

Address of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, at the Launch of Federation TV

I am very happy to be here tonight to witness the launch of Federation TV.

As we all know, this launch has been long expected. It was postponed several times, but now it is finally happening.

I am confident that the new broadcaster will reflect the interests of the Bosniaks, and the Croats and all the other citizens of the Federation, and over time that it will become a broadcaster with which all Federation citizens can identify. Ordinary viewers are the people for whom Federation TV has been created.

It will be their television – a genuinely public broadcaster that will not be manipulated by parties or by governments, but which will try to satisfy the needs of the whole spectrum of society.

I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has played a role in making the launch of Federation TV possible:

1. the management, the journalists, the editors, the technical staff and the other members of staff here,
2. the Federation RTV Council,

3. the technicians who have spent the last few days in the field adjusting transmitters, supported by CRA and OHR staff,
4. the donors – who are willing to invest 20 million marks in the new broadcasting system of which Federation TV is a part – in particular the European Union, which is the biggest donor,
5. the Croatian Government and HRT, which are supporting the establishment of the new system,
6. and lastly my own staff, my Broadcasting Agent John Shearer and my media development experts.

With the start of Federation TV, BHTV has ceased to exist. It has fulfilled its role, through good times and through bad times, and must now make way for new broadcasters. Part of BHTV will be integrated in Federation TV, another part will later merge into PBS.

The future public broadcasting system of BiH, as it is now envisaged, will comprise three principal companies: Federation TV, RTRS and a country-wide RTV-system. The launch of Federation TV takes us one step closer to the final system that will serve the whole country and all its citizens.

The establishment of this new system, as we all know, has been and will continue to be a difficult process. Do not expect miracles. It costs money and requires the right technical equipment to produce good programming and ensure that the TV signal reaches everybody, it costs money to buy good foreign programs, it takes time to train people and to hire qualified

new staff. At the moment, we are working on committing international funds to purchase equipment suitable for the digital age.

And the task of public broadcasters is difficult:

They are obliged to offer a wide range of programs, from informative political programs, to entertainment, to cultural programs, to children's programs.

They are required to address the needs of all citizens, the ordinary and the sophisticated ones, the young and the old.

They must report political events without displaying a preference for one party over another.

And they must take into account the linguistic, cultural and social traditions of their viewers.

This is a huge challenge, but today's start of Federation TV is promising.

I will finish now and wish everybody good luck in your challenging and extremely worthwhile undertaking.