

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 16/12/2002

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Croatia finally achieved a full sovereignty over Prevlaka	BiH Presidency still don't know who will be Chairman of Council of Ministers	HVO veterans announce blockade of main roads in FBiH	High Representative will declare amendments on Law on citizenship
Tomorrow – blockade of main roads in Federation BiH by HVO veterans	Trial of ex-President of Republika Srpska starts in the Hague	Zenica fire fighters to go on strike tomorrow	Trial of ex-president of RS starts tomorrow
Trial of Biljana Plavsic	New BiH Parliament has to deal with agreement on Port of Ploce	Inhabitants of several villages near Jajce demand removal of Zelenik garbage depot	SDS about its support to BiH budget
American President approves executions of terrorists		Railway line between Tuzla and Vinkovci in Croatia has been opened today	

Oslobodjenje	SDA to decide – the state premier Bosniak or Croat
Dnevni Avaz	Tihic: SDA will not be repeating its offer; Toby Robinson presents the report – Whether Ante Jelavic will be accused as well?

Dnevni List	HVIDRA will block roads and border crossings for two hours today: Whole-day blockade starts on Thursday
Vecernji List	Interview: Dragan Covic, Croat member of three-member BiH Presidency: Klein admitted mistake
Slobodna Dalmacija	After departure of UN observers full sovereignty in utter south of Croatia was established: Croatian flag is flying on Prevlaka
FRY Nacional	G17 creates a shadow government; Biljana Plavsic will be given a suspended sentence
Blic	Refugees ask for stoppage of evictions during winter; Diplomatic network expensive and irrational; Tihic: Name of Srpska is not in accordance with the Constitution
Glas Srpski	How many years students spend at Universities in RS: It takes decades to obtain a diploma; New York: Terrorists put on the hit list
Nezavisne Novine	Javier Solana for Nezavisne Novine: The BiH road to European Union entry will be a difficult one; Banja Luka mayor, Dragoljub Davidovic, on building of power plants: Banja Luka thermo-electric power plant on the priority list; Pensioners club in Banja Luka: a shelter from winter and poverty

Coalition building process

<p>SDA Presidency to discuss today candidates for BiH PM designate</p>	<p>The SDA Presidency is expected at its session scheduled for Monday in Sarajevo to decide whether the BiH prime minister designate will be of the Croat or Bosniak nationality. In a statement for Oslobodjenje (front page, p 3), SDA leader Sulejman Tihic confirmed that on the flight from New York to Sarajevo he had discussed with the HDZ's Dragan Covic a possibility that the HDZ's candidate (Barisa Colak) is nominated for the post of the BiH Council of Ministers Chairman. Moreover, according to the Party for BiH Presidency's decision and the recommendation by Haris Silajdzic, the new BiH PM designate should be Safet Halilovic. Although the Office of the High Representative did not participate in the discussions on the issue, the sources close to SDA told the newspaper that the OHR officials had suggested they would like to see Beriz Belkic, a senior Party for BiH official, on this post.</p> <p>At the same time, Tihic told Dnevni Avaz (front page, p 4) that the SDA Presidency was likely to propose its own candidate for the post at the Monday's session.</p>
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<p>Dnevni List on the BiH Council of Ministers Chairman nomination</p>	<p>Reminding of the December 17 deadline, set by the BiH Election Commission, by which the name of the designate for the new composition of BiH Council of Ministers is to be given, Dnevni List (p 7, "SDA giving Silajdzic's candidacy up", by Miso Relota) carries that the SDA Presidency is to consider today the HDZ's proposal that the position be occupied by a Croat. Sulejman Tihic is quoted as saying that the party will see whether and under which conditions Barisa Colak could be accepted as the CoM designate and that, due to newly-arisen circumstances, SDA could decide to put the candidacy of one of its members forward. DL also carries the statement of Adnan Terzic, the SDABiH Vice-president, given on FTV in which he has stated that the High Representative was exerting pressure in the direction of having a Croat performing the duty. On the other hand, Niko Lozancic, the HDZBiH Vice-president, claims believes that the "issue of the name of the CoM designate is a closed case", adding that it will be Barisa Colak and that such a position is based on the grounds of the results of HDZ negotiations with the Bosniak and Serb parties. In his view, Colak's candidacy is "a matter of order and honesty" as the respective entity Governments will be lead by a Bosniak, i.e. a Serb. Commenting that the entire process has all the time been followed by Paddy Ashdown, who is also interested in respecting the 17 December deadline, DL goes on to say that it can now be said with a 99% certainty that Haris Silajdzic has declined the offer for the position. Ones speculate the reason is that he has conditioned his acceptance with the request that the SDA tricks the agreement on cooperation that has already been reached with the HDZ and the SDS, other that claim he is preparing himself for a position at the next elections and he thus behaves as if he believes that the three national parties will not manage to form authorities or that, should they mange to do so, the alliance is to fall apart in a 6 months' time. Thus he would open space for snap elections and would become the winner among the Bosniak voters. That would be a proof that he was right all along and that he is the only one capable of taking Bih to reforms that the OHR and the entire IC insist. Since Barisa Colak has been appointed the Vice-chair of the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives, he would be replaced on that position by a deputy from West Herzegovina. This agreement has obviously surprised Paddy Ashdown, so he has urgently asked for a meeting with Haris Silajdzic, but the meeting resulted in no changes.</p>
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<p>Negotiations on future cabinet of Dragan Mikerevic begin today</p>	<p>The Deputy President of PDP, Zoran Djeric, stated for Nezavisne Novine (p 7) that negotiations on future Cabinet of the RS Prime Minister designate, Dragan Mikerevic, will begin today. According to Djeric, no names are known yet as there were no discussions with the parties that should compose the Government. The daily learnt the same from SDS.</p> <p>In line with the constitutional amendments, the RS Government should consist of 16 Ministries, according to the following formula: 8 Serbs plus the Prime Minister, 5 Bosniaks and 3 Croats.</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine speculates on possible candidates for ministerial positions. The daily claims that PDP is interested in Interior Ministry and Ministry of Finance, thus many see Sinisa Djordjevic, currently the Advisor to the RS PM for relations with the Hague as the new Interior Minister and Milica Bisic, currently the Head of the RS Tax administration as the new RS Finance Minister. According to this scheme, the current Finance Minister, Simeun Vilendecic, would replace Bisic as the Head of RS Tax Administration, while SDS would agree to have its member for the Minister of Traffic and Communications and the current Minister for Industry and Technology, Pero Bukejlovic, might keep his position.</p> <p>The SDA said it will support Mikerevic if it gets the post of the Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry for Refugees and DPs, Ministry for Agriculture and Ministry for Urbanism. Recalling some previous talks with the RS PM Mladen Ivanic, the Vice President of SDA, Elmir Jahic, claims that SDA should get three out of total five Ministries allocated to Bosniaks.</p> <p>According to Jahic, the SDA will also request that its members be appointed to the posts of assistants to the ministries of interior, finance and defense.</p>
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BiH integration into Europe

**Erhard Busek
on future of
Southeast
Europe**

The Special Coordinator of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, Erhard Busek, said that the European Union would not forget the Balkans following the admission of the new members, but that before the consideration of the admission of the countries from the region into the EU, the status of BiH and Kosovo had to be resolved, ONASA reported (Dnevni Avaz, p 3: "Integration of the Balkan states into the EU will be the next Brussels' step")

"Idea that problems of divided BiH will simply disappear within the European Union is not feasible, as well as the idea that Kosovo may integrate without becoming an independent state," Busek said, according to Vecernje Novosti, p 9, headline 'Status of BiH and Kosovo first'.

**Solana on
BiH's
integration
into Europe**

"BiH has already passed a great part of the road towards Europe. The new authorities must lead the country in the next phase of the integration. The implementation of the Job and Justice program and particularly the unification of the customs administrations and the introduction of a single VAT at the state level will be the key test," the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, wrote in an exclusive article for Dnevni Avaz (p 5: "BiH has already passed a great part of the road towards Europe"). Vecernji List (p 2, "Doctor Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for foreign and security policy: Only through the loopholes in the Law, BiH is robbed of 3.5 Billion Marks", article not signed) quotes Solana as saying that, if BiH implements reforms, the EU will openly offer BiH accession to the EU. "I cannot take on this commitment on behalf of BiH, but can promise that, in the months and years to come, the EU will maintain its engagement in South-East Europe".

Nezavisne Novine (cover page and p 3) carries the letter of the European Union High Commissioner for foreign affairs and security, Javier Solana, who said that very soon the shape and the size of the EU will drastically change, as it completed negotiations on its expansion at the summit in Copenhagen. According to Solana, the message to the countries of the South Eastern Europe, including BiH is clear: membership in European Union is not a dream impossible to achieve. His message to the citizens of BiH is: "BiH too can become part of the European Union if it improves the implementation of difficult and important reforms which are necessary for entry to Europe. It is up to you to decide."

HVO veterans protests

HVO veterans to block roads in FBiH today

The Cantonal Ministers and the Heads of the Administrations for Veterans' Issues from Mostar, Orasje, Grude, Zepce, Tomislavgrad and Vitez remained persistent in their position not to provide the authorized Federation Minister Suada Hadzovic with personal data about the HVO pensioners containing the amount of their monthly income as well. And Hadzovic remained decisive not to approve payment of October pensions to the HVO veterans without these data. This means that, as announced, the members of the HVO veterans' associations from 40 municipalities will on Monday block roads and border crossing in the entity to protest against such the Hadzovic's standpoint (Oslobodjenje, p 7, mentioned on the front page: "Blockage of roads as of today", Dnevni Avaz, p 3, mentioned on the front page: "Minister Hadzovic does not intend to change her position despite announced blockages")

<p>Jonjic's serious accusations against Minister Hadzovic</p>	<p>With regard to the problems that emerged regarding the issue of payment of disability allowances to Croat victims, Dnevni List (front and page 3) carries Dobrica Jonjic, the Deputy of Suada Hadzovic, the Federation Minister for Defenders' Issues, denying Hadzovic, who stated that a transparent payment of disability allowances does not suit the Croat party.</p> <p>Jonjic says: "This is a very harsh and irresponsible insinuation, even an open accusation addressed against whole HV0, and not against individuals." Jonjic says that Hadzovic does not treat both sides in the same way and states a few arguments to substantiate these claims. Jonjic concludes: "When submitting of lists with required information is in question, I am calling on Associations resulting from Homeland War to influence that the required data is submitted, because the legitimacy of all of us can be defended in this way only."</p> <p>With regard to the same issue, Vecernji List (page 2, by <u>Zoran Kresic</u>) carries an editorial which says: "It is interesting that this move of Suada Hadzovic takes place at the end of the mandate of the Alliance and destabilized SDP, whose member she is. Probably, Hadzovic's "spite" is also related to de-stabilization of the future authority by causing of social displeasure or it is an attempt to cause victims' provocation in order to create an alibi for the action."</p>
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Investigations/crimes/law enforcement

<p>Toby Robinson to present report on Hercegovacka Bank investigation today</p>	<p>Toby Robinson, the Hercegovacka bank Provisional administrator, is expected to present the report on the investigation into the Bank-related irregularities and the financial manipulations at a press conference in Mostar on Monday. The comprehensive report has been completed in the past days and it has already been in the hands of the High Representative Paddy Ashdown, as well as the authorized prosecution offices (Dnevni Avaz, p 2: "Whether Ante Jelavic will be amongst indictees as well").</p>
<p>Trial of Plavsic opens today before ICTY</p>	<p>Once called "the iron lady of the Balkans," Biljana Plavsic is now the highest-ranking Bosnian Serb to be tried for war crimes. Having pleaded guilty, she faces a sentencing hearing beginning Monday, and the big question is whether her publicly expressed remorse will get her leniency from the U.N. tribunal in The Hague. The 72-year-old former genetics professor could get life imprisonment. But the hearing is to last an unprecedented three days, raising speculation that high-profile Western leaders and academics may plead on her behalf in recognition of her constructive role in ending the 1992-1995 Bosnian war (Associated Press, Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz, Nezavisne Novine, p 4, Glas Srpski, p 3).</p> <p>The President of Serb People's Alliance [SNS-party established by Biljana Plavsic], Branislav Lolic, stated for Srna news agency that the future destiny of the party depends on the ICTY verdict to Biljana Plavsic (Glas Srpski, p 2). According to Lolic, the party will hold the session of the executive board on 11th January 2003 and decide on its future.</p>

<p>BiH Human Rights Chamber decision on Glamocko Polje</p>	<p>Although the BiH Human Rights Chamber in September 2001 brought the decision that within six- month period the Federation BiH recompenses all refugees and DPs from Glamocko Polje, at which property a military range / exercise field was built, no person has received any compensation. Decision on building the military range had been signed by Alija Izetbegovic in 1996. The Federation Army range called 'Barbara' is situated in the area that covers 7 villages and land of another 5 villages. Next to that range is SFOR exercise field "Pelican' which is situated on the territory of several Serb villages that were destroyed on 13 and 14 August 1998 by SFOR in order to build the exercise field. Association of refugees and DPs from Glamocko Polje 'Barbara' is dissatisfied with the IC stand toward this case. "We are an example of the IC's hypocrisy. It is repeating that all have to return to their homes of origin, while its soldiers took away our homes and property," the Association said. Glamoc's refugees also point out that they have proofs that SFOR is using ammunition with depleted uranium during its exercises. The decision of Human Rights Chamber says that OHR is in charge for implementing it (decision). However, spokesperson of OHR Banja Luka Sonja Pastuovic said that OHR did not have anything in common with it. SFOR spokesperson did not want to give any answer because "he does not have authority to speak about it". (FRY Nacional p 11 headline 'Military ranges erased houses of 350 families')</p>
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Interview with Dragan Covic; BiH diplomatic network

Covic interview with Vecernji List

Vecernji List (front and page 3, "Klein admitted that pulling down of national parties was American mistake") carries an interview with Dragan Covic, a Croat member of the BiH Presidency, who says that he stated before the UN Security Council, that they support all decisions that the High Representative is passing, however, they want to work more efficiently and pass laws faster so that the HR should not act in any way when it is about passing of laws or other decisions. Covic also said: "During the lunch, which was organized for members of the BiH Presidency, Jacques Paul Klein, the Head of the UN Mission in BiH, stated that finally time has come that the International Community and American Administration realize that the election winner is the one who gets trust of citizens. He concluded that the biggest mistake of the IC was that it did not make possible for the elections winner at previous elections to participate in the authority."

Rationalisation of BiH diplomatic network	<p>According to some politicians, BiH has irrational diplomatic network – with 39 embassies, 5 missions, 7 consulates and 500 employees it is very expensive, unorganised and does not satisfy the interests of all three people. According to Milovan Blagojevic, deputy BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the process of racionalisation of the network, the headquarters, i.e. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, should be strengthened first. Certain number of diplomatic posts will be cancelled and number of employees in administrative units will be considerably reduced. According to some information, the diplomatic network will be reduced for 1/3. (Blic p 6 headline ‘Diplomats face dismissal’)</p>
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Economic reforms in BiH	
Vecernji List: Scandalous Book of Rule on organization of Tax Administration of BiH Federation	<p>Vecernji List (front and page 3, by <u>Zoran Kresic</u>) carries that according to a new Book of Rule on the organization of the BiH Federation Tax Administration it has been envisaged to reduce the number of Tax Administrations in some Cantons and to link them some other Tax Administrations. VL says that this Book of Rule is based on the national discrimination, since it envisages to employ another 140 employees in the Cantons in which Bosniaks make majority, while over 160 employees will be dismissed from the Tax Administrations in the Cantons with the Croat majority. VL also says that Midhat Arifovic, the Head of the BiH Federation Tax Administration, confirmed this proposal in principle and Sefika Hafizovic, the Federation Minister of Finances and Arifovic’s colleague from Party for BiH should approve it. Also, according to the same proposal, the way in which the collection of taxes by Municipal Tax Administrations was organized is interesting, and according to it, the Tax Administration of the Mostar Municipality Stari Grad with the Bosniak majority should be collecting taxes from Aluminij, the only company that completely meets its obligations towards the state.</p>

<p>Ljiljan on VAT, foreign investments</p>	<p>Editorial by <u>Mirsad Sinanovic</u> on pg. 5 (no title) of this week's Ljiljan reads that gentlemen Ashdown, Jensen and Ingram think that sales tax has been splitting economic space in BiH, and that its application causes losses in both entities and Brcko District of at least a billion-KM. According to the article, the three think that the state VAT would harmonize the tax system and budgets of entities, cantons and municipalities would benefit from it. This argument however is not enough for RS party representatives. "Let us stay as further away from Europe as possible, but remain divided," reads the article. In the conclusion, Sinanovic refers to a statement by Sefik Dzaferovic, HoR Chair, that 'he believes in the determination of Mr. Ashdown'.</p> <p>Ljiljan on pg. 17, 18, 19 and 20 carried an interview with Sefik Dzaferovic, recently appointed HoR Chair. Asked whether he thinks BiH will have single account for the customs and VAT revenues, Dzaferovic said he had high hopes in HR's determination to carry the issue to the end. "BiH is a country that has a single policy on customs and three separate customs administrations. Such thing does not exist anywhere in the world. Due to non-existence of a single customs administration BiH loses half a billion KM.. BiH also loses a great deal of money due to inefficiency of the sales tax system and therefore it is very important to have state VAT. I believe in HR because he marked these two things as the key ones in his speech just over a month ago," said Dzaferovic.</p> <p>Entitled 'Reform and businessmen' in the 'SAUNA' column on pg. 13. The core of HR's initiative for stimulating foreign investments is that the reform will succeed if businessmen get involved. The idea was a guide for HR Ashdown to send a questionnaire to addresses of 500 businessmen. Replies already started arriving to OHR's address. Amongst other things – liberalization of the bus system regime, rationalization of tourism allocations, resolving the issue of multiple taxing... All these suggestions reached the Bulldozer Commission. It can already be said that the initiative was highly successful because it concerned concrete suggestions that politicians had not tackled at the assembly sessions. It could be expected that these suggestions would get soon to the parliamentary procedures. "Paddy is some sort of Bosnian bulldozer," is the conclusion in the article.</p> <p>Another article tackling the issue of VAT and single customs administration entitled 'Ivanic making up clashes in order to prevent the introduction of VAT and single customs' on pg. 36 and 37 by Mirsad Sinanovic. The article recalls statements by HR Ashdown, Alan Jensen and Midhat Arapovic (Director of the FBiH Customs Administration) which made it clear that the Federation had been dealing with great losses due to existence of fictitious firms and non-payment of sales taxes. Still, reads the article, all arguments are not enough for the RS PM Ivanic and Dodik to support the initiative to introduce the single customs administration and VAT. Ivanic even think that it would lead to clashes in BiH. "Ivanic's reasons are not of political nature. He is not concerned with economic indicators. PM Ivanic does not want BiH to have minimum institutions necessary for this country to really become a state. All reps from the RS parties refuse to give up state attributes of the RS institutions, which belong to BiH," reads the article.</p>
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Glas Srpski on VAT	Glas Srpski carries a report on introduction of VAT by <u>Milenko Sajic</u> with a headline "More money, less frauds". The article says that the VAT should be applied from January 1 st , 2005 and that the public is not well informed on this new tax system. Glas Srpski interviewed Rajko Tomas, professor at the Banja Luka Faculty of Economics, who said that the advantage of VAT is that protection from fraud is much more efficient as all phases of production and trade are being monitored. As one of disadvantages of the VAT system, Professor Tomas mentioned the inflation that may occur after its introduction, from 5 to 6 percent.
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Tihic's initiative for change of RS name	
SDA's Jahic on the initiative	Vice-president of the SDA Elmir Jahic confirmed that president of the party and Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency Sulejman Tihic would initiate a procedure for changing the RS's name, anthem and coat of arms before the BiH Constitutional Court. Jahic said that the name is contrary to the RS Constitution, which stipulates that this is the entity of Serbs, Bosniaks, Croats and others. According to him, it would be the best if name is changed into Entity of Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats or into some other neutral name. Jahic said that the SDA also supported the idea to change the name of Federation BiH, but "it does not mean that the SDA pledged for abolishment of the entities and creation of a unitary BiH as some say, but only for change of the names".

<p>Reactions</p>	<p>BiH Presidency Chairman Mirko Sarovic stated that the repeated “resurrection” of the story on changing the name Republika Srpska, is like “shooting in empty space”. He said that it is impossible to change the name RS, because it is defined by the Dayton Peace Accords and the BiH Constitution.</p> <p>Spokesperson of the PDP Igor Crnadak said that regardless of the SDA’s attempts, the name of Republika Srpska would remain as an entity, and noone could bring into question its constituency. The PDP thinks that such initiatives “are slowing down all positive processes in the whole BiH”. “This initiative neither has a basis in the DPA and BiH Constitution nor in common sense and logic”, Crnadak said.</p> <p>According to president of the SNSD Executive Board Nebojsa Radmanovic, Tihic’s initiative is old pre-election story. “Now they believe they could easier realise the initiative, because they are in the coalition with the strongest RS party – SDS,” Radmanovic said. He added that the initiative was anti-Dayton one.</p> <p>Vice-president of the SPRS Tihomir Gligoric claims that “due to the anti-Dayton attempt to change the RS’s name” the High Representative Paddy Ashdown should sanction Sulejman Tihic. “I would say that behind this stand is a real SDA intention and that is abolishment of the Serb entity and creation of an unitary BiH,” Gligoric said. (Blic p 7 headline ‘Tihic wants Entity of Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats’, Glas Srpski, p 3 – Sarovic’s statement)</p>
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BiH Law on Citizenship

BiH Law on citizenship: would it change by New Year?

One of the items on the agenda for tomorrow's session of the House of Representatives of BiH Parliamentary Assembly will be the Law on citizenship and changes and additions to the Law (Nezavisne Novine, p.5). The daily has learnt from its sources that if the House of Representatives passes changes and additions to the law, and bearing in mind that the House of peoples is not yet established, the House of Representatives will ask the High Representative to promulgate this law. The OHR refused to comment on its action that may follow the letter. The OHR Spokesman, Patrik Volf, briefly stated "we have only learnt about this from the media."

According to the current law, all BiH citizens who have dual citizenship will lose BiH citizenship if they do not give up on the other one by 31st December this year. The Assistant Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications, Miodrag Pandurevic, stated that the proposed changes suggest the extension of the deadline to 15 years from the day the law comes into force.

<p>BiH HoR Speaker on the Law on Citizenship</p>	<p>In an interview with Ljiljan, Sefik Dzaferovic, recently appointed HoR Chair said that one of the agenda points for the fourth session of the HR is amendments and changes to the Law on Citizenship. "I fulfilled my constitutional obligation and included the Law on agenda. Due to objective circumstances the HoP has not be established yet and therefore we will request from HT to pronounce the law before January 1 next year," stated Dzaferovic. He added that HR could do that without the HoP, but it would be significant of it was done by the HoR. This would send a message by representatives that they are interested in solving this important issue.</p>
<p>Ljiljan on the issue</p>	<p>'It's all in the hands of Ashdown' on pg. 21 and 22 by <u>Sejo Omeragic</u>. Poses the question of what will happen to BiH citizens if in three weeks 'unconstitutional and discriminatory' Law on Citizenship is enforced. According to Omeragic, we are just around the corner from the biggest tragedy since the Dayton. The article points out that it is odd that none of Bosniak officials raised the issue of the Law not being constitutional. The DPA stipulates that citizens are allowed to have dual citizenship. Only Hr Ashdown has the power to prevent the tragedy, reads the article. "He simply has to react because it is clear that there is no political will from either Serb or Croat national oligarchy in BiH to postpone the problem."</p>