

OHR BiH Media Round-up; 23/12/2002

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
US military exercise in Gulf	Reduction of banks in BiH	Refugee police a failure	BiH officials on Conflict of Interests Law
Elections in Montenegro	Elections in Montenegro	SBiH still to respond	Terzic supported by HR
	Russia won't attack Iraq	Privatisation	Working for Prosperity-PSDC agreement

Oslobodjenje	Alliance bringing down the nationalist party authority after all?; Theme of the Day - Dayton does not protect any profit makers; Workers requesting salaries, leaders resign
Dnevni Avaz	SBiH definitely entered 'the five'; Will Niko Lozancic become the FBiH President; Mok - Izetbegovic is worthy man and great European; Tomorrow decision on the import of milk from Slovenia
Dnevni List	Rudo Vidovic, the Federation President; Ashdown supports forming of BiH Council of Ministers
Vecernji List	Herzegovina facing total bankruptcy; Nikola Grabovac, former Federation Finance Minister: Ashdown stopped development of BiH
Glas Srpski	The Day of Srebrenica municipality marked: recognition for lack of work?; Banja Luka: priests to loose pension insurance
Nezavisne Novine	Answering the call of the RS Trade Unions: thousands of workers will come to protest in Banja Luka; BiH Parliament to confirm the appointment of the Chairman of Council of Ministers: Composition of BiH CoM still unknown; Zlatko Miletic: Courts and Prosecutor's Office do not help police; Drago Kalabic, DNS deputy: SDS and SDA agree on Naser Oric's participation in the RS government
Blic	Tito sold for 404 marks; Trade Unions announce blockade of Srpska; Renco Davidi: Entities will be able to influence on customs; Mikerevic: Srpska's Government by 10 January

Political Affairs	
SBiH takes part in the new government	Avaz pg. 1 and 2 - the SBiH Presidency last night decided to take part in all authority levels. By doing this, the party took responsibility for the participation in the executive authority and definitely entered 'the group of five' (meaning five ruling parties) that would rule in the next four years. According to the party announcement, the decision was motivated by unreserved support to the reform course in accordance with the 'Justice and Business' program, as agreed by the local authorities and HR for BiH. "The SBiH will do what they promised to their voters, and that is the fight for sovereign, democratic and European BiH," reads the announcement signed by the party President Safet Halilovic.
Alliance vs. government of the nationalist parties	Oslobodjenje pg. 1 - in the past two to three days, meetings of leaders of former Alliance took place. They tried to find common ground for forming the BiH authority. Apparently, the meetings took place following an initiative by Haris Silajdzic. Oslobodjenje source stated that everyone tied to 'trade and get as much as possible'. The daily reads that neither Lagumdzija nor Ivanic have anything against the Alliance. Following Silajdzic's 'orders', Kresimir Zubak was also included in the talks. HR Paddy Ashdown assisted the talks, and a reply to efforts and meetings of the Alliance leadership about the establishment of the state government would have to arrive today. The source also stated that it was not excluded that the Alliance would bring down national parties at the state level.

Forming of the RS government	<p>Avaz pg. 2 'SDA will request the vice-president and three ministerial posts in the government' – a statement by Adil Osmanovic, the RS Vice-President (SDA), regarding the forming of the new RS government. "Mikerevic's government will certainly be supported by the SDS, PDP, SDA, Pensioner's Party and RS Socialist Party, depending on the projects it offers. The SDA expects to get the vice-president and three ministerial posts. We are interested in the ministries of finances and internal affairs. Mikerevic is suggesting that the two posts be given to the PDP, but we emphasised before that we were interested in the ministries of refugees, urbanism and economic relations and co-ordination. Still, it all depends which political parties will be ready to support the new government," stated Osmanovic. The RS Prime Minister designate, Dragan Mikerevic, prior to the first round of negotiations with political parties on the composition of the new RS government, stated that ministers from PDP would be dominant in the new government (Glas Srpski pg.3, Nezavisne Novine pg.7, Blic pg. 7 'Decision on January 10'). By the end of this week, Mikerevic is supposed to meet with representatives of all political parties represented in the RS National Assembly. So far, Mikerevic had some initial talks with the representatives of the SDA, SBiH and SDP BiH. Mikerevic stated that he expected to close the negotiations by January 10th next year and then address the RS National Assembly. Commenting on the negotiations on the new RS government, the SNSD leader, Milorad Dodik, stated that he would have an 'informal chat' with Mikerevic, as he did not want to be in power together with national parties. The RS Socialist Party expressed the same view, even though one of its high officials, Tihomir Gligoric, said that SP RS would accept Mikerevic's invitation for negotiations.</p>
Confirmation of Terzic's appointment	<p>Avaz pg. 2 'The confirmation of appointment of the CoM Chair', Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'The appointment of the CoM Chair?' – very shortly reported on both papers that the HoR session is to take place today at 13.00 hours. During the fifth session, the HoR should confirm Terzic's appointment. Also, one of the agenda issues is reconsidering of the draft Law on Import and Export of Weapons and Military Equipment. "In the elections, the SDA showed it was the strongest political force in BiH, we got the most of the votes and mandates, and I think that it would not be wise if we had attempted to transfer the responsibility for leading the governments to someone else. We also want to get all posts in the RS belonging to Bosniaks under the Constitution. We believe that we have enough quality persons for these posts. We also have a serious program to come out of the crisis, which requires a four-year term. Nothing can change overnight, but as I said before we have both the strong people and a program that, in its key aspects, match the priorities of the international community," Adnan Terzic said in an interview with this week's Ljiljan ('Terzic: Horrible social situation is our common problem pg. 17, 18, 19 and 20). Asked to comment on the CoM reform initiated by the High Representative, Terzic emphasized that only a part was gained in comparison to what Paddy Ashdown had initially promised. "The space has been left for the Council of Ministers to work in accordance with its prior practice. It is still not, under its powers, a government like the governments of Germany, France, and England. There are still too many obstacles in the way of work of the state government. We believe that the reform represents a progress, but, unfortunately, it did not meet our expectations," Terzic said. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 3 – a statement by OHR Spokesperson Kevin Sullivan. "High Representative supports nomination of Adnan Terzic for designate of new BiH Council of Ministers because it is important that the Council of Ministers is formed as soon as possible to start with the reforms."</p>
Tihic on Bosniak liaison office for The Hague	<p>Avaz pg. 3 'We will be ready for Milosevic's trial' – Sulejman Tihic, the BiH Presidency member, promises full support to the work off the Bosniak liaison office for The Hague. Following yesterday's statement in the media by Bosniak liaison officer for The Hague, Amir Ahmic (see the last weekend brief, under OHR/IC), Tihic stated that they would be prepared for Milosevic with proofs and financial means. He further added that they should soon appoint the new FOSS Director, and they expected the new appointee to establish good co-operation with The Hague. Tihic already invited Ahmic to come to Sarajevo so they could discuss in details the problems the liaison office had been dealing with.</p>

Lozancic new FBiH President?	Avaz pg. 4 'Will Niko Lozancic become the Federation President?' - the paper reeferes to a senior source from the HDZ who stated that the HDZ Vice-President, Niko Lozancic, would be the future FBiH President. This apparently should be confirmed today by the BiH Presidency members. The source refused to reveal whom the HDZ plans to nominate for ministers in the CoM and the Federation government. The HDZ gets three state ministerial posts - foreign trade, security and finances. At the Federation level - ministries of agriculture, justice, defence, health and finances. The source also added that whatever the party decided to do it would have to be approved by HR.
Interview with Covic	Avaz pg. 4 'The necessity of preventing speedy displacing of Croats', Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Education saves Croats' - the Presidency member, Dragan Covic, gave interview to Zagreb based 'Moj kamen' magazine. He stated that the only way to protect Croats in BiH was the power of educated young Croats who were educating themselves in BiH, Croatia and around the world. "Our efforts are directed towards the creation of conditions for young Croat people outside of BiH to come back and fully take part in political, economic and cultural life," said Covic.
Lawsuit against FRY	Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'Lawsuit against FRY will pay Federation?', Avaz pg. 4 'From ongoing reserves it is possible to ensure 500,000-KM' - there is a possibility that necessary additional finances for the lawsuit against FRY might come out of the Federation budget for next year. According to Emir Silajdzic, Deputy Federation Finances Minister, the sum of 500,000 KM, which is the amount planned for the expenses of the lawsuit at the state level, would not represent a burden for the Federation budget.
New distribution of posts within HDZ	Dnevni List pg. 1 and 3 - according to the information coming from a session that HDZ BiH held in Sarajevo, HDZ representatives for the main ministerial positions were elected. Most of the positions were taken by candidates coming from Herzegovina, whilst members from Central Bosnia and Posavina were obviously neglected. DL says that the HDZ agreed to propose Rudo Vidovic, former Governor of the Central Bosnia Canton, to the position of the President of the Federation of BiH. Another position, which was planned for members coming from Central Bosnia, was the one of the Minister for Refugees and it would be given to Slavica Josipovic, who was performing the same function in the Central Bosnia Canton.
DNS on SDS-SDA negotiations	Nezavisne Novine pg. 6 - the DNS delegate to the RS National Assembly, Drago Kalabic, claims that the SDS and SDA negotiate on the appointment of the war time commander of BiH Army, Naser Oric, for the RS Interior. According to Kalabic, the negotiations are being held with the honorary SDA President, Alija Izetbegovic, and not with the current SDA President, Sulejman Tihic "The SDA blackmails SDS to fulfil its requests as the SDA is the real master in BiH. The SDA respects its war time commanders and tries to incorporate them in the new structures." Said Kalabic. He accused the SDS and SDA of forming the government while neglecting the fact that the war happened in BiH. "The SDA does not negotiate, it dictates the names of the candidates." The SDS Spokesman, Dusan Stojicic, rejected Kalabic's claims that Naser Oric may be appointed for the RS Interior Minister. The SDA leader, Sulejman Tihic, also said that his party did not negotiate with SDS on Oric's appointment. However, the SNSD delegate to the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, Nikola Spiric, is not at all surprised with the idea of Oric's appointment as the RS Interior Minister. "Anything is possible with the SDS, even to get Naser Oric for Interior Minister. The situation that we are drawn in by the SDS and SDA is tragic." According to Spiric, if Naser Oric were appointed to this position, it would represent ultimate humiliation for the RS. The leader of the Serb National Revival Party, Mirko Banjac, said that it was possible that people highly positioned during the war would come back to the political scene. The SRS delegate to the House of Representatives of BiH Parliamentary Assembly, Mirko Blagojevic, does not believe that the RS PM designate, Dragan Mikerevic, would accept to appoint Oric but, as he said, the SDS could no longer surprise him.

Peric on situation in BiH	Vecernje Novosti pg. 7 'Unbearable for Croats – Mostar Bishop Ratko Peric warned that position of Catholics and Croats in Muslim-Croat Federation was not on equal footing with others and labelled it as unbearable. "Croats do not have legal nor any state mechanism to achieve their national rights, to preserve their national identity and entity," Peric said. Bishop accused representatives of the IC for the situation and called them 'the world protectors of the Dayton's peace'.
DL editorial	Dnevni List pg. 7 by S. Kuzman entitled 'Victory of national parties opened door for national hatred' – an editorial saying that although the new authority has not been constituted yet, all negative things that the victory of the national parties brings are visible. DL says that such situation suits the national parties and criminal groups that will start to act after the new authorities are formed and adds. "Then the International Community will have to make the next move because local judiciary and police are not able to cope with criminals who have associates in police and judiciary up to the state level," reads the article. The author wonders whether the victory of the national parties is related to an increased number of incidents on the entire BiH territory. "We wonder what is the problem here, whether it's the program of national parties or criminals who feel more than safe when they have their stronghold in the authorities and they are not afraid of law and possible consequences."
LJILJAN on unification of Mostar	Ljiljan pg. 23 and 24 'Suspicious offer by HDZ and SDA's lightly withdrawal' by <u>Enes Ratkusic</u> – about the organization of Mostar in one municipality. The author starts by saying that people who follow the situation must have noticed that nobody has gone public to say that the recent initiative on unification of Mostar has been prepared by the HDZ BiH. In this context, the author wonders why the OHR decided to adopt this one-sided offer and raised a question why the OHR would believe the party that had been against such plan for years. "Naïveté, off course, must be ruled out. But, if we exclude naivete there is only thing left – to face the fact that HDZ's intentions correspond with intentions of those who really matter in this country", says Ratkusic. He also questions HDZ's sincerity. The author however says that it does not give the SDA a right to devaluate the seven year long efforts on unification of Mostar. Ratkusic claims that there is no way the HDZ is sincere. He substantiates his claim with a story about a proposal by a member of the Constitutional Commission that the rotation of Governor-Mayor of Mostar be replaced by the rotation of cantonal Prime Minister-Mayor of Mostar, which was received with indignation by the HDZ. Finally, the article concludes that the whole situation will result in inter-Bosniak conflicts between the SDA and SBiH, and that as far as the Croat side is concerned everything is very clear (i.e. there will be no parallelisms and all institutions apart from the Islamic Community and BZK 'Preporod' would be unified). "HDZ will, in such constellation, achieve much more. The SDA, if they decline a dialogue, will get nothing."

Economic Affairs

Grabovac's accusations against HR	Vecernji List pg. 1 and 5 – an interview with Nikola Grabovac, former Federation Finance Minister who was removed by HR Paddy Ashdown. He accuses the HR of stopping the macro-economic stabilization in the Federation because allegedly his removal stopped the Strategy of Development of FBiH. Grabovac says that his forecasts are coming true and that international officials are nowadays racing each other in stressing the difficult situation that the FBiH is in. "It is a catastrophic situation and the international financial institutions, IMF, World Bank and OHR Economic Department share the responsibility. Those are the people who are no match for the current situation in BiH and they are contributing to destruction of BiH with their economic measures", says Grabovac. Questioned whether it is a case of ignorance or intention by the IC, Grabovac says it is an obvious intention and substantiates it with the fact that BiH has a huge trade deficit with both Slovenia and Croatia. "We are left to the market and we are not prepared for it", says Grabovac. "I filed written charges against Paddy Ashdown and sent him in writing that I accused him of stopping the macro-economic stabilization in FBiH (...) They were written and forwarded to the OHR. I addressed the Human Rights Court. What's going to happen next; I am just a mere citizen and cannot answer such questions".
EC analysis on economy in Balkans	Avaz pg. 12 'Corruption still the key economic problem' – the EC last week in Brussels presented their analysis of the economic situation in Balkans. According to the report, the inflation rate was decreasing in Albania, BiH, Croatia and Macedonia. Croatia and Macedonia attracted the most foreign capital last year, and in the next year they predict an increase of foreign investments in BiH and FRY, and decrease in Macedonia.
Bulldozer action	Avaz pg. 12 'Tax in the function of development of grey economy in construction business' – the column this time presented Director of the 'Sirbegovic' construction company from Gracanica and President of the BiH Managers Association, Faruk Sirbegovic. He stated that the main problem in the construction business was that the 10% tax, which was only in the function of the grey economy in this business.
Davidi on customs reform	Blic pg. 7 'No damage for entities' – "The European Commission helps BiH every year with about 500 million-KM, but every year through tax frauds BiH loses that amount," Renco Davidi, Deputy Head of the EU Mission in BiH and Head of Team for BiH Customs System Reform, warned. According to Davidi, BiH has three customs administrations – in RS, Federation and Brcko District – which do not differ from each other, and that enables different applications of the law. This opens a space for competition in order to attract more work and that enables big frauds and budget losses. He rejects claims of some BiH politicians that the customs system reform, which leads to the creation of a single customs administration on the state level, is 'politically motivated move by the IC'. "Nothing in the sphere of reform has a goal to steal from the entities and transfer it to the state level. We simply want customs administration that will be unique for the whole country," Davidi said, adding that the customs reform would not limit the entities' competence over customs revenues. According to him, the reformed customs system will eliminate corruption. The only obstacle for forming single customs is political disagreement.
Herzegovina facing collapse	Vecernji List pg. 5 – if the new authority does not make radical changes of existing legal regulations in the area of economy in 2003, the biggest producers from Herzegovina are announcing economic collapse and a higher rate of unemployment. VL says that the last warnings are coming from companies that have strong economic positions at the BiH market. The article also says that HR Paddy Ashdown publicly praised the work of these companies many times, promising that he will help so that Herzegovina can be a synonym for the development of the whole BiH. Marinko Sulic, from 'Bobita Company' from Citluk, says that the incapable authority is partly responsible for the possible economic collapse of the producers. According to Sulic, politicians who have nothing to do with economy have caused this situation. "This is a country of petty politicians and not the people who want the development of this country," said Mijo Brajkovic, the General Manager of Aluminij.

Housing Issues

Revision of housing contracts

Oslobodjenje pg. 4 'Revision of housing contracts by the end of the year', Avaz pg. 8 'Revision of revalidates contracts by New Year' – Federation Minister for Urbanism, Ramiz Mehmedagic, stated that the revision of revalidates housing contracts for the flats that had been proclaimed abandoned and the pre-war owners submitted property return request, would be completed by the end of the year. He however added that the process would not be completed by this time in the Sarajevo Canton because there was much more to do there. Mehmedagic expects the revision in this Canton would be completed by 31 March next year.

Events

Celebration of municipality day

Glas Srpski pg. 1 – during a ceremonial session of the Srebrenica municipal Assembly held on Saturday, local and international organisations received letters of thanks and awards for their contribution to the development of this municipality. Amongst others, the letters were given to High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, former and current mayors of Srebrenica municipality, Sefket Hafizovic and Abdurahman Malkic, Chairman of the municipal assembly, Desnica Radivojevic and all delegates of the municipal assembly. According to the daily, the awards ceremony was strongly criticised by the local population. They wondered what were the successes reached by the local and international officials when it was common knowledge that Serbs were leaving this town and that Bosniaks announced that they would leave if the situation did not improve by the end of January. Four days ago, from the very same room where the awards ceremony took place, 180 Bosniak returnees have sent an open letter to the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, warning him that they would all leave Srebrenica. Glas Srpski recalls that in the letter the returnees expressed their dissatisfaction with Ashdown's care for the returnees. So far, according to the returnees, Ashdown only met couple of times with Srebrenica Associations that works in Sarajevo and Tuzla and had some talks on the building of the memorial in Potocari.

RS Youth Council meeting

Blic pg. 7 'Ivanic: useful ideas of young people' – the sixth meetings of RS youth, a two-day event organised by the RS Youth Council under the auspices of the RS Ministry of Sports and Youth, ended on Sunday in Laktasi. During the meetings, representatives of youth organisations of the RS informed the Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and Minister of Sports and Youth Zoran Tesanovic about their problems. Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic assessed on Saturday that municipalities and local communities should allocate more funds for RS youth because the 250,000-KM allocations from the budget per year were not enough. Ivanic also spoke about economic issues in the RS. He stressed the RS economy might reach the pre-war level in eight years and that youth should take part in the process. "The ideas of young people should also enable the influx of foreign capital that would put the RS in European integration – crucial for BiH and progress of the RS," he said.