU was ready to support all requests by the BiH Graphic Designers Union and other NGOs in boycotting the project. As for Lagumdzija's responsibility in the project, Lazovic said he could not assess whether there were any responsibility by former SDP ministers and to what extent.

Spiric	Avaz pg. 5 'What can state government do when they can not determine the price of a document' – statement by Nikola Spiric, President of the Commission for Finances and Budget of the BiH HoR. He announced that due to that latest events surrounding the CIPS project, he would request the collective resignation of the current CoM. Spiric said he would put the request forward regardless of the fact whether the CoM accepted the latest decision by the HR or not. He thinks the real issue is what can the Com do at all if they cannot make a decision related to the price of documents. Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'The CoM should resign' – "This is a sort of irresponsible protectorate where the BiH institution have no authorities," said Spiric. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 7 – Spiric yesterday stated that he would launch an initiative for the impeachment of the BiH Council of Ministers if he does not get an answer as to why the estimations of the BiH Council of Ministers and OHR regarding the ID's price differ in 45%. Glas Srpski pg. 2 'Impeach of BiH CoM', Nezavisne Novine pg. 6 'I will demand the impeachment of BiH CoM' – announced that he would initiate the impeachment proceedings against the BiH CoM members, unless he got a clear response to a question why reviews on the IDs cost of OHR and BiH CoM differ in almost 45% of its content! Blic pg. 7 'I will request dismissal of CoM' – again Spiric's statement he would call for the dismissal of the CoM.
CoM Inter-Resource Commission	Avaz pg. 4 'There are bigger problems in financing the CIPS than the price of the ID' – on yesterday's meeting of the CoM Inter-Resource Commission attended also by PDHR Donald Hays and Director of the CIPS project Mirk Skrbic. It was established that there were more serious problems concerning the overall financing of the project than the price of the IDs. The financing of the project therefore has to be discussed by the CoM.
PDHR Hays	Avaz pg. 4 'The personal documents in BiH the cheapest in the region' – PDHR Donald Hays said the price of the new IDs in BiH was the cheapest by far when compared to process of the same in neighbouring countries. He said this was the document devised by the highest European standards. Oslobodjenje pg. 4 'Could be no cheaper than 14,5 KM!' – "The CIPS is self-sustainable with the price of 14,5 KM because BiH is a country in debts and has to return its loans, and the CIPS will ensure the re-paying of the loans," said Hays. Dnevni List pg. 5 'The CIPS was supposed to be self-financing project' – "One political party served information, which have been appearing in media during the last few days and in this way this political party wants to score political points," said Hays. Added that this has put the CoM in a difficult position.
Braithwaite	Dnevni List pg. 1 and 7 – OHR Spokesperson Julian Briathwaite. "If the BiH Council of Ministers changes the decision on the price of the identity cards, BiH will not be able to meet its financial obligations related to the paying off of the loans, which helped starting of the CIPS project. This might make it difficult for BiH to get loans in the future." Nezavisne Novine pg. 6 'New ID cards must cost 14.5 KM' – presented the structure of the costs of the ID card issuance, owing to which the new card must cost 14.5 KM. According to Braithwaite, the issuance of ID cards is financed from its own resources, because the state does not have resources and the budget for finance this project.
BiH Consumers Union	Avaz pg. 4 'The decision by HR is an attack on households' – Mesud Lakota, Secretary of the BiH Consumers Union, stated that HR's decision was a direct attack on the budget of citizens. He said this following a lecture entitled 'BiH consumer – protection and rights', which was held in Mostar. The entire CIPS project was done in a non-transparent manner and it is not known where the money from the IDs goes to," said Lakota.
Tomic	Dnevni List pg. 12 'Mostar as a pace of residence was left out' – Mostar Deputy Mayor under resignation Neven Tomic stated that he would return his ID since it does not contain the name of the city of Mostar but only the name of the Mostar municipality. "I do not participate in any campaigns that support or do not support the CIPS project. I believe that this is just another absurdity that takes place when Mostar and its future are in question...After I saw this I talked to Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Minister of Interior, Goran Bilic, who completely understood omissions and who ordered legal department to do certain checking and make corrections if they concluded that this was wrong."

HNK Mol	Dnevni List pg. 13 'Identity cards' forms are unique for whole BiH' – a position of the HNK Mol on the whole issue. Their press release says that names of the Mostar municipalities used on the identity card's form in the 'municipality-place of residence' section are in accordance with positive legal regulations, which are unique for the whole BiH territory. The press release also says that all other interpretations are political views about possible new organization of the city of Mostar and they cannot be grounds for the issuing of personal documents to the citizens of Mostar to this body.
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Economic Affairs	
RS Elektroprivreda	<p>Avaz pg. 9 'Ashdown removing Svetozar Acimovic?' by <u>S.N.</u> – poses a question of whether Director of RS Elektroprivreda, Svetozar Acimovic, will resign or will be removed today by HR Paddy Ashdown. The daily reports that it was buzzing at the OHR last night where all leading members of the IC met to discuss some of the activities that should be taken in order to improve the situation in the RS Elektroprivreda. According to the daily, the IC will, amongst other things, request from the RS government to interfere less in the work and especially finances of the RS Elektroprivreda. Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'The money from electricity for Karadzic's support' – on yesterday's OHR press conference where an audit on the business dealings of the RS Elektroprivreda (2001 – 2002) was presented. PDHR Donald Hays said he was disappointed with results, and that it was a case of theft, bad management and neglect by heads of the RSE, which resulted in the RS citizens being damaged for several million KM. Special Auditor Dale Ellen Ralph, as appointed by the HR, devised the audit. Dnevni list pg. 1 and 5 and Slobodna Dalmacija back page 'Robbery in the RS Elektroprivreda' – Hays saying that little or nothing is being invested into the reconstruction of the distribution network thanks to which over 30% of electric energy is lost. DL adds that the Auditor's Report recommends the annulment of the tender for Fatnicko polje tunnel and the suspension of Buk-Bijela dam project. "Everything is now a matter for financial police and local judicial bodies," Hays said. PDHR also said that he did not see anything in the Report that would indicate the RS Elektroprivreda financed Radovan Karadzic, but that he could not exclude such a possibility. SD adds that the IC has taken the Report seriously since the HR, Paddy Ashdown has convoked an irregular PIC SB session, while DL reads that the recommendations and the sanctions for the responsible ones will be presented by the High Representative. Nezavisne Novine pg. 1 and 3, Glas Srpski pg. 2 'High voltage report' – according to Hays, the RS is losing the amount of 166 million-KM on the annual basis, owing to bad management of the firm, the conflict of interest and the negligence. SRNA – Assistant General Director of the Elektroprivreda RS for legal issues, Mirko Mijatovic, denied charges that the company's business dealings were based on theft, poor management and carelessness. Blic pg. 7 'Annual loss of 166 million'; Vecernje Novosti pg. 7 '161 million missing' – Special Auditor recommends that the Financial Police and UK Serious Fraud Office investigate transactions and relationships with the Energy Financing Team (EFT). "You always hear stories about the national wealth, and this is an example of managing this wealth," said Hays, announcing that the High Representative would tomorrow issue an official statement on the revision report. FRY dailies also quoted SDS Spokesperson, Dusan Stojicic, who refused to comment the OHR report on Elektroprivreda's dealings. He said neither the RS National Assembly nor his party have received the report. "The only thing I could say now is that this affair is an attempt to make Elektroprivreda affair look like the affair in the RS Customs Administration when the public was bombed with some information without any proof," Stojicic says. He thinks that the report is a prelude to a discussion on the restructuring and privatising of the RS Elektroprivreda.</p>

Reactions in the RS to the audit	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 3 'An investigation would be completed' – Milorad Dodik, SNSD President, yesterday stated that the international community would do everything within its powers to implement all measures in order to end the story about the RS Elektroprivreda. He also particularly pointed out that the SDS is to take the greatest burden. According to Dodik, everybody knows that Mirko Sarovic was actually a mentor to Bosko Lemez, and that Dragan Kalinic, on behalf of the SDS, proposed Lemez as the minister and also appointed the leading officials of the RS EP.</p> <p>RS PM, Dragan Mikerevic, announced that the RS government would discuss this issue at one of the coming government sessions after it gets the copy of the audit. Mikerevic added that the RS government was interested in the rooting out of all criminal activity, because the number of people interested in placing investments in the RS is increasing.</p> <p>RS Minister of Economy, Energy and Development, Milan Bogicevic, stated that the RS EP Directorate received the Special Auditor's report, and that it is preparing its official response to it.</p> <p>Assistant Director General for legal issues at RS EP, Mirko Mijatovic, last night denied that the business dealings of the RS EP were based on theft, loathing, bad management and negligence. Mijatovic also stressed that the RS EP would respond to accusations.</p> <p>Zekerijah Osmic, SDP MP, stated that the RS EP functions in the interest of the SDS policy. He also accused the SDS of having been responsible for criminal activities performed within the RS EP.</p>
EFT to press charges against NN	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 3 'The EFT to sue Nezavisne' – an EFT press release. "We are surprised and embittered over the accusations presented in the Special Auditor's Report on the RS EP, which makes a negative connotation and reference to the EFT firm. The EFT has already undertaken some legal steps to respond to these outrageous accusations." The EFT also requested that one of the biggest international auditor's firms should conduct a new investigation into the case. And the findings of this investigation are to be presented to the public.</p>
Bulldozer Commission	<p>Avaz pg. 8 'The BiH authorities will be presented 50 recommendations' – the Bulldozer Commission, at yesterday's plenary session, selected 27 more suggestions including the recommendations for foreign companies not to have to register in both entities and to simplify the issuance of transport permits. According to an announcement from the OHR, the Commission has finalised 50 concrete recommendations that will be presented to the BiH authorities.</p>
Jungic vs. Hays	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'It is known where the money went' – General Director of the Srpska Telecom, Zeljko Jungic, denied claims by PDHR Donald Hays that telecom operators in BiH do not answer anyone about the expenditures of their profits. He told Glas Srpski that in the last year this company gave 30 million KM to the pension and invalid fund, and also gave money for helping refugees and DPs, sport and cultural societies and others. As for Hays' statement that telecom operators in BiH were preserving monopoly in the communication sector and are not ready for the liberalisation of the same, Jungic emphasized that Telecom is absolutely ready for the competition. Glas Srpski pg. 5 'Unfounded accusations' – "In two and a half years of commercial work, the operator of the mobile telephone network in the RS, the firm MOBI's has managed to provide the coverage of 90% of the RS territory. Moreover, it plans to fulfill all conditions outlined in the work permit, thus cover at least 80% of BiH territory until May next year." He also stressed that Hays' accusations against this firm had no grounds at all. Namely, Hays said that the three operators of the mobile telephone network in BiH offer to the citizens too little for a lot of money. Janackovic denied these accusations by saying that MOBI's cut the connection prices in the post-paid system a couple of times in the course of last year. It also cut the prices of the basic pre-paid packages, and now those prices have been harmonized to 35 KM.</p>

Pensions for war invalids	Avaz pg. 1 and 9 – the biggest front-page story today reporting that the pay out of January pensions for war invalids in the Una-Sana, Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva cantons will not commence on 24 February as it was planned. The reason for the new postponement being again the lists of Croat victims. Today a meeting should be held between FBiH Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, and FBiH Minister for War Veterans Ibrahim Nadarevic. President of HVIDRA, Andjelko Barun, said that representatives of cantonal administrations would forward today to ministers lists of Croat pension users.
Opinion poll on VAT	Vecernji List pg. 2 ‘RS citizens support state VAT’ – according to a public opinion poll conducted by the Sarajevo for Market Research ‘Decision Shop’ most of BiH citizens do not think about the meaning of a value added tax introduction. Even 11% of interviewed persons are against the VAT introduction (10% in the Federation of BiH and 12% in the RS). Also, in the Federation even 46% of questioned persons support the introduction of the state VAT and only 2% for the entity’s one. In the RS even 21% of questioned persons support introduction of the entity’s VAT, while 15% of the questioned persons support its introduction at the state level.
Savic on ITPC	Glas Srpski pg. 5 ‘The Constitution does not live here’ – Snjezana Savic, Professor at the Banja Luka University of Law, assessed that the decision passed by HR Paddy Ashdown in regard to the establishment of the Indirect Tax Policy Commission, was not in accordance with the BiH Constitution. According to her, the decision deprives the RS and Federation of their authority over running tax policy and transfers the authorities to the BiH level.

Political Affairs	
Komsic	Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 7 – the main front-page story informing that Zeljko Komsic, BiH Ambassador in Belgrade, has been refusing to carry out the hand-over of duties to the new Charge D’Affairs, Radomir Bogdanovic, who was recently appointed by BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic. Komsic resigned to the post back in October last year and notified Mirsad Muhovic, Minister-Advisor at the embassy at the time, as the new Charge D’Affairs until the arrival of the new ambassador. Meanwhile, Ivanic removed Muhovic and instead appointed Bogdanovic. “Minister Ivanic is seriously violating the national structure of the leading cadre in the BiH embassy in Belgrade by withdrawing highest-ranking Bosniak and Croat diplomats and notifying Bogdanovic who is at the same time citizen of Serbia and Montenegro,” said Komsic. Avaz pg. 1 and 2 – same statement by Komsic. Also, a statement by Foreign Minister Spokesperson, Miranda Sidran-Beslagic, that they were surprised Komsic spoke to media before speaking to them. Nezavisne Novine pg. 1 and 7 – same accusations against Ivanic. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 3 – carried the same statement as noted above by Komsic.
Beecroft - Kalinic	Avaz pg. 4 ‘The RS parliament soon to discuss the education laws’ – Robert Beecroft, Head of the OSCE in BiH, met with President of the RS NA Dragan Kalinic. Beecroft pointed out the progress made in the area of education and requested that the laws related to the sector be discussed soon by the RS NA. The two further talked on the work of the Commission for Indirect Tax politics and activities that the OSCE plans to take related to property rights of Serbs in Croatia and Croat refugees. Nacional pg. 11, Vecernje Novosti pg. 13 – also discussed the Report on business conducts by the RS Elektroprivreda, which will soon be forwarded for consideration to the entity parliament.

Federation government	<p>Avaz pg. 8 'Lozancic, Dzihanovic and Radivojevic still harmonizing propositions for FOSS director' – despite the announcements, the FBiH government, which held a session yesterday, failed to appoint new director of the FOSS. Ahmet Hadzipasic, Federation PM, stated that FBiH President Niko Lozancic and his deputies Sahbaz Dzihanovic and Desnica Radivojevic were still harmonizing their views related to the issue. The government forwarded urgently to the parliament 18 laws that were imposed between April and December last year by HR. Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, said the project of the introduction of VAT could not be established at the entity level, and the government gave full support to the introduction at the state level. Oslobođenje pg. 1 and 3 – Dragan Vrankic and Fuad Kasumovic were appointed in the Commission for indirect Tax politics, which is in charge of preparing the VAT laws. One of the first government's decisions was to release companies that work on the Potocari memorial from paying the sales tax. Oslobođenje pg. 5 'FOSS Director without OHR's approval?' – Hadzipasic said he was expecting a proposal for the appointment of the new director, but Radivojevic said differently. He said they received a proposal by PM Hadzipasic to appoint Sead Kikic the new Director. Apparently, the OHR is against Kikic's appointment. Dnevni list pg. 5 'The VAT must be introduced uniquely on the entire BiH territory' – at its inaugural session held yesterday and following consideration of the FBiH Finance Ministry's activities related to the introduction of VAT and unified customs on BiH level, the FBiH government took a position that the project of introduction of VAT could not be established on the entity level. Draft Budget for 2003 and the Draft Law on the Budget Execution were adopted in the text as imposed by the High Representative last December.</p>
BiH HoP	<p>Avaz pg. 8 'The budget worth 530 million-KM adopted' – yesterday's session of the BiH HoP. They adopted this year's budget – 325 million-KM for servicing the BiH foreign debt and 205 million KM for financing state institutions. Delegates made a decision on a procedure of the appointment of members of the BiH PBS Main Board. Oslobođenje pg. 8 'The budget of BiH institutions adopted' – adopted the budget and the text of the Law on the execution of the same as previously adopted by the HoR. Dnevni List pg. 2 'Budget of BiH institutions and international obligations for 2003 was adopted' – also reported on the session and the adoption of the budget.</p>
RS NA	<p>Avaz pg. 10 'The SDA will request that damage done to returnees be compensated by municipality of entity' – representatives of the RS NA adopted yesterday a final version of the agenda, which includes, amongst other things, the discussion of the 'BiH Security policy' document, the proposal of the RTRS Law and information on the security of returnees and non-Serb individuals. Glas Srpski pg. 2 'Discussion on electricity and tax' – during yesterday's session in Banja Luka, the MP's at the RS Parliament discussed the proposed agenda for five hours. Discussed whether to include the Action Plan for Restructuring and Privatisation of the RS EP into the session agenda or not. At the end, it was included into agenda. The session resumed late in the evening with the election of delegates to the Council of Peoples.</p>
BiH lawsuit	<p>Vecernje Novosti pg. 3 'No compromise with Belgrade', Nacional pg. 6 – Bosniak officials have refused a proposal by Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic, that BiH withdraws the lawsuit against Serbia and Montenegro, and instead reach the 'out-of-court' settlement. According to BiH Agent before the International Justice Court in the Hague, Sakib Softic, it is not in BiH interest to withdraw the lawsuit. Sulejman Tihic refuses any talks on the settlement between the two countries. He says that relations between Belgrade and Sarajevo are not burdened by the lawsuit but 'by aggression, genocide and numerous crimes committed by army forces under Belgrade's regime's control'.</p>

Mostar	Vecernji List pg. 4 'On administrative organization of Mostar' and Slobodna Dalmacija pg. 1 and 5 - last Friday 'Studio 88' and the 'Konrad Adenauer' Foundation organized a public forum on the organization of Mostar. Representatives of political parties that have proposals on the future organization of Mostar participated in the public forum. Safet Omerovic from Party for BiH stated that they saw Mostar as unified, functional whole, organized as one municipality, in which all peoples would be equal. Mostar Deputy Mayor under resignation, Neven Tomic, stated that the city should be organized as one administrative municipality. "There are many arguments to accept Mostar as one municipality, however, other options are not excluded," Josip Merdzo from HDZ stated. Fatima Leho from the SDA stated that the current status that was called parallelism with 6 municipalities and the Central Zone had to be corrected.
DL editorial	Dnevni List pg. 6 by <u>Dr. Kadrija Hodzic</u> - an editorial dealing with a novel entitled 'Most shameful moment: Britain and destruction of Bosnia' by Brendan Simms. Hodzic says that according to Simms the current British policy has more sympathies for Bosnia and Hodzic wonders whether we can expect now that through its role in the International Community and through the presence of High Representative Paddy Ashdown Great Britain has better understanding for the historical survival of BiH. The author says that he wants to express his respect for the persistence and courage by HR while defending Bosnia during the war. "On the other hand, I would express concern about his approaching to the politics, whose ideologies do not guarantee survival of BiH although this can be partly justified by his diplomatic cooperation with authority representatives... (Non) establishing of unified customs and value added tax at the state level is the last test for the economic sustainability of BiH, which is also the ground of political sustainability. It seems that the IC does not have a clear stand on our future, and this slows down the positive transition processes. Rhetorical calls for the economic reform are not enough no matter who they come from. Can Paddy Ashdown remain out of geographic-political interests of Great Britain even if they are currently on a better level than they were in the 90's."
SD editorial	Slobodna Dalmacija pg. 17 by Dino Mikulandra - an editorial calculating the chances that BiH has in getting the compensation in the lawsuit against Serbia and Montenegro. "The international community wants integrating and not accusing, it demands a monetary and customs union in order to be able to secure market for its products in an easier way. It wants peace at any cost. In this whole story war damage is extremely disturbing, non-market factor."

International Community

EU	Avaz pg. 2 "The EU will use NATO potentials for operations in BiH - a statement by Christina Galyak, Spokesperson for Javier Solana. Confirmed that the NATO won't leave BiH if the EU was to take over from them next year the mandate of the stabilisation forces. She said the Alliance would be engaged in BiH and the EU planned to use their resources. Vecernje Novosti pg. 8 'Europe takes over the Balkans' - ambitions of the European Union are to have the biggest role in the Balkans, especially when it comes to the military and security plans. These ambitions have got support from the EU Ministers of Interior Affairs at the meeting in Brussels. The Ministers supported a French-British proposal and the report by EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Javier Solana that the EU takes over from the NATO SFOR Mission in BiH next year. According to the French-British proposal, the EU Mission in BiH should not have less soldiers in BiH than NATO presently has, which means about 12,000. Vecernji List pg. 3 'EU soldiers instead of NATO' - Slavko Marin, Advisor for Military Issues of Croat member of the BiH Presidency, said he did not see the contradiction in the joint engagement of the EU and the USA because they were both a part of the global security.
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