OHR BiH Media Round-up, 20/2/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	**BH TV 1** (19,00 hrs)	**FED TV** (19,30 hrs)	**RT RS** (19,30)
Serbia-Montenegro Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic visited BiH	Ashdown and Svilanovic called today in Sarajevo Balkan countries to take joint stand for the EU Summit	Membership in the EU is frame for solution to all open issues, said Serbia-Montenegro Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic in Sarajevo	Meeting of Serbia and Montenegro Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic with the BH Presidency
Mostar Police found and luckily deactivated two explosive devices	Protest of Elektroprivreda workers took place in Banja Luka	Cantonal Court in Sarajevo sentenced Alija Delimustafic to 4 years in prison	SFOR intruded in company Lignosper in order to find hidden weapon
New FBiH Defence Minister Miroslav Nikolic pleads to transfer defence responsibilities to the state level	Syndicate claims protest protects capital but not rights of workers	RS has obligation to help all the refugees and displaced persons but also those wanting to permanently settle in that entity, said RS President Dragan Cavic	30000 workers and citizens protested against privatisation of Elektroprivreda in Banjaluka

In Hague Tribunal, Dragan Vasiljkovic, known as Captain Dragan, testifies at Milosevic's trial	Hague suspect, Albanian Fatmir Limaj has been arrested		Dragan Mikerevic on reconstruction and modernisation of electric power system

Oslobodjenje	Civil servants appointed illegally
Dnevni Avaz	Former FBiH Ministers wait for salaries to terminate their professional engagement
Dnevni List	BiH lawsuit against Yugoslavia slows down cooperation
Vecernji List	Bombs on property of Slezak family again
Slobodna Dalmacija	"Two kilos of explosive in Slezak's betting shops de-activated before explosion
Glas Srpski	Do illegally built gas stations in RS work?
Nezavisne Novine	Cantonal Court in Sarajevo – Former minister sentenced to four years imprisonment; Banja Luka: Association of parents demand Minister Savanovic be removed; Goran Svilanovic in Sarajevo – BiH and Serbia and Montenegro to Europe together; Dragan Cavic in new Audi A8; Pensioners to sue Government and RS PIO Fund; Banja Luka: Protest against privatisation of Elektroprivreda
Blic	Workers against selling of the whole Elektroprivreda; Mile Atlagic: Returnees are without job, rights and houses

Affairs

Oslobodjenje: Civil servants appointed illegally	Oslobodjenje front page, pgs. 4-5 'Revision of the employees in the civil service to be conducted soon – Civil servants appointed illegally' – Fuad Sabeta and Bakir Dautbasic, the new secretaries of the BiH Foreign Ministry and the BiH Ministry for Security are the first but not the only civil servants who have been appointed illegally by the new authorities. The BiH Council of Ministers is expected at its session scheduled for today to appoint yet six secretaries and a general secretary as only two names have been sent to the BiH Civil Service Agency for approval, the newspaper learns. "Nezavisne Novine", page 5, "Fuad Sabeta appointed in spite of criminal charges" – NN update to Sabeta affair, claiming that the former BIH Foreign Ministry pressed two criminal charges, including the name of Fuad Sabeta. The first criminal charges concern the case "Sacirbegovic", while the second one was pressed upon the BiH Federation Chief Audits office investigation into activities at the diplomatic and consular missions of BiH throughout the world. Dnevni List (front and page 6, "Revision of diplomas in BiH Civil Service Agency soon") carries an interview with Head of BiH Civil Service Agency Jakob Finci. Finci says: "In order to achieve professionalization it is necessary to do a revision of civil servants and only two things will be taken into consideration. The first one is education, while the second one is the way in which these persons were employed, that is, whether they were employed according to regulations that were valid at the time when they started to work for the sate service or they became civil servants thanks to their partisan, family or other connections."
Dnevni Avaz: Former FBiH Minister wait for salaries to terminate their professional engagement	Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 11 'Former FBiH Ministers wait for salaries to finally leave the offices' – The newspaper learns in the Secretariat of the FBiH Government, not a single former entity's minister has so far officially submitted a request for termination of the professional engagement in the Government. There are some announcements and they will be realized at the end of the month after the payment of the February salaries in an average amount of KM 1,600. The position of the new Government is clear: all former ministers must decide on their future engagement including an offer to possibly continue their work within the BiH Federation bodies.

Mostar	Dnevni list (p 7, “Ashdown: Mostar requires an urgent solution and my full engagement”, by Eduard Babic) re-tells the reasons given for the resignation of Mostar Deputy Mayor Tomic and comments many saw it in light of new political developments. Tomic’s most significant political idea – “Mostar – one City one Municipality” stands little chance of coming true bearing in mind the current ratio of the local political forces and he is, Babic comments, aware of it. The idea can only be realised by imposition of a Decision by the High Representative as any agreement of the interested parties is impossible. Babic goes on to say that, unlike Tomic’s earlier announcements of resignation, this time the announcement did not stir lot of dust within the IC which had, up to now, done everything to please Tomic any time he would mention his resignation. This time, following the announcement, apart from “regret”, there were no words of support to the Deputy Mayor. But, the situation is gradually changing. First the High Representative of the IC in BiH shyly announced that his intention was to first solve some economic issues and then would deal with the issue of Mostar. Babic quotes the HR as saying that he has realised in the meantime that Mostar requires an urgent solution and his full engagement. The announcement by the French Ambassador to BiH of the withdrawal of France from the Old Bridge project at first sounded confusing, but it is easy to conclude that all the stone-carving works in the project are being performed by people from Turkey while no one counts any more on the national cadre, trained at the Stone-carving school which was financed by France. Though indirect, this move, according to Babic, also goes in Tomic’s favour. The article concludes by saying there is a “general war” within the HDZ Mostar City Board regarding the name of the new candidate to replace Tomic, adding that the HDZ HQ is trying to talk Tomic into changing his decision. Babic comments that Tomic might stay at his current position if he would finally get firm guarantees for the implementation of his political and economic ideas. Vecernji list (p 6, “T. Young the new Head of OSCE”, by O.C.), Dnevni list (p 12, “Emphasis put on the education reform”, by D.Kozina) and Slobodna Dalmacija (p 18, “Thomas Young the new Head of OSCE”, Fena) report that the OHR has informed that the DHR and the Head of OHR-South, Jean Pierre Bercot, sent a letter to the Head of Mostar Municipality Old Town, Zijad Hadziomerovic, in which he expressed his astonishment over the fact that the Municipality still employed Nedzad Behram, a person once removed by the HR from the position of the Head of the Housing Department. Bercot requested from Mr. Hadziomerovic to immediately remove Mr. Behram from any further work on any issue relating to property or any matter affecting the rights of refugees and displaced persons.

New proposal for the future re-organisation of Mostar	In light of the document "The basic principles for re-organisation of the city of Mostar", publicly presented by the caucus of the Coalition for Single and Democratic BiH (CD Coalition) yesterday, Slobodna Dalmacija (p 17, "SDP and SDA request the division of Mostar", by Miroslav Landeka) reports that journalists were told that the Plan was supported by SDA and SDP, as well as independent councilors (the day before, Party for BiH released it did not support it).
Editorials on situation in Mostar	Dnevni List (page 2, by Vesna Leto) carries an editorial on the Mostar situation. The editorial wonders since when the political situation in Mostar has been heading towards nationalism and the author implies that the political situation has to be 'slippery' in order to make possible to some people privatization, co-capitalization etc. for small amounts of money. The editorial also wonders as to why it has taken years to international and domestic institutions to qualify finally Head of Mostar Municipality Stari Grad Zijad Hadziomerovic a nationalist and hard-liner. The editorial wonders: "Will OHR and High Representative himself be principled and remove Hadziomerovic because he violated HR's decision and kept in Municipal services a person, who according to someone's orders, was stopping minority returns in that Municipality." In the role of a guest-commentator in Vecernji List (p 4), Josip Merdzo says that the situation in which, on the territory of the pre-war municipality of Mostar, there are now 7 administrations (each of which is defined as a local self-government unit) and the Central Zone which is, in the legal sense, almost impossible to fit into the system of the Federation and the Canton, indicates to the unsustainability of such an organisation. Bearing in mind that the number of the population is lower than before the war and that all the industry and social activities have been reduced, it is clear that such an organisation of the city is a complicated, inefficient, legally intricate and costly solution due to which it is its inhabitants who suffer the most.
Mostar: Explosive devices planted in café and betting shop owned by Slezak family	Vecernji List (front and page 3, "Bombs on property of Slezak family again"), Dnevni List (front and page 31, "Family Slezak is target again") and Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 15, "Two kilos of explosive in Slezak's betting shops de-activated before explosion") carry that two explosive devices were planted, one in a betting shop owned by Dinko Slezak, one of the most prominent Mostar businessmen, and a café "Enigma", owned by his brother Zoran Slezak. Luckily, the explosive devices were revealed on time and thus tragedy was prevented since the explosive device planted in the café was supposed to explode at 23:00 hours, when the café is still open for its guests. VL says that this is a new shock for the Slezak family since Dinko Slezak's brother-in -law Blasko Knezovic was killed a few weeks ago and the investigation on this case is still underway. Dinko Slezak's family was attacked a few times before.

RS Elektroprivreda privatisation	"Glas Srpski", page 4 "Round Table and privatisation" and "Signature to uncertainty", "Nezavisne Novine", page 3 "RS Elektroprivreda in claws of politicians" – Both dailies report on yesterday's one-hour protest of the RS Elektroprivreda employees in Banja Luka. The protest of over 1500 was organised to mark the opposition to the sale of RS Elektroprivreda capital. Blic pg. 7 headline 'They treat to cut off the electricity'; Vecernje Novosti pg. 5 'They do not want a boss' – President of the RS Elektroprivreda Trade Union Mirko Djukic, said that if the RS institutions accepted the privatisation of majority part of that enterprise, then some others steps would be taken, such as cutting off the electricity. "We do accept the privatisation, but we ask that the state remains to be the majority owner, which also includes the RS Oil Refinery," Djukic said. At the same time, the workers ask all parliamentary parties to publicly declare themselves on this problem. They also want that the session of the RS NA that will discuss this issue is broadcast live. A letter with the same requests was sent from the yesterday's protest to High Representative Paddy Ashdown. The conclusion of yesterday's Round Table called "Privatisation of energy sector", organised by the RS Chamber of Commerce, was that the "RS Elektroprivreda should go under privatisation process after this sector is developed and raised to satisfactory level." The participants of the Round Table agreed that the politics has involved in this issue to a great extent. The issue the participants raised and expressed concern about was what would happen if 51% of the capital, instead of 49% as stipulated, are to be sold. RS Premier, Dragan Mikerevic, expressed his view that it is necessary to sell 51% of the state capital at RS Elektroprivreda, because the restructuring of this sector would demand the amount of US $ 86 million.
RS MoI to investigate into Privredna Banka affair	"Nezavisne Novine", page 3 "Interrogations to follow police investigation" – Zoran Glusac, the RS Interior Ministry spokesperson, yesterday announced that the RS Ministry of Internal Affairs would announce the results of the investigation into Privredna Banka affair sometime next week. The investigation is to show whether there were or were not elements of criminal act committed by the persons involved in the transaction. Jovan Spajic, Acting RS Public Prosecutor, last week ordered police and audit's office to conduct the investigation.

Minister Savanovic affair	"Nezavisne Novine", page 5 "Minister Gojko Savanovic be removed for criminal activities" – Borko Dzajic, the President of the Forum of the parents, yesterday requested the removal of Gojko Savanovic from the position of the RS Minister of Education and Culture. At yesterday's press conference in Banja Luka, Dzajic accused Savanovic of being corrupted and involved in criminal activities. He also accused him of being responsible for the application of "discriminatory criteria". Savanovic yesterday denied the accusation of having plagiarised the physics textbook for 4th class of secondary school, referring to them as representing "cheap political tricks of some professor". Blic pg. 7 headline 'They request Savanovic's resignation'; Vecernje Novosti pg. 13 headline 'Minister has to go' also covered the issue.
Delimustafic case	"Nezavisne Novine", page 2 "Four years sentence to Alija Delimustafic" – NN reports that the Sarajevo Cantonal Court yesterday sentenced the former Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of BIH, Alija Delimustafic, to four years imprisonment. He was sentenced for having committed the criminal act of abduction of Kasim Bjelavac in Munich in 1996. The sentence term is to include the period, which Delimustafic spent in custody. Dnevni Avaz pg. 39, mentioned on the front page, and Oslobodjenje pg. 31, mentioned on the front page, Belgrade Nacional pg. 6, Vecernje Novosti pg. 11 also reported on the issue.
Kotorsko	Glas Srpski", page 2, "Final outcome at Court" – RS President, Dragan Cavic, and the RS Vice President, Adil Osmanovic and Ivan Tomljenovic, yesterday visited the municipality of Doboj, where they met the local officials and discussed the actual problems in this municipality, including the issue of Kotorsko. Cavic stated that the construction prohibition should be respected, noting that it is now up to judicial bodies to finally resolve this issue. Osmanovic promised that he would seek from the Premier of Zenica-Doboj Canton to assist in the process of Serb returns from Kotorsko to Vozuca. Tomljenovic expressed conviction that this problem would be overcome with the assistance of the Doboj Mayor, Obren Petrovic. Dnevni Avaz pg. 8 'Bosniaks requested return of the expropriated land, Serbs requested to be allowed to build houses', Oslobodjenje pg. 7 'Court's ruling must be respected', Blic pg. 7 headline 'To respect the decision on ban' also reported on the visit.

Court of BiH residence	Dnevni Avaz pg. 10 'Court of BiH judges will request dislocation of the Court from the military barrack' – At a recent session of the Court of BiH judges, it was concluded that an initiative should be launched these days for the dislocation of the Court from the "Ramiz Slcin" military barracks, learns the newspaper from the reliable sources close to the institution. The main reason for such the initiative is inappropriate working conditions in terms of the Court's location. "In almost all countries worldwide the courts are placed either in the downtowns or in representative buildings. The building where we work is none of these," the source said.

Political affairs

Svilanovic visits BiH	Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Minister Svilanovic visits BiH – Regional Cooperation is a common goal' – During the Wednesday's meetings in Sarajevo of the BiH Presidency members and the BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic with the Serbia and Montenegro Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic, the major attention was paid to the work of the South East Europe Process of Cooperation (SEEPC). "The interest of BiH is the improvement of the cooperation in the region. In this way, we would make it clear to the European Union and NATO that instead of conflicts and destruction the time of cooperation in the interest of all the citizens is coming in the region," Ivanic said following the meeting. Svilanovic for his part emphasized that his visit to Sarajevo was the continuation of touring the SEEPC countries with an aim to improve the cooperation in the region. "During the period of our chairing the SEEPC, we have been insisting on four themes: free trade in the region, establishment of the regional energy markets, improvement of the transport and communications and joint fight against organized crime," said Svilanovic. Svilanovic also met with the BiH Council of Ministers Chairman, Adnan Terzic, and the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. "We discussed the situation in BiH with a special attention paid to the issues of customs and VAT," said Ashdowvn following the meeting. Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'BiH lawsuit against Serbia and Montenegro should not slow down cooperation between the two countries' just reports on the Svilanovic's talks with Ivanic. "Glas Srpski", page 3 – "Cooperation within the region"; Nezavisne Novine", page 4 – "BiH and Serbia and Montenegro to Europe together" – Both dailies report on yesterday's meeting between Foreign Ministers of BiH and Serbia and Montenegro, Mladen Ivanic and Goran Svilanovic. They also report on the separate Svilanovic's meetings with High Representative to BiH Paddy Ashdown, members of the BiH Presidency, Mirko Sarovic, Sulejman Tihic and Dragan Covic, and the Chairperson of the BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic. During his visit, Svilanovic made a reference to the BIH lawsuit against the FRY, which, in his view, stands like a shadow on the path of a good cooperation between these two states. "Glas Srpski" also carries an inset saying that the agreement was initialised yesterday, in regard to cooperation between the customs administration services of BiH Federation and Serbia and Montenegro. The goal of the agreement, which would resemble the agreement recently signed between RS and Serbia and Montenegro, is to prevent the smuggling in high-excise goods and money laundering. Blic pg. 2 headline 'To take a unique stand toward EU'; Nacional pg. 11 headline "BiH and Serbia and Montenegro more competitive in Europe' – Serbia and Montenegro Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic and High Representative Paddy Ashdown, on Wednesday called on Southeast European countries to take a unique stance at the European Union summit to be held in Greece's Salonika in June in order to advance their chances for accelerated joining European associations. "I expected that we will receive clear instructions at the summit in Salonika regarding our obligations on the path towards drawing closer to the European Union," Svilanovic said in Sarajevo. Svilanovic told reporters that his one-day visit to BiH was directly connected with preparations for the meeting of the SouthEast Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP) member countries to be held in Belgrade on 9 April. Svilanovic said the meeting in Belgrade was the real opportunity to prepare a coordinated stance for the Salonika summit, and the best message that the countries of the region could send was the improvement of their cooperation. High Representative Ashdown said after the talks with Svilanovic that it was very important for the Southeast European countries to take a joint stance expressing their wishes to European Union member countries. Svilanovic and Ashdown also talked about the programme of reforms in BiH and constitutional changes in Serbia and Montenegro. "We discussed the current situation in BiH and particularly the issues of customs and VAT. I explained to my collocutors again that the aim of introducing customs and VAT at state level is to implement this within the framework of the Dayton Agreement," Ashdown said after the meeting. "This is an opportunity to inform our collocutors in BiH about the Constitutional Charter which was recently adopted and by which the FRY ceased to exist, and from which the state union of Serbia and Montenegro was formed with differently defined responsibilities of the two member states," Svilanovic said. Serbian Finance Minister Bozidar Djelic said after the meeting in the OHR that the aim of his visit was to discuss issues with the Prime Ministers in BiH which would help strengthening of economic ties. "It is clear that BiH and Serbia and Montenegro have a joint interest in becoming more competitive in the European market," Djelic said.

Cropress on Goran Svilanovic's visit to Sarajevo	Vecernji List (page 14, by E. Medunjanin, "Harmonizing of 'European politics' "), Dnevni List (front and page 5, by Ivica Glibusic," BiH lawsuit against Yugoslavia slows down cooperation"), Jutarnji List (page 10, "Svilanovic and Ashdown on EU Summit") and Slobodna Dalmacija (last page, "Members of BiH Presidency talked with Goran Svilanovic") carry that Minister of Foreign Affairs of Serbia and Montenegro Goran Svilanovic paid visit to Sarajevo yesterday. After the meeting with High Representative Paddy Ashdown, Svilanovic called on harmonizing of "European politics" of all countries of the region. After the meeting with BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs Mladen Ivanic, Svilanovic stated that a lawsuit for genocide filed against Yugoslavia partly burdens relations between the two countries. With regard to the unification of the tax system in BiH and the RS opposition against the unification, Serbian Minister of Finances Bozidar Djelic, who came to Sarajevo with Svilanovic, stated: " We do not want to interfere in internal BiH issues, but as a signatory of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) we want guarantees that spirit and provisions of the DPA are not changed by customs and tax reforms."
Dispute over ICC jurisdiction – BiH must respond to US request by July 1	Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'Response to America by July 1', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Dispute over ICC jurisdiction – BiH must respond to US request by July 1' – BiH and Serbian and Montenegro Foreign Ministers, Mladen Ivanic and Goran Svilanovic, confirmed to journalists in Sarajevo on Wednesday that both countries had received an US request for signing a bilateral agreement on the exclusion of the US citizens from the International Criminal Court's jurisdiction. "The request is in process of consideration. We have received clear messages from the US that it will be very difficult to continue cooperation programs with the countries which the bilateral agreements on the issue have not been reached with. It is about a very sensitive request that one should seriously think about. The BiH Foreign Ministry is currently considering the request in cooperation with the Presidency. The decision has not been made so far," Ivanic said.
Council of Ministers to discuss CIPS, third GSM license	Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'BiH Council of Ministers to hold its session today – CIPS, third GSM license to be discussed' – The BiH Council of Ministers is expected at its session scheduled for today to discuss an information on the process of issuance of the third GSM license in BiH prepared by the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The Council will also discuss the implementation of the CIPS project.
Julian Braithwaite: "Endangering of CRA's independence unacceptable for OHR"	Dnevni List (page 2, "Endangering of CRA's independence unacceptable for OHR") carries that commenting on an article from yesterday's issue of Olsobodjenje according to which BiH Minister of Communications and Traffic Branko Dokic demanded an investigation on the legality of the CRA'a work, OHR Spokesperson Julian Braithwaite stated: "Any attempt to undermine the work of CRA or to make it subordinate to political pressure would be unacceptable for OHR." Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'OHR against pressures on CRA' also carried Braithwaite's statement.
Nezavisne's editorial on third GSM license	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 2 carries an editorial by Almir Sarenkapa entitled 'Impudence'. The author claims that citizens of BiH pay much higher prices for international calls than citizens of other European countries and says that those who use word 'robbery' when talking about local Telecom may be right. According to Sarenkapa: 'PDHR Donald Hays continues the mission of his Boss, Paddy Ashdown and that is to issue license to Eronet as third GSM operator, at any price.' The author draws this conclusion from the fact that two days ago, Hays organized round table, at which private internet providers spent two hours talking about high prices in BiH, and representatives of three existing Telecom in our country had no chance to say why the prices are so high as they were not there. Paddy Ashdown is persistent in his intention to issue a license to Eronet, under same conditions as it was issued to BH Telekom and Mobilna RS, forgetting that the two are still state owned, while in Eronet case, the state was robbed. According to Sarenkapa, everything is prepared for Brits to become owners of the third operator: Co-owner of Eronet is Croatian Telekom which is owned by Deutsche Telecom which was recently bought by a British telecommunication company…things are much clearer.
Miroslav Nikolic appointed Federation of BiH Minister of Defense	Vecernji List (page 4, "I hope that I will be last Federation of BiH Minister of Defense"), Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 17, "I will be last Federation of BiH Minister of Defense") and Dnevni List (front and page 3, "Ministry of Defense at BiH state level in 4 years") carry that new Federation of BiH Minister of Defense Miroslav Nikolic took over this duty from Mijo Anic yesterday. The dailies carry that both Anic and Nikolic promoted the same goal and that is to establish the state Ministry of Defense as soon as possible. Nikolic stated: "I sincerely hope that I will be the last Federation of BiH Minister of Defense and that during the next four years we shall transfer all authorities of this Ministry to the state Ministry of Defense." Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'BiH Federation got a single Defense Minister' and Dnevni Avaz pg. 8 'Nikolic – I believe I will be the last Defense Minister in the Federation' also reported on the issue.

Ibrahimovic to request launch of legal proceedings before the Constitutional Court over the appointment to key posts	Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'Ibrahimovic will request Lozancic to launch legal proceedings before the Constitutional Court' – "The members of the Parliament appointed the Federation Prime Minister Ahmed Hadzipasic and myself in compliance with the entity's Constitution," the Speaker of the FBiH House of Representatives, Muhamed Ibrahimovic, told the newspaper. He believes that the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council actually did not act in compliance with the constitutional amendments because it had appointed Amir Jaganjac as the Supreme Court President before the appointment of the Prime Minister. "I will suggest Federation President Niko Lozancic to launch a legal proceeding before the Constitutional Court to determine the legitimacy of the judges appointment before the appointment of the heads in the executive authorities," Ibrahimovic said.

International community/OHR

Ashdown visits Tuzla, Bosanski Samac, Orasje	Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Visit to the Cardio-Surgery', Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 'Conduction of heart transplantations to be started soon' – On Wednesday, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, visited Cardio-Surgery Clinic in Tuzla. "I wish that we have more hospital in BiH like this. The citizens deserve that," Ashdown said on the occasion. According to Dnevni Avaz, in the course of the day, Ashdown also visited Bosanski Samac and Orasje. In Bosanski Samac, he met with the local businessmen to discuss their problems and the introduction of VAT. Vecernji List (page 2) carries that High Representative Paddy Ashdown paid his first visit to the Posavina Canton yesterday. During the visit the HR stressed the importance of the unified Customs Administration and introduction of a value added tax at the state level for the sake of sustainable development and encouragement of return. "Glas Srpski", page 3, "Ashdown in Samac"; "Nezavisne Novine", page 3 "State to collect, entities to spend" – Both dailies report on yesterday's visit of the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, to Samac. In his short address to the press, HR Ashdown said that: "There are many states where the state collect taxes, and the entities get it back." According to Ashdown, "there is a serious problem in BiH, which is how we can turn the current economy, which depends on international assistance, into the economy based on production and export."

Interview with EUPM's Frederiksen	Dnevni Avaz pg. 5, mentioned on the front page 'Legitimate only policemen with certificates' – Interview with the EUPM Commissioner Sven Frederiksen. Frederiksen emphasized that the security situation in BiH was stable but that it had to be improved further. Asked to comment on the frequent public requests for the review of the decision on the de-certification of the 19 Sarajevo special policemen, Frederiksen said that "all these requests should be addressed not to him but to Paddy Ashdown."
Hays in Banja Luka today	PDHR Donald Hays will visit Banja Luka today to discuss establishment of a common customs administration and the introduction of VAT with RS officials. Spokesperson of OHR Banja Luka Sonja Pastuovic told a press conference on Wednesday that Hays would meet RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic, RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic and chairs of caucuses in the RS National Assembly. She said that common customs and VAT at the state level are a precondition for BiH accession to the EU and a precondition for the creation of a single market that will open the door to foreign investments in BiH. "Common customs are necessary if we wish to prevent 1,4 billion KM ending up in the hands of criminals", Pastuovic said. She added that the international community expects all politicians in BiH to live up to their pre-election promises and to support reform. (Blic pg. 7, Nacional pg. 11)

Other developments	
BH Telecom denies claims on the level of prices of its services	"Nezavisne Novine", page 5 – "Phone call costs lowest in the world" – The public company of BH Telekom yesterday denied the claims of Donald Hays, PDHR, who claimed there is a monopoly over the telecommunication system in BIH at Tuesday's Round Table on Liberalisation of Public Sector in BiH. BH Telekom officials told NN that no invitation was sent to BH Telekom to attend the Round Table. BH Telekom officials also deny claims of Herbert Pribitzer, OHR representative. Namely, BH Telekom claims that the phone call costs in BiH, in general, mainly rate below the European average, while costs of many of those service (subscription, local and international communication, etc.) are the lowest in the world.
Illegal constructions	"Glas Srpski", front page, "Do illegally built gas stations in RS work?" – Boro Babic, RS Chief Trade Inspector, claims that the Ministry of Trade and Tourism cannot issue work permit, unless the gas station owner provided all necessary documentation that the object was legally built. However, RS Ministry for Urbanisation and Construction claims that half of 300 gas stations in the RS does not have necessary documentation.