

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 11/3/2005

Latest radio news broadcast at 12.00 on 11 March 2005

RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (12,00 hrs)	BH Radio 1 (12,00 hrs)	RTRS (12,00 hrs)
HDZ Presidency on Covic case	CoE welcomes voluntary surrenders	EUFOR search in Tilava
RS authorities against Police reform	EUFOR raids Maunaga's house	Stanisic to surrender to ICTY today
Madrid anniversary	Venice Commission in session	Cavic interview for Dnevni Avaz

TV news broadcast on 10 March 2005

RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	TV PINK (18,00 hrs)	BHT 1 (19,00 hrs)
BiH HoR session	BiH-SCG-Cro free trade agreements	Indictment against Covic and others
Free trade contract reactions	BiH HoR in session	Croatia/EU negotiations
Mladic's salary	Stanisic to surrender to The Hague	Serbia , Croatia on FTAs
Stanisic's surrender to ICTY	Olli Rehn on BiH/EU negotiations	Iranian President visit to BiH

NTV Hayat (19,00 hrs)	FTV (19,30 hrs)	RTRS (19,30 hrs)
BiH-SCG-Cro free trade agreements	Indictment against Covic and others	Indictment vs. Covic confirmed
BiH HoR in session	OHR on indictment against Covic	Stanisic's surrender to ICTY

Lijanovic case update	Veterans-disabled soldiers pensions	Gregorian meets Stojicic
War veterans pensions	Road to Orahovica cleared	NGO's on police reform

Oslobodjenje	Dragan Covic and the Lijanovic brothers indicted for organised crime
Dnevni Avaz	Indictment against Covic confirmed
Dnevni List	Bill of indictment against Covic, Tadic, Lijanovic and Lucic confirmed
Vecernji List	Bill of indictment against 7 confirmed
Slobodna Dalmacija	'Herzegovinians will be going shopping to Dalmatia
Glas Srpske	A child in a backpack
Nezavisne Novine	Mico Stanisic to surrender to the Tribunal today
Blic	Villages running out of medicaments and food
Vecernje Novosti	Barrier at Drina
Belgrade's Nacional	Features Serbia related titles
Dani	Exclusive: Everything is ready for Mustafa effendi Ceric to become the first European mufti; Lijanovici case: 1974 details on robberies and frauds
Slobodna Bosna	The scream of a loser: the secret of Ashdown's amnesty
Ljiljan	Silajdzic: Croatian press sends me to the Hague because of Aluminij; Kreso: Dual citizenships jeopardize processing of war crimes cases; Rehabilitation: Alibabic again to head intelligence?

LATEST NEWS OF TODAY

<p>EUFOR raids Maunaga's house</p>	<p>BH Radio 1, RS Radio – EUFOR raided the house of Branislav Maunaga, nearby Sarajevo this morning. The Public Security Center East Sarajevo confirmed that the action went without any incidents. EUFOR troops confiscated a box containing unknown information, which could be related to the ICTY suspects at large.</p>
<p>Venice Comm. discusses HR powers, BiH Constitution</p>	<p>BH Radio 1 – The two-day session of the CoE's Venice Commission started this morning, and one of the topics will include the constitutional situation in BiH and the exercise of the HR's powers. According to a source of Srna news agency, meeting will discuss the possible constitutional changes in BiH, as well as the use of "ethnic veto".</p>
<p>BL Bishop Komarica meets with SDHR Wnendt</p>	<p>RHB – The Banja Luka Bishop, Franjo Komarica, met with Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, with whom he talked about opening of new Catholic school centres in Banja Luka , Bihac and Livno. The two agreed that the opening of new centres would represent a help to the return of minority population, reports KTA.</p>
<p>Bukejlovic: RS Government opposes any change to FTAs</p>	<p>RS Radio – In a statement to TANJUG news agency, Pwero Bukejlkovic, RS Prime Minister, stated that the RS Government opposes to any danger the Agreement on free trade with SiCG may face, adding <i>"It is of the view that the problem of protection of domestic production should have been resolved in another manner."</i></p>

Organised crime/legal proceedings

<p>Indictment against Covic and others confirmed</p>	<p>BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Oslobodjenje cover page, pgs 4-5 'Dragan Covic and the Lijanovic brothers indicted for organised crime', Dnevni Avaz cover page 'Indictment against Covic confirmed', pg 2 'Indictment confirmed against Dragan Covic, the Lijanovic brothers, Mato Tadic and Zdravko Lucic', Nezavisne Novine pg 3, announced on cover 'Covic and Tadic were accused of organized and economic crime' by <u>A. Sisic</u> – The Court of BiH on Thursday confirmed 12 out of 14 points of the indictment against member of the BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, BiH Constitutional Court President, Mato Tadic, four Ivankovic-Lijanovic brothers, the owners of "Lijanovici" company, and Zdravko Lucic, professor at the Sarajevo University law faculty. Among other things, They are charged with abuse of authority, giving and receiving bribe and tax evasion. BiH prosecution claims that Covic received more than 1 million KM and Tadic 200.000 Euros of bribe from Ivankovics.</p> <p>Dnevni List cover pg splash and pgs 2 and 3 'Bill of indictment against Covic, Tadic, Lijanovic and Lucic confirmed' by <u>I. Glibusic</u>, Vecernji List cover pg splash and pg 3 'Bill of indictment against 7 confirmed' by <u>Z. Kresic</u>, Slobodna Dalmacija also covered the issue.</p>
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<p>OHR: Officials indicted for crime are expected to step down</p>	<p>BHT, FTV, Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'OHR still request for resignations', Oslobodjenje pg 4 'Suspects should resign', Nezavisne Novine pg 3 'OHR expects resignation' – Commenting on the confirmation of the indictment against Covic and the others, the OHR reiterated that the elected officials, who have been suspected of crime, are expected to step down.</p> <p>Dnevni List pg 2 'OHR expects resignations of Covic and Tadic' <u>not signed</u>, Vecernji List cover pg splash and pg 3 'Bill of indictment against 7 confirmed' by <u>Z. Kresic</u>, Slobodna Dalmacija last pg 'Persons suspected of criminal activities should abandon positions' by <u>B. Kristo</u> also covered the OHR's statement. VL also says that it has been supposed that Covic will not resign.</p>
<p>Tadic waits for BiH CC to take stance</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'I still do not want to comment to indictment' by <u>H.O</u> – The President of the BiH Constitutional Court, Mato Tadic, still refuses to comment to the indictment which accuses him of receiving bribe in Lijanovici case, before his fellow justices in the Court take a stance on this issue. <i>"I repeat what I already said: this is not about me, but about a dignity of the BiH Constitutional Court,"</i> said Tadic.</p>

<p>HDZ: We shall accept all legal decisions</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 2 'HDZ BiH: We shall accept all legal decisions' <u>not signed</u> carries that commenting on the fact that the BiH Court confirmed the bill of indictment against Dragan Covic, 'Lijanovici' owners etc. HDZ stated that the HDZ Presidency would make its stand <i>'on political aspects and implications of the latest decisions passed by judicial bodies soon'</i>. The HDZ reaction also says: <i>'Being aware of all stated things we shall accept all decisions coming for any authority level, which were passed within the legal and constitutional procedure.'</i></p>
<p>Jerko Ivankovic Lijanovic: The Lijanovics did not damage FBiH, state budgets</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 3 'Jerko Ivankovic Lijanovic: Truth will win' <u>not signed</u> – Commenting on the confirmed bill of indictment one of the 'Lijanovici' owners Jerko Ivankovic Lijanovic stated: <i>' 'Lijanovici' did not damage the Federation of BiH or state budget and they did not do anything that is contrary to the FBiH legal regulations. I hope that this court process will finish as soon as possible so that truth can finally win.'</i></p>
<p>DL comments on confirmed bill of indictment against Covic</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 2 'Nevertheless, wheels of justice goes around' <u>by M. Karacic</u> – commenting on the confirmed bill of indictment against Croat member of the BiH Presidency Dragan Covic and the others, the author says: <i>'The Covic case is just a top of the iceberg, which has started to melt. Therefore, in future we shall find out as to where about 14 billions KM donations disappeared, as well as the money that the Croatian Diaspora was sending as assistance to Croats for years and not to mention about 10 minor affairs...These issues are coming on the agenda as late as now and probably we shall get answers to these questions as well. Wheels of justice is slow, but it goes around nevertheless.'</i></p>

<p>SB: Nikolic's testimony not important for 'Lijanovics' case</p>	<p>Slobodna Bosna pgs 26-28 'Covic's salvation of Lijanovics' by <u>Asim Metiljevic</u> – SB learns from 'credible source' that the role of protected witness, Zoran Nikolic [BiH media speculated he worked for Lijanovici], in the entire 'Lijanovici' case is not a key testimony for processing Dragan Covic, Mato Tadic, and others, and that it would not jeopardize the process even if it proves to be entirely wrong. SB says it possesses one of the key documents to be used in the trial, which is an official information submitted by FBiH Customs Administration on 6 May 2002 to than FBiH Prosecutor Marinko Jurcevic later used as a ground to raise 90 charges against owners of Lijanovic company. Document allegedly proves that Covic brought unauthorized decision to abolish the taxes on frozen meat waste enabling Lijanovici to avoid paying taxes [such decision could only be brought by CoM]. All 90 cases were lost by Lijanovici before the FBiH Supreme Court, however BiH Constitutional Court returned them back to procedure due to procedural irregularities.</p>
<p>Dani: Lijanovici could avoid process in BiH</p>	<p>Dani pgs 24-27 'Lijanovics, owners of animal and human empire in BiH', mentioned on cover, by <u>Snjezana Mulic</u> – Article brings details of the Lijanovici case, and says that Lijanovic company [against whom 1974 cases were submitted to FBiH Supreme Court from 2002 to 2004] could avoid the process in BiH as they possess Croatian citizenship.</p>

**Luzanski,
Batinic: "We
were right
about Croat
Self-Rule"**

Oslobodjenje pg 6 "We were right about the Croat Self-Rule", mentioned on cover, by Az. Kalamujic – The leading officials of the "Croat Self-Rule", **Ivo Andric Luzanski** and **Zdravko Batinic**, told daily that *"they were absolutely right when they entered the front for protection of Croat interest in BiH in 2001."*

Day after Prosecutor **John McNair** dropped charged against them and five other officials for jeopardizing integrity of FBiH in 2001 [by establishing the Croat Self-Rule], Luzanski, who at the time was a Vice President of the FBiH, says he would *"do the same thing for Croat equality today."* Despite the fact he established that activities of Batinic, Luzanski, **Ante Jelavic**, **Miroslav Prce**, **Dragan Curcic**, **Marko Tokic** and **Petar Milic** did act towards the change of constitutional organization in FBiH, McNair was not able to prove that the top officials in this 'project' were ready to use force. *"[Self-Rule] was political fight, and not a crime, which we proved in the investigation,"* said Luzanski and Batinic, who also claim that establishment of the third entity is the best solution for BiH.

Vecernji List, pg 5 'Today I look at Croat self-rule with sadness', by Misijana Brkic-Milinkovic – Carries an interview with **Marko Tokic**, one of indictees in the 'Croat self-rule' case against whom the BiH Prosecution has decided to withdraw the indictment. Commenting on the whole issue, Tokic says the indictment was politically motivated from the very beginning, claiming that the people involved in the 'Croat self-rule' always worked within the boundaries of the BiH Constitution, which is evident in the documents of the 'Croat self-rule' that have been published on the internet.

<p>FBiH Supreme Court confirms verdict against Ivan Bender</p>	<p>Vecernji List, pg 2, mentioned on front ‘Ivan Bender gets four and half years of prison’, by <u>Robert Soldo</u>, Dnevni List, pg 5, mentioned on front ‘Four and half years confirmed for Ivan Bender’, by <u>N. Dedic</u> – The FBiH Supreme Court confirmed the verdict that was earlier passed by the Cantonal Court in Mostar, which sentenced a former Director of the Mostar Health/Disability Insurance Fund, Ivan Bender, to 4,5 years imprisonment. Bender was charged with abuse of office and authority relating to the sale of Hotel ‘Ero’, when the hotel was sold by the Fund to Croatia-based companies for a smaller value than envisaged by the book value.</p>
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<p>VL: Foreign judges take oath thus violating BiH Constitution</p>	<p>Vecernji List, pg 7, mentioned on front ‘By taking oath foreign judges violated Constitution’, by <u>Zoran Kresic</u> – The author notes that international judges that work in the BiH Court “<i>took a controversial oath</i>” in Sarajevo on Thursday when they swore to respect the Constitution of BiH and its laws, despite the fact that the legislation in BiH stipulates that judges and prosecutors in BiH have to be BiH citizens. The author also claims that the ceremony was done without the media covering the event, wondering whether the judges have been installed in BiH with a purpose that had been planned in advance. Furthermore, the author notes that the Constitution of BiH does not envisage the institution of BiH Court, underlining that the BiH citizenship is a prerequisite stipulated in the BiH for someone to become a judge or a prosecutor. The author also notes that foreign attorneys cannot be engaged in cases before the BiH Court, which springs the author to say one can label it as double standards, saying it is interesting that the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, is concerned in his letter to the Chairman of BiH CoM, Adnan Terzic, in which he calls on BiH authorities to implement the Constitution.</p>
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<p>BHT: De-certified police officers announce lawsuit against Ashdown</p>	<p>BHT <u>Mirela Cosic</u> – De-certified police officers announce filing of legal suit against the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and BiH before the Human Rights Court in Strasbourg. They also announce blockade of the border crossing Izacic. Police officers, de-certified by the UN IPTF, are the only ones who didn't get possibility of revision of those decisions after the HR announced last week revision process of removal decisions issued by OHR in period from 1998 to 2003. Human rights experts believes that there is no reason to treat de-certified police officers differently than those whose removals will be reconsidered by the OHR. <i>"More than 70% of our labour disputes are blocked under pressures that comes from the OHR and BiH Presidency and Council of ministers"</i>, stated representative of the Association of de-certified police officers, Ramo Suljic. Former HR Wolfgang Petritsch stated for BHT that no one should be punished forever (BHT quoted statement from last Thursday). At the press conference in Sarajevo, Ashdown also underlined that revision process involves only the OHR's removal decisions. BH Dani weekly magazine Director, Senad Pecanin, said that exclusion of de-certified police officers from this process, which received court decisions that state their innocence, represents use of double standards.</p>
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War crimes/cooperation with ICTY

<p>Former RS Interior Minister Stanisic to turn himself in to ICTY</p>	<p>RHB, TV Pink, BHT, FTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje pg 2, mentioned on cover 'Mico Stanisic to surrender to The Hague Tribunal', Dnevni Avaz pg 8 'Mico Stanisic goes to The Hague today', Dnevni List pg 5 'Former RS Minister of Police turns himself in to ICTY' by HINA, Vecernji List pg 2 'Mico Stanisic will turn himself in' by rt, Nezavisne Novine cover pg splash and pg 2 'Mico Stanisic to surrender to the Tribunal today' by S. Karic, Vecernje Novosti pg 17, announced on cover 'Mico Stanisic too goes to the Hague' by P. V., Glas Srpske pg 3 'I am leaving with my heart full' by V. Janjic, EuroBlic pg 5 'Mico Stanisic volunteers' by D. V. – Former RS Interior Minister, Mico Stanisic, will surrender to the ICTY, confirmed the Serbian Government to Beta news agency. Government said that Stanisic has decided to so following the talk he held with the Serbian Minister of Public Administration and Local Governance, Zoran Loncar, and RS Interior Minister Darko Matijasevic.</p>
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**DL
interview:
Meddzida
Kreso on war
crimes
trials in
BiH**

Dnevni List, pg 9, mentioned on front 'BiH Court could be left without cases', not signed – Carries an interview with the President of BiH Court, **Meddzida Kreso**, in which she talks about the future of war crimes trials in BiH. Asked as to when the war crimes trials could start at the BiH Court, Kreso says that when it comes to the 'Meakic and others' and 'Stankovic' cases, on which she attended a status conference in The Hague, it all depends on the ICTY and subsequent appeals of the parties involved. However, Kreso says having in mind that decisions in the ICTY are usually taken slowly, the trials could start in one month time plus the time for parties to appeal. Speaking more about the transfer of cases from the ICTY onto the BiH judiciary, Kreso says the BiH Court could be left without cases in case the indictees "*run away*" to the neighboring countries, which would represent a complete debacle for the whole project of war crimes trials at the BiH Court. Asked whether the BiH Court can demand the extradition of the indictees from the neighboring countries, Kreso says it cannot demand, however it can request, however there is possibility that a state in question rejects the request in case an indictee in question has the dual citizenship. In order to get to the indictees, says Kreso, the three countries (BiH, SCG and Croatia) have to reach agreements, stressing it is foremost a political issue.

Dani pgs 28-29 'Our problem is dual citizenships' by Emir Burlovic, **Ljiljan** pgs 22-24 'Because of dual citizenship we could be left without war crimes indictees' by Elirija Hadziahmetovic – Magazines run the interview with Kreso along the same lines.

**TV Hayat
broadcast
story on
start of war
crime trials
in BiH**

TV Hayat Semsudin Skejic – Starting from March 11, BiH is enabled to process war crime cases. It seems as if BiH courts are going to have a lot of work since over 10.000 persons have been involved in war crimes. The ICTY has allowed indictments against 661 persons to be raised. The ICTY representatives say that the ICTY has allowed over 800 cases, but it is stated that the processes were going to take too much time. Over 100 cases have been processed within 9 years. *“It seems as if BiH judiciary was not ready to process that great number of cases and it is clear that it is a great job. There were probably some political reasons for several cases not to be opened”*, said the ICTY representative to BiH, **Matias Hellman**. Hellman adds that it is difficult to have impartial trials before the domestic courts, due to the security issue. Through the survey on corruption, Transparency International find out what BiH citizens think about BiH judiciary. BiH citizens believe that the judiciary is corrupted. *“According to surveys, judiciary is one of the 10 most corrupted BiH institutions. Over 55 % citizens believe that almost all judges and prosecutors are corrupted. In that sense we should think about war crime cases. Most of the things in BiH are being politicized”*, said the Spokesperson to Transparency International, **Srdjan Blagovcanin**. The OSCE mission has been supervising the process of having war crime cases processed before the domestic courts for over a year, and it is going to state its report on observations it made, within a month.

<p>Paravac's office replies to RS POWs accusations re his attendance at WCC inauguration</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 8 'Dukic: Paravac is trying to exert political pressure against us' by M. <u>Battarelo</u> carries that after President of the RS Prisoners of War Association Branislav Dukic criticised Serb member of the BiH Presidency Borislav Paravac because he attended the opening ceremony of the BiH War Crimes Chamber (see yesterday's OHR BiH Media Round-up), the Paravac's office issued a press release which says that <i>'as a Head of the state Paravac attended the opening ceremony, which was more of state than political character. Such role implies obligations that can be pleasant and unpleasant to a person.'</i> The press release also says that Paravac has always supported the work of the aforementioned Association and he showed it by his presence to a failed attempt to place a memorial plaque in front of barracks 'Viktor Bubanj'. Commenting on this press release, Dukic said that all reactions coming from the Paravac's office serve a political showdown and covering up of the truth and those who are willing to talk about the truth.</p>
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<p>Former senior RS intelligence officer: Those who searched for Hague fugitives were sacked</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 6 'Those who searched for Hague fugitives were sacked' by V. Popovic – <i>NN</i> carries an interview with Predrag Ceranic, former assistant to director of RS Intelligence Agency (OBS), who was sacked on 31 December 2004. he speaks about the establishment of the Initiative Board of Association of former intelligence officers who were sacked at the end of 2004. The Association is led by Edhem Besic, former executive director of FOSS. Ceranic says the purpose of establishing this Association was to provide legal aid to all those sacked in order to achieve respect of their rights. He warns: <i>"The most recent screening of personnel at State Intelligence and Security Agency has resulted in removal of all those suspected of being involved in radical Islamic elements present in BiH. Furthermore, under the veil of infamous security check, all persons suspected of being engaged in locating war crimes suspects were also removed. On this, Dzuvo, Zaric and Cosic respected the principle that they should not interfere in others' job, meaning each of them made decisions on status of their compatriots."</i> He comments on press question regarding silence of OHR regarding this issue saying that international organisations are presently not interested in the issue as to how the state agency would operate, but instead they were just interested in seeing the institution established.</p>
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Economic/social issues

**Croatia slams
BiH's
"discriminatory"
decision on free
trade accord**

RHB, BHT, FTV, Oslobođenje pg 7, mentioned on cover 'Diplomatic note to BiH Government', **Dnevni Avaz** pg 12 'Zagreb says Croatia is being discriminated' – The Croatian government on Thursday expressed deep dissatisfaction with the BiH Council of Minister's decision to temporarily suspend parts of the free trade agreement with Croatia, describing it as discriminating against Croatian exporters. The government decided to send a diplomatic note to representatives of BiH in Croatia and the Croatian Ambassador to Sarajevo, who will deliver it to the Bosnian authorities. The decision of BiH's Council of Ministers refers to 23 agricultural and food products and imposes customs duties on milk and dairy products, and meat and some meat products. The Croatian Government said it expected that the decision would be withdrawn in the shortest possible time and that joint efforts would be invested to find the best possible solution for both countries. The decision affects only Croatian exporters, and not those from other countries, despite the fact that none of the 23 products to which it refers receive production or export subsidies, according to the Croatian Government. The Council of Ministers passed the decision in anticipation of a bilateral meeting, thus jeopardizing the positive efforts that have been made so far and burdening relations between the two countries, the Government concludes. **Dnevni List** pg 7 'BiH CoM's decision discriminating' by I.G., **Vecernji List** pg 16 'BiH Government discriminates Croatian products' by D. Knezevic, **Slobodna Dalmacija** pg 4, mentioned on cover 'Croatian Government sent protest note to BiH' by O. Romljak also covered the issue.

<p>Serbian Ministers Dinkic, Vukcevic and Dimitrijevic criticize CoM decision on customs</p>	<p>RHB, PINK, BHT, Hayat, Vecernje Novosti pg 9 ‘Customs barrier at Drina’, announced on cover ‘Barrier at Drina’ by <u>G. Bulatovic</u> – The article refers to the decision of BiH CoM to suspend a part of the Agreement on free trades between BiH and SiCG and to introduce customs duties for goods imported from Serbia. Inset ‘Minus at the budget’ carries a comment of Serbian Minister of Finances Mladjan Dinkic as saying the decision actually derived from problems with the budget BiH is facing and he thinks this would surely worsen diplomatic relations between the two countries. Serbian Minister for Diaspora Vojislav Vukcevic has stated they would ask from all competent ministries to influence BiH authorities to change the decision.</p> <p>Glas Srpske pg 2 ‘Ministers did not come’ by <u>Srna</u> – carries a statement of Serbian Minister of Trades Bojan Dimitrijevic, who also announced they would ask for abolishment of the decision and he said such a decision is unsustainable and harmful to trade cooperation of the two countries adding <i>‘this must have been some kind of a misunderstanding’</i>.</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine pg 4, announced on cover ‘Zagreb and Belgrade demand that CoM decision is withdrawn’ by <u>N. Krsman</u> also carries Dimitrijevic’s reaction. Oslobodjenje pg 7 carries Dinkic’s statement.</p> <p>Glas Srpske pg 2 ‘Ministers did not come’ by <u>Srna</u>, Nezavisne Novine pg 4, announced on cover ‘Zagreb and Belgrade demand that CoM decision is withdrawn’ by <u>N. Krsman</u> report that Croatian and Serbian authorities are dissatisfied with decision of CoM to suspend a part of the Agreement on free trades and to introduce customs duties for goods imported from Croatia and SiCG.</p>
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<p>OHR demands for reconsidering of the decision on customs</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 4 'OHR demands for reconsidering of the decision on customs' <u>by M. C.</u></p> <p>– A source close to CoM has stated BiH Minister for Foreign Trades and Economic Relations Dragan Doko has received a letter from OHR, in which he was invited to reconsider the decision on introducing customs on certain goods imported from Serbia and Croatia. PDHR Donald Hays has signed the letter.</p>
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<p>BiH HoR session interrupted, CoM failed to inform deputies on FTAs provisions suspension</p>	<p>RHB, TV Pink, TV Hayat, FTV, Dnevni List pg 4 'CoM ignores Parliamentary Assembly' by N. Bise, Slobodna Dalmacija last pg 'As sign of protest session interrupted' by H carry that a session of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly House of Representatives was interrupted on Thursday since the BiH Council of Ministers did not attend the session. Representative Jozo Krizanovic stated that the session was interrupted since the BiH CoM representatives did not submit the information on temporary suspension of certain provisions from the Free Trade Agreement with Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro and because of irresponsible approach of the BiH CoM towards the HoR. Krizanovic added: <i>'The session will continue when the BiH CoM secures certain information that the Parliament demands from them.'</i></p> <p>RTRSDragana Knezevic – The decision of BIH Council of Ministers on suspension of some items of free trade contract with SCG and Croatia provoked reactions in region and in BIH. BIH House of Representatives discontinued its session on Thursday because none of representatives of BIH CoM were present. Whilst SCG announced possibility of breaking of free trade contract and break of diplomatic relations with BIH, Croatia informed that it won't introduce countermeasures toward BIH. Nikola Spiric Deputy Chair of BIH HoR stated that CoM should have asked for approval from BIH Parliament. Azra Hadziahmetovic from SzBIH stated that the way that the CoM has made this decision is not in accordance with international regulations. Zlatko Lagumdzija SDP Chairman stated that CoM hasn't protected the domestic production and added that it only violated the international credibility of the country. BIH Parliament asked from BIH CoM to give them information on taken measures regarding the issue of customs tax. This session will probably be continued next week.</p>
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**FBiH Government:
February
pensions for
disabled
persons,
families of
killed soldiers
not reduced**

Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, Oslobodjenje pg 5, mentioned on cover 'February pensions for disabled persons, families of killed soldiers not reduced', **Dnevni Avaz** pg 10, mentioned on cover 'February invalid pensions not reduced' – FBiH Government decided not to reduce monthly veterans/disabled soldiers pensions, in spite of the World Bank (WB) request to do so. The WB insisted on reducing of pensions costs from 301 to 288 millions KM, or otherwise, BiH will loose the loan of 53 millions USD. *"In past two years, public incomes grew up for 606 millions. Veterans and disabled soldiers must also benefit from that increase of public incomes"*, stated FBiH Minister of Veterans and disables Soldiers issues, **Ibrahim Nadarevic**, and added that it would be smarter for any Government to search somewhere else for savings, even on salaries to administration staff. Economy experts say that the international finance institutions requests were expected, because BiH have no economy strategy, said reporter. Deadline for fulfilling of international finance institutions requests is June this year, until when restrictions of budgetary funds should be completed. **Dnevni List** pg 5 'Disability pays remain same' by D.P. Mandic, **Vecernji List** pg 4 'Only 2,9% of funds for agriculture' by E. Medunajnin, **Slobodna Dalmacija** pg 13 'Disability pas remain same' by **D. Pasic** and 'FBiH Government: Money for farmers' by D. Pasic also reported on FBiH Government session.

Discussion on internal debt settlement: RS Government requests for review of foundations to invoke vital national interests clause

Pink, Oslobođenje pg 2 'Criteria to invoke vital national interest clause' – **FENA** – Representatives of the RS Government on Thursday have requested from the international representatives in BiH to review the criteria for launching the vital national interest procedure in order to ensure that this procedure is not abused. In this context, the RS Government indicates that vetoing the amendments to the Law on the Executive Procedure by the Bosniak delegates in the RS Council of Peoples has disabled unblocking of the accounts of municipalities Trebinje, Vlasenica and Sekovici, whose functioning has been brought into question by claims for paying wartime damages. The RS Assistant Minister of Finance, **Zarko Mionic**, told the press that if the Council for Protection of Vital National Interest within the RS Constitutional Court rejects the amendments to the Law on the Executive Procedure, the RS Government would approach alternative solutions. Namely, this could be done by amending the Law on Administration and Local Self-government by which the municipalities would be provided with certain assets and it would be prescribed to which percent a municipality can compensate the wartime damages, i.e. the internal debt. Another solution could be to include the municipalities into the positive Law on Settling the Internal Debt, said Mionic. The matter of the internal debt was considered at the meeting in Banja Luka with participation of representatives of the Entity ministries of finance, administration and local self-government, justice, and economic relations with foreign countries, as well as the representatives of the OHR, OSCE, and several international financial institutions, the IMF, the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury. The RS National Assembly has tasked the RS Government to find the solutions for settling the municipalities' internal debt by March 31.

<p>RS Government: War reparation cases to be resolved through out-of-court settlements</p>	<p>Pink, BHT, RTRS, Glas Srpske pg 3 'Three years for settling accounts' by <u>G. Dakic</u> – RS Government Thursday confirmed the Draft Law on war reparations. In this way, RS Public Prosecutor's Office was given task to complete out-of-court settlements with war reparation applicants by the end of 2007. <i>'Amounts of these out-of-court settlements should not exceed 600 million KM, which is in accordance with the Law on Internal Debt and recommendations of IMF'</i>, RS Defence Minister Milovan Stankovic has stated after the Government session.</p> <p>EuroBlic pg RS4 'Up to 600 million KM for payment' by <u>T. Veselinovic</u>, Oslobodjenje pg 8 also report on the session.</p>
<p>SD: Herzegovinians will be going shopping to Dalmatia because of VAT</p>	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija, front pg splash and pg 4 'Herzegovinians will be going shopping to Dalmatia', by <u>Zoran Zekic</u> – The author argues that people from Herzegovina could be going shopping to Dalmatian towns when the VAT starts to be applied in BiH, something which was unconceivable in the past when BiH was a lot cheaper than Croatia. SD carries a comment by the President of FBiH Economic Chamber, Jago Lasic, who says that some products, which have been tax free such as milk, bread, books etc, will now become more expensive, noting that the VAT will affect the prices of many public utilities. <i>"I think the state should not rush with the introduction of the VAT, on the contrary, it has to prepare itself for it"</i>, says Lasic.</p>

<p>BL Bishop Komarica discussed with Covic poor return of Croats to RS</p>	<p>RHB, Dnevni List pg 4 'Bishop Komarica demands help for Catholics in RS' by <u>KTA</u>, Vecernji List pg 3 'Only 12 000 Catholics in 64 parishes' by <u>dja</u>, Slobodna Dalmacija last pg 'Church property should be returned' by <u>B. Jelic</u> carry that Banja Luka Bishop Franjo Komarica met with Croat member of the BiH Presidency Dragan Covic on Thursday. During this meeting Komarica informed Covic about poor return of Croats to the RS and said that this is not only injustice, but shame for all politicians who have been in power in this area during the last 15 years. Komarica also asked Covic to pay more attention to the Croat population in the RS, which dramatically disappears in this entity.</p>
<p>BiH Prosecutor's Office, SIPA to help in audit of spending of donors' funds</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 4, announced on cover 'Help of the Prosecutor's Office was asked for' by <u>M. Cubro</u> – An investigation commission would suggest to BiH Parliament to ask from BiH Prosecutor's Office, state auditors and SIPA to check on spending donors' funds, as Chairman of Investigation Parliamentary Commission for donation spending issues Tihomir Gligoric has confirmed Thursday. Deputy Chief State Auditor Dragan Kulina has warned that the Ministry of Foreign Trades and Economic Relations has no data base but only a poor registry of donated funds. He added auditors are not in a position to check the way in which donated funds have been spent since donors usually sent their auditors to verify these matters.</p>
<p>RS PM Bukejlovic met with EBRD representatives</p>	<p>Glas Srpske pg 2 'There will be more loans' by <u>D. V. M.</u> – RS PM Pero Bukejlovic, RS Minister for Economy, Energy and Development Miladin Gligoric and RS Minister for Traffic and Communications Dragoje Lajic met with EBRD representatives Thursday. EBRD representatives stated they were pleased with cooperation with RS authorities in the past and said the bank would like to support private-owned companies and privatisation process in RS.</p>

Political developmens/reforms

<p>OHR: SIPA Director should be appointed exclusively on the basis of professional biography</p>	<p>RHB, Pink, Hayat, Dnevni Avaz pg 10 'SIPA Director should be appointed exclusively on the basis of professional biography', Oslobodjenje pg 2 'Professionalism is a condition for SIPA Director', Nezavisne Novine pg 6 'Selection of SIPA directors without political pressures' by <u>Srna</u>, Glas Srpske pg 2 'Director aside of politics' by <u>M. Dz.</u> – OHR Spokesperson in Banja Luka, Ljiljana Radetic , stated at the press conference that SIPA director has to be appointed in accordance to professional standards, without political interference. Radetic added that SIPA is expected to play the key role in ensuring the cooperation with the ICTY.</p>
<p>Ashdown for local Radio Station in Bratunac: Police Organisation in BiH is poor</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 'Criminals are those who do not want reform', Dnevni Avaz pg 10, FENA – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said on Thursday that the main reason for carrying out the police reform is the fact that the police organization in BiH is poor, as a result of which the criminals are winning the battle, and the police are losing. <i>"Those who do not wish reforms in the police are actually criminals and their friends, which include politicians, because they are satisfied with the current system,"</i> said Ashdown and added that in BiH there are currently 13 different polices with an inefficient coordination and that 140 million KM is spent on their requirements. For example, you steal a car in Eastern Sarajevo , drive it to downtown Sarajevo and you are home free, because the police cannot follow you, said Ashdown. He said that the deadline for realizing police reform is May this year and stressed that the new system will provide for an efficient battle against the criminals.</p>

<p>Martens: EU wants to have a safe BiH</p>	<p>EuroBlic pg RS2 'Forget about Europe without reforming the police' <u>by Rajna Radosavljevic</u> – In a page-long interview, Chairman of PRC Wilfred Martens has emphasised the importance of reforming of police forces in BiH. He has said the police reform is one of pre-requisites set by EU and it will not change these standards. He further explained advantages of reforming the police.</p>
<p>NN op-ed critical of HR's policy</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine op-ed pg 7 'Intimidation or a part of scenario' <u>by Slavo Kukic</u> – The author wonders into the reasons for the most recent statements and announcements of HR Paddy Ashdown. Author notes those do not mark any sort of alienation, but instead a part of well taught scenario, inspiration for which HR has found in centuries long colonial policy of his home land. The author is also critical of HR for having failed to cooperate with SDP of BiH and SNSD, but instead has turned towards nationalistic parties in BiH, which all of his predecessors viewed as being mainly responsible for one of the bloodiest Golgotha of this state. The author stresses this sort of politicians suits HR for two reasons. The first is that they can extend their mandate and purpose of stay in this state, a job well paid. The second one is that the so called reformists often prepare eulogies, which prepares grounds for fruitful continuation of his career within top circles of European policy.</p>

<p>SB says review of removal decisions first sign of reducing HR's Bonn powers, Ljiljan wonders will Alibabic return to Intelligence?</p>	<p>Slobodna Bosna cover splash, pgs 18-21 'Swag song by Bosnian colonizer Ashdown' by <u>Danka Savic</u> – Referring to the announcement by the HR Paddy Ashdown on review of OHR's decisions on removal of officials, the magazine says that this is <i>"practically the first indication of the audit of OHR's Bonn powers"</i> and that <i>"it is certain that in the future their use will be reduced to those officials which assist the war crimes suspects."</i> Author also claims that the decision was also a result of the pressure by international think-tank institutes which accused HR of non-democratic use of powers. <i>"It is also an admittance that in the past several years in some cases OHR made removal decisions on base of wrong estimates,"</i> says SB and adds that Nikola Grabovac, "unjustly" removed FBiH Finance Minister, could expect a pardon.</p> <p>Ljiljan pgs 14-16 'Muni Alibabic against in BiH intelligence?' by <u>Mustafa Borovic</u> – On the same issue, Ljiljan says that HR <i>"risks to make new mistakes [in the review process], to pardon 'hawks' and leave people with much lesser sins under sanctions."</i> According to Ljiljan's sources, French [speculated to be taking over HR's position] are making a pressure on Ashdown to pardon Munir Alibabic, concluding that it is speculated that Alibabic could soon take over one of the leading positions in OSA and there are mentions of his appointment to the position of the State Police Commissioner.</p> <p>Dani pg 17 – the magazine is highly critical of Ashdown's announcement.</p>
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<p>Feral Tribune: RS Helsinki Committee Chair Dizdarevic comments on situation in BiH, role of HR Ashdown</p>	<p>Feral Tribune, pg 29 'Ashdown is stalling Bosnia', by <u>Igor Lasic</u> – Carries an interview with the re-elected President of BiH Helsinki Committee, Srdjan Dizdarevic, in which he, whilst talking about the situation in BiH and the role of the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, in the country, says the problem with the HR is that he acts in BiH as a viceroy, in other words an imperial representative, who intends to keep the strings in his own hands and who does not show readiness to open dialogue and partnership with others, instead he imposes decisions and removes people. <i>"The problem is in the man, not in the institution of the High Representative. Ashdown obviously wants to permanently stay in BiH, and wants to make it dependant on international factors. It would be sufficient that he acts as an interpreter of the Dayton agreement, and as an aide, but in this relation, things are obviously not moving, the country is becoming more dependent (...) It is clear that we do not have a firm political scene that would counter influences of the IC, a scene that would set itself as a partner, and which would lead the country to independence"</i>, says Dizdarevic.</p>
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**RS President
Cavic: No
constitution
is eternal**

Dnevni Avaz pg 5 'There is no country whose constitution is eternal' by Edina Sarac – In an interview to DA, the RS Presidency, **Dragan Cavic**, says that he is *"aware that many in RS will disagree with his opinion, but one has to be open and say that the story on constitutional changes must not be a taboo."* Cavic notes that BiH currently undergoes the processes in order to join Euro-Atlantic integrations, and while it waits *"all should think what will happen after. Looking at others, it is clear that what follows are the most serious reforms which in a number of ways entire into all pores of lives."* Being asked whether, then, he is in favor of constitutional changes, Cavic responds: *"There is no country whose constitution is eternal."* But, says Cavic, the constitutional changes must not be used to have one people dominate over others. *"Constitutional will certainly be changed, only the ambient must be created for it,"* says Cavic underlying that there is no resistance towards reforms in BiH. On police reform, Cavic says that the key problem is territorial organization as *"it is silly to try to shut down current inter-entity lines and to make some other regional borders."* As for the defence reform, Cavic expects next phase to be a discussion on a single army and abolishment of entities Defence Ministries, and he stresses he is *"absolutely in favor of admitting this country to NATO."* Commenting the cooperation with the ICTY, Cavic says that in last six months RS created the atmosphere in which war crimes suspect at large cannot feel comfortable to hide in RS and in which no political official would dispute legality of ICTY. *"The biggest problem is that everybody from public indictments have dual citizenship. We get the orders, and the solution of the problem is in Belgrade ,"* concludes Cavic.

<p>Priebe: EC cannot recommend launching of SAA negotiations btw BiH and EU</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'There are no conditions to start negotiations between BiH and EU' by <u>S. Numanovic</u> – European Commission cannot give a green light for launching the negotiations on stabilization and admission of BiH to EU, says Director of the EC Directorate for the Western Balkans, Reinhard Priebe who currently attends the meeting of Consultative Task Force in Sarajevo. At this meeting the BiH authorities presented the progress in meeting 16 conditions from the Feasibility Study. He says that there will be another meeting in May when all achieved will be analyzed once again. The EC officials points to two key problems in the BiH: cooperation with the ICTY and police reform. EU and EC expects war crimes suspects to in the Hague, whether voluntarily or forced, says Priebe adding that police must be organized at the state level.</p>
<p>Internet public opinion poll: Two-third majority for one President in BiH</p>	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija, pg 16 '76% in favour of one President', by <u>M. Landeka</u> – According to a public opinion poll, which has been conducted by the Mostar-based 'Bljesak' internet site, of 365 people that replied to the poll, 76,25% agree that BiH should have one President, whilst 14,79% believe that BiH should have three Presidents. 9,86% of people are not interested in the issue at all.</p>

<p>RS Helsinki Board and BH journalists condemn SDS pressure against RTRS</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 5 'SDS wants to return RS and BiH into mono-intellectual status' by <u>V. Popovic</u> – Branko Todorovic, Executive Director of the Helsinki Board for Human Rights, condemned SDS pressures against editorial policy of RTRS, adding: <i>"SDS policy based on pressures, totalitarianism, intolerance, extremism, extreme nationalism and violence. We are all aware of fatal consequences of that policy."</i> The Association "BH Journalists" also strongly criticised pressures of SDS, saying that SDS officials cannot accept the fact that independent and professional media represent a pre-requisite for strengthening of democratic institutions in RS and BiH. BHT, Oslobođenje pg 10 also carried the BiH journalists reaction.</p>
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