

Chronology/Monthly Tracker, April 2002

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SUMMARY

The month of April was marked by three events crucial for Bosnia and Herzegovina's democratic development and integration in Europe: the completion of the constitutional reform process in the Entities, BiH's accession to the Council of Europe and the start of the implementation of the Citizens Identity Protection System (CIPS), which will provide the country's citizens with new, secure and centrally administered personal documents.

On April 4, the National Assembly of Republika Srpska passed constitutional amendments that reflected, though not completely, the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement of March 27. Two weeks later, on April 18, the Federation House of Peoples succeeded in adopting amendments to the Federation Constitution in line with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, but the House of Representatives failed to secure the necessary two-thirds majority to pass the amendments, due to negative votes by the SDA and HDZ. In order to overcome this resistance and close the remaining gaps, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on April 19 issued three Decisions promulgating constitutional amendments in both Entities that are fully based on the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement and amending the BiH Election Law accordingly.

At a press conference, the High Representative stressed that his Decisions built on work done by the domestic leaders. "The

international community and I myself are exercising our role as a partner for BiH and its leaders," Petritsch said. "This time, the largest part of the job was done by the domestic authorities and I congratulate them for that . . . I am able to issue my Decisions today knowing that the leaders of BiH have taken this country a huge step forward towards a future based on modern European norms, which include consensus and sensible compromise. The Alliance leaders and the RS leadership have shown courage, strength, persistence and commitment. More than this, they have shown responsibility and statesmanship when faced with one of the most complex questions a democracy can confront itself with, and that is, of course, the constitution."

At a ceremony in Strasbourg on April 24, Bosnia and Herzegovina officially became the 44th member of the Council of Europe, an event that was welcomed by everybody in BiH and the entire International Community. Walter Schwimmer, the General Secretary of the Council, stressed that BiH's accession open new doors for the country in its efforts to forge closer ties with Europe. Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija hailed BiH's admission as "a victory of democratic forces and a new beginning for the country," thanking the High Representative, "who did not formally sign anything on Wednesday, but who did sign enough in the past," for his contribution to securing BiH membership of the Council. The High Representative himself recalled that BiH was not yet a state in the real sense of the word when he came to BiH in 1999. "Now, at the end of my mandate, I am convinced that BiH is becoming a modern, democratic state with a lot of tolerance and a future in Europe," he said.

Lastly, on April 29, the BiH Council of Ministers approved a contract on the implementation of the Citizens' Identity Protection System (CIPS) with Siemens and adopted a number of important decisions pertaining to the project. Among others, it set up an implementation task force and decided that the

printing house for the new personal documents will be located in Banja Luka. After the session, BiH Deputy Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications Milan Lovric and Siemens signed the contract, worth Euro 16,857,099.

Under the project, the issuance of new and secure ID cards and driving licenses, as well as the single passports imposed by the High Representative in 2000, will be centrally managed by the State and there will be central registries for these documents as well as for residence and JMBG (centralised citizens' registration) numbers. The Office of the High Representative welcomed the signing of the contract as a major breakthrough. "The project will provide the BiH authorities with important tools in the fight against international terrorism, organised crime, and illegal migration – each of which threatens BiH's place in a secure and modern Europe," OHR stated in a press release.

CHRONOLOGY

Monday, April 1

- During a meeting with the members of the BiH Presidency, the chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Dragan Mikerevic, stresses that it is necessary to adopt the State budget for 2002 as soon as possible in order to sign the contract for the implementation of the CIPS (Citizens Identity Protection System) project, worth more than 33 million KM.
- At a press conference in Sarajevo, the president of the BiH Election Commission, Lidija Korac, urges all the authorities to adopt constitutional amendments promptly so that the gaps in the BiH Election Law can be filled.
- Addressing BiH Croat officials in Mostar, the Croatian ambassador to BiH, Josip Vrbosic, calls on HDZ representatives to add their signatures to the agreement on constitutional changes reached on March 27 at the

OHR. "This is certainly a painful compromise," FENA quotes Vrbosic as saying. "Still, the agreement provides a good basis to gradually overcome all the antagonisms, and it opens a European perspective for BiH."

- SFOR troops arrest a former BiH Serb military officer indicted by ICTY for his role in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. In a statement for the press, SFOR confirms that Momir Nikolic, accused of genocide, forcible transfer and inhumane acts as crimes against humanity and murder as a violation of the laws or customs of war was detained by SFOR soldiers that morning in Bratunac near Srebrenica.

Tuesday, April 2

- During a visit to the RS Police Academy, the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, reiterates that the RS is ready to implement constitutional changes that will not endanger its position under the Dayton Peace Agreement.
- In an interview with the RS magazine Patriot, RS Vice President Dragan Cavic declares the implementation of the Constitutional Court's ruling on the constituency of peoples to be the most difficult test of the national and parliamentary maturity of the RS since Dayton.
- In a statement for the press, the main board of the PDP (Party for Democratic Progress) states that the March 27 agreement on constitutional change includes a number of solutions detrimental to the RS, but represents a good foundation for constitutional amendments. The PDP expresses its hope that the deputies in the RS National Assembly will give their maximum to identify the best solutions "respecting the spirit of the agreement."
- At a briefing for journalists informing them of the status of the investigation into Hercegovacka Bank, Johan Verheyden, the spokesperson of the Provisional Administration, and Mario Brkic, an OHR spokesperson, say many irregularities were revealed in the

privatisation of the Bank, the issuance of loans by the Bank and the Bank's balance sheet.

Wednesday, April 3

- The RS Constitutional Commission adopts draft amendments to the RS Constitution. While Krstan Simic, a Serb member of the Commission, complains to the press that the Serb members were outvoted on almost all issues, SDA President and Bosniak member of the Commission Sulejman Tihic says that he voted for the draft amendments because they go further than the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- At a press conference in Banja Luka, RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic says that the outvoting of the Serb side in the Constitutional Commission should serve as a warning of what could happen in the future in other bodies of the legislative and executive power in the RS.
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a Decision enabling municipal elections in Zepce to be held on the same day as this year's general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ([PR: HR issues two decisions on Zepce municipality](#) – April 3, 2002)
- The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Jacques Paul Klein, officially open the Bosniak Secondary School Annex in Zepce. ([PR: PDHR Zepce speech](#) – April 3, 2002)
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, emphasizes in talks with the Chairman of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, Antanas Valionis, that the post-accession requirements for BiH must be respected and that they must be met within the set deadlines. Petritsch says that BiH politicians must address these issues because they are not only important for BiH's membership of the Council, but will bring BiH closer to

the European Union.

- The Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administrator, Toby Robinson, meets with BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija, Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen and his deputy, and Minister of Finance Nikola Grabovac. The aim of the meeting was to inform the BiH leaders about the ongoing investigation into Hercegovacka Banka, and likely future developments.

Thursday, April 4

- At a session in Banja Luka, the RS National Assembly adopts 24 amendments to the RS Constitution, which were proposed by 68 Serb deputies earlier in the day. The amendments were supported by all the Serb deputies in the Assembly (68 votes in favour), while the representatives of the SDP, SDA, Party for BiH and NHI voted against the proposal (13 votes). The OHR refuses to comment, saying its experts need time to study the amendments.
- In a statement published in Dnevni Avaz, Senior OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmeier says the readiness of the RS to implement the March 27 Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement is one of the tests of its willingness to reform, alongside genuine co-operation with the ICTY, active support for the returns process and support for State institutions and State-level laws.
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a Decision suspending all judicial and prosecutorial appointments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (except to the BiH and Entity Constitutional Courts, the BiH Human Rights Chamber, the Court of BiH and all the courts in the Brčko District), pending the restructuring of the judicial system. ([PR: HR issues a Decision on Judicial and Prosecutorial Appointments](#) – April 4, 2002)
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a Decision extending the mandate of the Provisional

Administrator of Hercegovacka Banka with regard to blocking deposits and investments in Hercegovacka Banka, beyond the period of one year. This Decision was necessary in order to allow the Provisional Administrator to continue her audit without jeopardising the work she has accomplished so far. ([PR: HR amends his Decision on Provisional Administration](#) – April 5, 2002)

- At a session in Sarajevo, the Federation Government passes draft amendments to the Federation Constitution, forwarding these amendments to both houses of the Federation Parliament, the Constitutional Commission of the House of Representatives and the OHR. The Government declares that the draft amendments reflect the essence of the Constitutional Court's ruling and are in line with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- At a session in Sarajevo, the Federation House of Representatives approves the dismissal of 10,000 soldiers of the Federation armed forces and promises that the soldiers will receive severance payments of 10,000 KM each, which will be financed through commercial loans to be taken by the Government.

Friday, April 5

- At a [press conference](#) in Mostar marking one year since the introduction of Provisional Administration at Hercegovacka Banka, Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays says the final goal of the founders of Hercegovacka Banka was to make Herzegovina an economically and financially autonomous region, i.e. to put it under HDZ control. Hays explained that Hercegovacka Banka was intended to act as a kind of treasury for this project. Although the bank was created as a commercial bank, it became an institution that met political goals and the financial needs of individuals, Hays says.
- BiH's foreign debt on December 31, 2001 amounted to 4.3

billion KM, according to information received and discussed by the BiH Presidency at its session in Sarajevo today. Croat member of the Presidency Jozo Krizanovic tells journalists following the session that only in 2006 or 2007 will BiH be able to take out new foreign loans.

- On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the fatal shooting during peace demonstrations on Sarajevo's Vrbanja Bridge, one of the tragic incidents that marked the beginning of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a press release expressing his solidarity with the citizens of BiH as they remember the difficulties of the last decade and look forward with hope to the future. (PR: [HR expresses solidarity with BiH citizens](#) – April 5, 2002)
- At a ceremony in Srebrenica, the cornerstone for the construction of a mosque in Srebrenica is laid. The mosque will be constructed on the site of the former White Mosque. The peaceful ceremony is also attended by representatives of the municipal authorities.

Saturday, April 6

- BiH marks the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the 1992-95 war. While only a few official events take place to commemorate April 6, 1992, the day when the European Community recognised BiH's independence and which is widely seen as the point at which an already simmering conflict turned into war, the anniversary is on the minds of most citizens and is given broad media coverage. Sarajevo newspapers run special editions recalling the 43-month siege of the capital, during which more than 10,000 people were killed, and TV stations rebroadcast wartime footage.
- Romano Prodi, the President of the European Commission, who is visiting Sarajevo on the tenth anniversary of the recognition of BiH's independence by the European

Community, says Europe's doors are open to BiH. Following his meeting with the BiH Presidency he tells journalists that BiH must adopt European standards in order to have access to the European market of 500 million people. With the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, Prodi discusses ways to integrate BiH in Europe. "Europe and BiH should have common values, common rules and travel on a common road to the future," Prodi tells the press after the meeting. "Thanks to Petritsch's engagement, BiH is now on the right path toward European integration." Petritsch points out the significance of the European Commission's assistance to BiH, which has been increased in spite of the general decline in foreign aid to the country.

Sunday, April 7

- Paddy Ashdown, the future High Representative of the International Community in BiH and the former leader of the British Liberal Democrats, says in an interview with the BBC that crime in BiH scares him more than nationalism. At the same time, he emphasises that great progress has been made in the country since the end of the war. Ashdown says that if as much progress had been made in Northern Ireland in the past 30 years as has been made in BiH in just six years, today we would not have the problems there that we have.

Monday, April 8

- During a visit to Stolac, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, tells journalists that his experts are still assessing the substance of the amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution adopted by the RS National Assembly last week. "But let me repeat my general stance: nothing less than 100 percent of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement will be accepted," Petritsch emphasises.

- At their weekly meeting in Sarajevo, the Co-ordinating body of the governing Alliance for Change rejects the Constitutional amendment adopted by the RS National Assembly the previous week. The Co-ordination body says the amendments do not reflect the requirements of the Constitutional Court's ruling or the spirit of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- In Stolac, the High Representative also meets with municipal officials. "There will be no investments and no revival of the economy in Stolac unless the principles of tolerance are re-established in the town," Petritsch tells the press. The High Representative also visits sites of reconstruction of religious facilities in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton.
- The members of the RS National Assembly's Constitutional Commission representing the SDP, Party for BiH and NHI ask the High Representative to annul the amendments to the Entity Constitution as adopted by the RS National Assembly.
- A group of four foreign experts in the fields of war-crimes prosecutions and the judicial system in BiH arrive in Sarajevo to begin research for OHR's Consultancy Project on the Future of War Crimes Prosecutions in BiH. They are expected to finish their report and recommendations by mid-May. Their report will address the possibilities for ensuring international professional standards for war-crimes prosecutions in BiH, referring ICTY cases to BiH, and using the Court of BiH to prosecute war crimes.
- Just 15 minutes after the beginning of a session of the Federation Government, the Party for BiH ministers leave the session, freezing their participation in the work of the Government until the "AM Sped case" is resolved. The Finance Minister Nikola Grabovac approved the return of a customs deposit of 1.7 million KM to the AM Sped Company from Orasje without the consent of his deputy Sefika Hafizovic.

- Vecernji List carries an [interview](#) with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in which he talks about the Hercegovacka Banka case, the March 27 agreement on constitutional change and the overall situation in the country. With regard to Hercegovacka Banka, the High Representative says that the investigation is more serious and complicated than he expected, which is why the Provisional Administrator and OHR's Anti-Fraud Unit cannot yet reveal details or names of people involved in the illegal activities that took place.

Tuesday, April 9

- Following the adoption of constitutional amendments by the RS National Assembly on April 4, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, meets with the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council at the ambassadorial level in Sarajevo. In a press release issued after the meeting, the High Representative expresses serious concerns about the RS amendments, which "fall short of, and do not in full reflect, the 27 March Agreement." The Steering Board declares its support for the High Representative's "exhaustive efforts" aimed at ensuring that the amendments are fully in line with the March 27 Agreement. ([PR: HR discusses constitutional amendments with the Steering Board](#) – April 9, 2002)
- At a press conference in Sarajevo, OHR spokesman Kevin Sullivan criticises the RS for failing to investigate the disappearance of Colonel Avdo Palic, who disappeared while in the custody of Serb forces in 1995. The RS was ordered to conduct this investigation by the BiH Human Rights Chamber more than a year ago. Sullivan says that RS President Mirko Sarovic, Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and Defense Minister Bilic bear collective responsibility for ensuring that a proper investigation

of the Palic case is undertaken.

Wednesday, April 10

- “Humanitarian motivation and political ambition drove the Netherlands to undertake an ill-conceived and virtually impossible peace mission in Srebrenica in 1995,” states a 7,000-page report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD), which was commissioned by the Dutch government in 1996 and has been published today. NIOD claims that “Dutchbat”, a battalion of lightly-armed Dutch peacekeepers, was sent to an ill-defined “safe area” with an unclear mandate, and lacked adequate training, resources and intelligence-gathering capacities.
- In Sarajevo, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, meets with representatives of the four main political parties in the RS (Mladen Ivanic from the PDP, Dragan Kalinic from the SDS, Krstan Simic from the SNSD and Dragutin Illic from the SPRS), notifying them that while the constitutional amendments passed by the RS National Assembly last Thursday go in the right direction and represent a step forward, they do not fully reflect the Mrakovic-Sarajevo Agreement and must be further amended. Present at the meeting were also representatives of the Contact Group (France, Germany, Italy, Russia, UK, US).
- The SDP General Secretary, Miro Lazovic, tells a press conference in Sarajevo that the party’s main board has assessed that the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement is a major step forward, comparing what it envisages with the current situation. Lazovic says the SDP demands the full implementation of the Agreement, which means that the RS constitutional amendments must be corrected. He adds that nationalist political parties (such as the SDS, SDA, HDZ) are obviously against the Agreement because they are afraid of losing influence.

- At a meeting in Sarajevo, the PBS Founding Board, the FRTV Council, the RTRS Steering Board, a working group of the BiH Council of Ministers, and international representatives express their support of the draft Law on the Public Broadcasting Service. The draft Law provides the legal basis and details for the work of the Public Broadcasting System, which comprises three elements: two broadcasters at the Entity level (Federation RTV and RTRS) and one broadcaster at the State-level. Relations among the three broadcasters are to be based on co-operation and agreement. The participants at the meeting agree that the draft law be sent to the Council of Ministers for consideration and adoption. The PBS Founding Board announces that the first PBS evening news programme will be broadcast on May 7.

Thursday, April 11

- During a visit to Sarajevo, the European Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, meets with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch and tells journalists afterwards that BiH could sign a Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU as early as next year. However, he emphasises that for this to happen BiH must meet all 18 “EU Road Map” requirements in the next two to three months, so that a feasibility study can be conducted in the autumn. For his part, Petritsch positively assesses the increased EU presence in BiH. The EU will run a police mission in BiH from next year onward, and the next High Representative will also be the EU Special Representative in BiH.
- At a press conference in Banja Luka, the Chairman of the RS Constitutional Commission, Miroslav Mikes, says that the RS National Assembly will remove some technical and legal mistakes from the RS constitutional amendments, which the High Representative insists on. “Petritsch

requested us to make some improvements and a harmonisation so that the amendments of the RS National Assembly fully correspond to the Sarajevo Agreement,” Mikes says. The High Representative explains his view on the issue in an [interview](#) with Dnevni Avaz.

- As property law implementation has begun to speed up following the recent legislative amendments imposed by the High Representatives, the PLIP agencies – OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, CRPC and UNMIBH – note that misunderstandings remain regarding the entitlement to alternative accommodation. In a press release, they stress that once a decision ordering a temporary occupant to vacate the property s/he occupies has been issued by the responsible housing authority, the temporary occupant has no right to remain in the property, regardless of whether s/he is entitled to alternative accommodation and has or has not been provided with the same. ([PR: PLIP Agencies reiterate alternative accommodation criteria](#) – April 11, 2002)

Friday, April 12

- The members of the BiH Presidency and of the collegia of both chambers of the BiH Parliament fail to agree on the State budget for 2002. The contentious issue is the provision under which the legal representative of BiH in its law-suit against the FRY before the International Court of Justice in The Hague will be financed from the State budget. Most Serb representatives object to this provision.
- After a main board session in Mostar, the HDZ (Croat Democratic Union) announces that the main board has rejected the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. In a statement for the press, the HDZ calls on its delegates to the Federation Parliament to vote for constitutional amendments proposed by the HDZ.
- Croatia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs Tonino Picula and

Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zdravko Tomac meet in Mostar with representatives of Croat parties in BiH. After the meeting, Picula notes that disagreement about the ongoing constitutional changes in BiH's Entities is evident, as representatives of the NHI and the HSS (Croat Peasant party) – ie Alliance parties – insist on the implementation of the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, while the parties gathered in the Croat National Assembly reject it.

- Austria's President Thomas Klestil visits Sarajevo for one day, meeting with senior BiH and international officials including the High Representative. Klestil says that Austria, which "energetically lobbied for BiH's admission to the Council of Europe," will continue to support BiH in its efforts to join other European institutions. ([PR: HR meets with Austrian President](#) – April 12, 2002)
- In an [interview](#) with Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, calls on the State and Federation authorities to pay their respective share of the money needed to finance this year's general elections. While the RS has paid its share of a million KM, the State has so far only paid 100,000 KM out of 1.2 million KM it is due to pay, and the Federation still has to pay its allotted total of 1.6 million KM.
- The Sarajevo stock exchange officially opens.

Saturday, April 13

- The SDA announces that it will not vote for the constitutional amendments drafted by the Federation Government. "The adoption of these amendments would mean that the discriminatory amendments to the RS Constitution, which ensure Serb domination and reduce Bosniaks and Croats to national minorities, would automatically take effect," SDA Vice-President Adnan Terzic tells a news conference in Sarajevo.

Sunday, April 14

- In an interview with HRT (Croatian Radio-Television), Croatian Foreign Minister Tonino Picula says that the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement represents a good solution for the Croats in BiH and could serve as the basis for amending the two Entity Constitutions.

Monday, April 15

- The EU General Affairs Council welcomes the Agreement on constitutional change in the Entities reached in Sarajevo on March 27, and urges political leaders in the RS and the Federation to adopt constitutional amendments in line with this Agreement. "By implementing the Agreement... BiH would take an important step towards its European future," the Council notes in a [communiqué](#).
- At a meeting with Contact Group ambassadors (Great Britain, USA, France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation and Spain), the leadership of the SDA reiterates that it will not support the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement or the Federation government-proposed constitutional amendments. SDA President Sulejman Tihic explained that the Agreement is not acceptable to the party because it "does not ensure the equality of peoples and respect for human rights on the entire territory of BiH." The meeting was also attended by SDA Vice President Adnan Terzic, and the party's honorary leader, Alija Izetbegovic, according to an SDA press release.
- The Federation prosecutor's office files criminal charges against three persons charged with preparing acts of terrorism, espionage and abuse of office: Bakir Alispahic, the former director of AID (the Bosniak intelligence service) and a former interior minister, Irfan Ljevakovic, former AID adviser, and Enver Mujezinovic, former head of the Sarajevo AID section.
- The Dutch government resigns following the release of a report by the Dutch Institute for War Documentation. The

report assigns responsibility to senior Dutch officials in relation to the Srebrenica tragedy.

- In Sarajevo, the education ministers of BiH, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro sign an agreement on co-operation in the field of education. According to the ministers, this document will stimulate education reform in their countries in line with European standards as well as the exchange of knowledge, documents, experts and experience with the goal of modernising the education systems.

Tuesday, April 16

- The International Crisis Group (ICG) calls on the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to impose constitutional change in the Entities if the RS National Assembly and the Federation Parliament fail to adopt amendments in line with the so-called Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- The Contact Group Ambassadors (France, Germany, Italy, Russia, UK, US) meet with RS President Mirko Sarovic and RS Vice President Dragan Cavic. The UK Ambassador to BiH, Ian Cliff, states after the meeting that the March 27 Agreement has to be implemented in full.
- The same is re-iterated by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, after his meeting with the chairman of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Rafael Estrella. The High Representative stresses the April 18 deadline, when elections have to be announced, adding that the implementation of the Constitutional Court's ruling is a test for BiH politicians, and in particular the SDA and HDZ. Chairman Estrella supported the view of the High Representative. "The adoption of the amendments presents the key symbol of political will and determination to take over the responsibility for BiH's future," Estrella said after a meeting with Petritsch.
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, the Head of

the OSCE Mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft, and the BiH Human Rights and Refugee Minister, Kresimir Zubak, review and sign the document titled [“Human Rights in BiH – Priorities for 2002.”](#) (PR: [Human Rights Priorities for 2002 Endorsed](#) – April 16, 2002)

Wednesday, April 17

- After meeting with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, the EU High Representative for Common and Security Policy, Javier Solana, urges political leaders in BiH to demonstrate progressiveness and European orientation by adopting constitutional amendments in line with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- In a letter sent to RS Vice-President Dragan Cavic, who raised concerns about the status of BiH's constituent peoples under the constitutions of the Federation Cantons, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, clarifies that “within nine months of the adoption of the amendments to the Constitution of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the principles which are contained in the Agreement shall be applied to the Cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” ([PR: HR answers letter by Vice-president Cavic](#) – April 17, 2002)
- At a press conference in Sarajevo, the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, says she believes wartime Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, one of the world's most wanted men, will be brought to the court in The Hague before October 10 when the trial against former BiH Serb leaders Momcilo Krajisnik and Biljana Plavsic is scheduled to start. Del Ponte said she wants Karadzic to face trial together with Krajisnik and Plavsic, who were his close allies during the 1992-95 war. During her visit to BiH, Del Ponte meets with the High Representative, Head of the UN Mission to BiH Jacques Paul Klein and BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija.

- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues two Decisions lifting the 4 December 2001 freeze of apartment privatisations in the RS ([PR: High Representative lifts suspension of RS apartment privatisation](#) – April 17, 2002)
- An OHR car carrying three German bodyguards employed by the “Internationale Bodyguard und Sicherheitsagentur” is involved in a fatal car crash near Visoko. The two occupants of the other car are killed. ([PR: OHR vehicle involved in fatal accident](#) – April 17, 2002)

Thursday, April 18

- In a press release issued in the morning, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, reiterates that the deadline for the implementation of the Constitutional Court’s decision on the constituency of peoples in both Entities is expiring tonight as by the end of the day the general elections have to be announced based on an Election Law that is amended in line with the new constitutional provisions. ([PR: HR reiterates deadline for full implementation of Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement](#) – April 18, 2002)
- Visiting Sarajevo, the NATO Secretary General, George Robertson, meets with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch. At a joint press conference following the meeting, Robertson urges the BiH parliamentarians to pass the constitutional amendments in line with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- In the afternoon, the Federation House of Peoples adopts the Federation Government-proposed constitutional amendments, which, according to the Government, reflect the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement. A simple majority in the House of Representatives also votes for the amendments, but the House of Representatives does not muster the required two-thirds majority because the SDA and HDZ deputies vote against the draft amendments. OHR

Senior Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer tells Oslobodjenje that the High Representative is disappointed with the behaviour of the SDA and HDZ.

- In an evening interview with RTRS, the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, says that a harmonised version of amendments to the RS Constitution has been forwarded to the Office of the High Representative. "The High Representative will decide as to whether he finds this version acceptable or not, and will probably respond to it in the course of the night. I hope that this time there will be no objections," Ivanic says. He adds that the RS has demonstrated that it is capable of handling such a difficult issue, and willing to implement the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement.
- Late at night, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a Decision that amends the BiH Election Law reducing the statutory time period for announcing elections prior to their holding from 170 to 169 days. This Decision applies only to the October 2002 Elections. ([PR: HR reduces election announcement period](#) – April 19, 2002)

Friday, April 19

- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, completes the long process of constitutional change in the BiH's Entities by issuing three Decisions building on the work done by BiH's main political parties. He closes a small number of gaps in the constitutional amendments passed by the Entity Parliaments to harmonise them in full with the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement, promulgates them in the Entities thus overcoming the resistance put forward by the SDA and HDZ, and amends the Election Law in accordance with the new Entity Constitutions. ([PR: Process of constitutional change in BiH entities is completed](#) – April 19, 2002)
- At a [press conference](#), the High Representative stresses

that he has issued these Decisions in partnership with the domestic authorities. "I am able to issue my Decisions today knowing that the leaders of BiH have taken this country a huge step forward towards a future based on modern European norms, which include consensus and a sensible compromise," Petritsch says. "The international community and I myself are exercising our role as a partner for BiH and its leaders. The Alliance leaders and the RS leadership have shown courage, strength, persistence and commitment. More than this, they have shown responsibility and statesmanship when faced with one of the most complex questions a democracy can confront itself with, and that is, of course, the constitution."

- The President of the BiH Election Commission, Lidija Korac, announces that the next general elections in BiH will be held on October 5 this year.
- The SDP holds a special press conference in Sarajevo to celebrate the completion of the constitutional reform process. "This is the day of victory of BiH," says SDP President Zlatko Lagumdžija. "This is the day of victory of the citizens of this country and all three constituent peoples. This is the victory of law and order and European values in this country. This is also the day when nationalism has been defeated in BiH."
- NATO Secretary General George Robertson tells the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of both BiH Entities that military reform in BiH is a top priority of the entire International Community, including NATO. "BiH will access the (Partnership for Peace) program only if the reforms are carried out," Robertson tells journalists in Sarajevo before leaving BiH.

Saturday, April 20

- In Skopje, BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Azra Hadžiahmetović and Macedonian Minister of

Economy Besnik Fetai sign a free trade agreement.

- Upon their return from Macedonia, the members of BiH Presidency meet the High Representative at Sarajevo Airport. BiH Presidency Chairman Beriz Belkic tells journalists that the BiH Presidency welcomes the decisions related to constitutional reform, which were adopted by the legislative bodies and through the institution of the High Representative in BiH and form part of the constitutional and legal system of BiH.
- The Party for BiH believes that the High Representative's Decisions on the implementation of the amendments to the Constitutions of the Entities represent a justified and responsible act, which at the very end preserved the credibility of democratic reform in BiH, The Party President, Safet Halilovic, says at a press conference in Sarajevo.
- "We are completely satisfied with the epilogue at the end of the process of constitutional reform, since the amendments fully reflect the agreement on constitutional change that we, too, signed," NHI President Kresimir Zubak said at a press conference in Sarajevo.
- At another press conference in Sarajevo, SDA President Sulejman Tihic says his party accepts the amendments proclaimed by the High Representative on Friday, adding it will even advocate their implementation, but that it will at the same time use constitutional means to try to change them.
- In Mostar, Josip Merdzo, the General Secretary of the HDZ, tells the press that the imposed constitutional amendments in BiH make it impossible for the Croats of BiH to elect their representatives in the executive bodies and that this will be done by Serbs in the RS and by Bosniaks in the BiH Federation.
- RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic is quoted by Glas Srpski as saying that the High Representative did not make substantial changes to the amendments of the RS National Assembly. "This tells us that the RS and the National

Assembly acted smartly, which is more than I can say for the Federation, whose politicians shouted from the top of the roof that they would pass the amendments. In the end, they did nothing", said Ivanic.

- Milorad Dodik, Chairman of the RS Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), tells the press in Banja Luka that the party has no reason to be unhappy about the amendments to the RS Constitution that have been imposed by the High Representative.
- The BiH Serb Civic Council (SGV) – Movement for Equality describes the High Representative's Decisions on the constitutional amendments as the biggest step forward in the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in the area of the protection of civil, human and national rights. In a press release issued in Sarajevo, the NGO highlights Petritsch's decisiveness and persistency.

Sunday, April 21

- At a meeting in London, BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija and future High Representative Paddy Ashdown, who is expected to take up his duties at the end of May, agree that the completion of the constitutional reform process in BiH by the current High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, represents an important step in building a new and different BiH and integrating it in Europe, according to the BiH Foreign Ministry.

Monday, April 22

- The Alliance for Change will draft a plan for the fast implementation of the High Representative's Decisions related to constitutional change in the BiH Entities, the Chairman of the Co-ordination body of the Alliance of Change, Ilija Simic, says at a press conference in Sarajevo.
- At this session, the Alliance for Change also expresses its support for the draft law on the BiH Public

Broadcasting Service (PBS) and appeals to all delegates in the State institutions to pass this draft. According to the Co-ordination of the Alliance, PBS is a very important project that will legally integrate BiH's information system.

- In an [interview](#) with Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, says he expects the constitutional amendments to be fully implemented by the end of this year. The new bodies and mechanisms envisaged in the amendments will be set up after the elections in October.
- The Federation Government, at a session in Sarajevo, discusses the disputed pay-out of a 1.7 million KM customs deposit to the AM Sped Company in Orasje, and decides to initiate disciplinary procedures against two assistant finance ministers involved in the transaction.

Tuesday, April 23

- A two-day meeting at Leeds Castle in Kent, UK, begins. The meeting is organised by the incoming High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and attended by the current High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, his Principal Deputy, Donald Hays, the heads of the main international organisations in BiH, the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdžija, and Entity Prime Ministers Mladen Ivanic and Alija Behmen. The seminar is part of the preparations for a seamless and efficient hand-over, scheduled to take place on May 27.
- In the morning in London, Paddy Ashdown meets UK Prime Minister Tony Blair.
- The heads of the PLIP agencies (OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, UNMIBH and CRPC) condemn the politically motivated attempts of war veterans and similar groups to postpone legal evictions, which is undermining the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. ([PR: PLIP Principals condemn violation of the property laws by political pressure](#))

[groups](#) – April 23, 2002)

Wednesday, April 24

- BiH becomes the 44th member of the Council of Europe. The ceremony in Strasbourg is attended by the BiH Presidency, members of the Council of Ministers and the BiH Parliament, and the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch. “The admission of BiH to the Council of Europe is a victory of democratic forces and a new beginning for the country,” Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija says when he signs the European Convention on Human Rights and the Protocol on Admission. The High Representative says at a press conference in Strasbourg: “When I came to BiH in August 1999, the country was not a state in the real sense of that word. Now, at the end of my mandate, I am convinced that BiH is becoming a modern, democratic state with a lot of tolerance and a future in Europe.” ([PR: HR hails BiH accession to the Council of Europe](#) – April 24, 2002)
- International organisations operating in BiH including the OHR, OSCE and UNMIBH and BiH’s neighbours Croatia and the FRY also welcome BiH’s accession to the Council of Europe as a step towards BiH’s integration in Europe.

Thursday, April 25

- In an interview with Mostar Television Oscar-C, the Provisional Administrator of Hercegovacka Bank, Toby Robinson, discusses the future of the Bank, saying the most obvious way to save it is to award the mobile telephone operator Eronet the third GSM license in BiH. Hercegovacka Bank-owned companies hold 40 % of Eronet’s shares, which would go up in value if Eronet, currently operating on the basis of a regional license, became a countrywide operator.

April 27

- SFOR announces they have uncovered a huge stash of more than 4,000 mortars in a hidden part of a warehouse of a textile factory in Vrapcici near Mostar.

April 29

- The BiH Council of Ministers approves a contract on the implementation of the Citizens' Identity Protection System (CIPS) with Siemens and adopts a number of decisions pertaining to the project. Among others, it sets up an implementation task force and decides that the printing house for the new personal documents will be located in Banja Luka. After the session, BiH Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications, Milan Lovric, and Siemens sign the contract, worth Euro 16,857,099. The Office of the High Representative welcomes the signing of the contract, stressing that the CIPS project represents a major breakthrough in administering residency registration and personal-identity documents in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Under the project, the issuance of new and secure ID cards and driving licenses, as well as the single passports imposed by the High Representative in 2000, will be centrally managed by the State and there will be central registries for those documents as well as residence and JMBG(centralisedcitizens' registrationnumbers. ([PR: OHR welcomes signing of CIPS contract](#) – April 30, 2002)
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, meets with a delegation from United World Colleges (UWC), a UK-based organisation that runs schools throughout the world. UWC is proposing to open an international and residential college in Sarajevo as a fully accredited member of the UWC movement. ([PR: HR meets United World Colleges delegation](#) – April 29, 2002)
- During a meeting with Sarajevo Mayor Muhidin Hamamdžić, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, expresses

his support for Sarajevo's candidacy to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2010, saying that this initiative is uniting sport activists, politicians and intellectuals in BiH and helping focus on the future.

April 30

- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, the SFOR commander in BiH, General John B. Sylvester, and the UNHCR Chief of Mission, Werner Blatter, accompany some 20 ambassadors to BiH on a helicopter tour of return sites across the country. The purpose of this visit is to enable the ambassadors to see and hear first-hand how the return process is going, and to evaluate the needs of returnees in order to provide the most effective assistance.
- The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issues a Decision prioritising the return of residential properties to returnee police officers in both Entities. ([PR: HR prioritises return of properties to police officers](#) – April 30, 2002)

ECONOMIC STATISTICS

BiH Economic Update

Source: FBiH and RS Statistical Offices

Indicator	Federation of BiH	Republika Srpska	BIH (OHR estimate)
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GDP nominal 2000	6,698 billion KM	2,463 billion KM	9,161 billion KM
GDP nominal 1999	6,141		8,321
Nominal increase 1999-2000	billion KM + 9,0%	2,180 billion KM + 13,0%	billion KM +10,0%
Real increase 1999-2000 (minus inflation)	+7,8%	-0,6%	+5,5%
Index of Industrial Production 03/02 compared to 2001 03/02 compared to 03/01	+6,2% +5,6%	1,8 % -9,0%	+4,7% +0,7%
Retail Price Index 03/02 compared to 2001 03/02 compared to 03/01	+0,5% -0,2%	+2,5% +3,4%	N/A N/A
Average Net Salary 03/02 03/02 compared to 2001 (averages)	470,44 KM +6,1%	334 KM +6,7%	421,1 KM +9,24%
Number of Employed 02/02 (RS 12/01) Number of Registered Unemployed 02/02 (RS 09/01)	404.318 persons 271.822 persons	227.740 persons 153.231persons	632.058 425.053
Number of pensioners in 03/02 (RS 12/01) Average pension in 03/02 (RS 12/01)	287.840 persons 190 KM	182.258 persons 120,49 KM	459.194 persons 162,6 KM

Imports Jan-Feb 02	0,691 billion KM	0,282 billion KM	0,973 billion KM
Exports Jan-Feb 02	0,182 billion KM		0,252 billion KM
Trade deficit Jan-Feb 02	0,509 billion KM	0,070 billion KM	0,721 billion KM
Import/Export coverage	26,3%	0,212 billion KM 24,8%	25,9%

RETURN STATISTICS

See link to the UNHCR Mission to BiH web page at www.unhcr.ba or see the latest statistics for March on the [pdf file](#).

Please also consult the OHR's chronology for:

2002 [2001](#) [2000](#) [1999](#) [1998](#) [1997](#) [1996](#) and [1995](#)

[Jan](#) | [Feb](#) | [Mar](#) | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec