OHR BiH Media Round-up, 2/1/2004

HERCEG-BOSNA RADIO (18,00 hrs)	**BH TV 1** (19,00 hrs)	**FED TV** (19,30 hrs)	**RT RS** (19,30)
Aluminium electricity	Celebrations in BiH	New Year celebrations	Banja Luka New Year
New Year Celebrations	New Year in world	Two children saved in Iran	Srpsko Sarajevo New Year
Pope’s message	Explosion of car in Iraq	Ireland chairs EC	RS towns on 2004
World News	Travel with ID to Croatia		

Oslobodjenje	8,000 jobs for BiH workers in Italy
Dnevni Avaz	Kreso: Ashdown has found a good solution
Dnevni List	“Ashdown – Aluminij of Mostar saved by decree”; “Terzic: Corridor Vc crucial developing project in 2004”
Vecernji List	“Paddy Ashdown imposed law and saved Aluminij”; “Terzic: Our opponents sponsor protests”
Slobodna Dalmacija	Features Croatia related headlines

Economic/social issues

Aluminij fails to secure power, may halt production	Herceg-Bosna Radio on Dec 31, Jan 1, Osloboodjenje 'BiH Elektroprivreda does not respect Government's conclusions' – The Mostar-based Aluminij Company said on Wednesday that, as of January 1, it will be on the brink of halting production as BiH Elektroprivreda has refused to implement Tuesday's decision by the Federation of BiH Government that a regular power supply be resumed to the Mostar giant, 12 per cent of which is owned by the Croatian town of Sibenik-based TLM. "The management of Mostar's Aluminij plant was informed on Wednesday, 31 December 2003, that, despite the conclusions of the FBiH Government on December 30, Elektroprivreda BiH is not ready to supply Aluminij with a sufficient amount of electric energy. If the stand of the management of Elektroprivreda BiH remains the same, Mostar's Aluminij plant, as of January 1 2004, will be forced to reduce or halt production," says a dramatic statement by the Aluminij's public relations office.
BiH Elektroprivreda urged to resume supplying Mostar aluminium plant	HINA – Federation of BiH Vice-President and Finance Minister Dragan Vrankic on Wednesday called on BiH Elektroprivreda to respect Tuesday's order of the Federation government and resume, from midnight, regular supply of electric power to the Mostar-based Aluminij plant. "I expect BiH Elektroprivreda to respect decisions of the Federation government. I believe that common sense will prevail and Aluminij will resume its production," Minister Vrankic told HINA.

Ashdown imposes a solution to ensure power for Aluminij	FTV on Dec 31 – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Wednesday made a decree on the enactment of a law on the supply of electricity and thus made it possible for the aluminium plant in the southern city of Mostar to be provided with power and continue operating. The law, which came into effect on Wednesday, stipulates that power supply companies cannot export electricity unless they previously ensure sufficient provisions of power for other companies in the country. The text of the law was forwarded to the prime minister of the Federation, Ahmet Hadzipasic, and the competent minister in this entity, Izet Zigic. Herceg-Bosna Radio, BHTV on Jan 1, Oslobodjenje pg. 7, mentioned on the front page 'Electricity at industrial tariffs', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Aluminij put into FBiH's standard electricity tariff system' – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, on Wednesday issued a Decision setting out a general framework for resolving situations where industrial companies and their electricity providers have failed to reach a price agreement. "This is a temporary decision, providing a non-discriminatory basis for determining an appropriate electricity price in such cases. It will remain in effect until the Federation Government has put in place a proper regulatory structure for the electricity market and a fair and commercially viable framework for strategic companies. The High Representative has issued this Decision because the Federation Government has failed to resolve a dispute concerning the provision of electricity to Aluminiji Mostar. The breakdown of negotiations between Aluminiji and its electricity provider threatened to undermine the electricity grid and lead to the closure of BiH's largest exporter. This would have provoked an economic and political crisis in the Federation," said an OHR press release issued on Thursday. Dnevni List (front "Ashdown – Aluminij of Mostar saved by decree" and page 3 "Paddy Ashdown saves Aluminij of Mostar by decree", by Miso Relota) also reports on the issuance of the HR's decision. According to DL, reason behind the OHR's reaction/decision was a letter that the Elektroprivreda of BiH had sent to the Aluminij management informing it that the company (Elektroprivreda of BiH) was not ready to supply Aluminij with sufficient electricity. DL also notes that the FBiH Minister of Industry and Energy, Izet Zigic, who comes from the Party for BiH, was supposed to present a report about consequences of termination of contract with "Debis International" during the last session of the FBiH Government but failed to do so. In light of this, DL wonders why the FBiH Government does not finally discuss the issue why the contract was terminated and why the status of special consumers is not solved yet. (Vecernji List, front "Paddy Ashdown imposes law and saves Aluminij" and page 2 "Ashdown saves Aluminij", by Zoran Kresic, Slobodna Dalmacija, back page "Ashdown secures electricity to 'Aluminij' through law", by H, Jutarnji List, page 8 "Paddy Ashdown orders continuation of electricity supply to Mostar's Aluminij", by S. Pavic, Vjesnik, front page "Ashdown secures electricity for Mostar's Aluminij through decree") Under subtitle "Drama of last day of 2003", Vecernji List reports on page 2 that the Principle Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, phoned the manager of EP BiH, Enver Kreso, several times on Wednesday evening (Dec. 31) in order to ensure that the EP BiH continues supplying "Aluminij" with electricity, which Kreso had rejected, claiming the EP BiH could only supply 80 MW/h ("Aluminij" needs 125 MW/h). VL goes on to say that Kreso, when he learned from the OHR that the new Law (Decision) could jeopardize the contract with the EFT, confirmed that he had found the remaining 40 MW/h. Under subtitle "Compromise solution at Leipzig market", Dnevni List (page 3) unofficially learns from "sources close to the FBiH Government" that a long-term solution for "Aluminij" will most likely be sought at the so-called "Leipzig market", where Germany, Italy, Hungary and Greece get the electricity from. Apparently, the price of electricity at the market is 33 Euros per MW/h and one can get a discount of some 15%, which means that the price could be set at 28,5 Euros per MW/h.
Kreso: Ashdown has found a good solution	Dnevni Avaz front page 'Kreso: Ashdown has found a good solution', pg. 2 'Ashdown's decision is positive' – "In my opinion it is about a good solution that will accelerate implementation of the Action Plan for electric-energetic sector restructuring," BiH Elektroprivreda Director Enver Kreso told the newspaper commenting on the High Representative's decision related to the FBiH power sector/Aluminij.

DL on behaviour of OHR and Croat politicians with regard to Aluminij and other issues	Dnevni List (page 2, "Who were the traitors?!", by M. Skoko) carries an editorial saying that coming of a new, 2004 year was extremely hard-working and exciting for most of the OHR employees. The author also says that it is becoming clear that the OHR employees have a role of peace-keepers in BiH. The author reminds of the New Year's message of High Representative Paddy Ashdown who stressed that we are the tailors of our destiny, however, according to the author, BiH politicians failed at their first exam in the New Year. The author mentions the issue of payment of RTV subscription and the Aluminij issue. According to the editorial, representatives of the International Community had to resolve the Aluminij issue because the politicians did not have time to resolve it since they were in a hurry to reach destinations where they celebrated the New Year. The author reminds of 2000 when Croat representatives in the authority bodies left their positions in Sarajevo and the Croat politicians who stayed in Sarajevo were qualified as traitors because of that. The author wonders: "Who were the traitors?! Leaving Sarajevo and the authority they left space and time for various options and maneuvering with the people and parties to whom Croat interests are at the end of their lists of priorities. Now, some people mind Croat companies, some people mind Herzegovina." The author wonders whether by their stay in Sarajevo they could make possible for Croats to be also in charge of the economic issues now.
Oslobodjenje: 8,000 jobs for BiH workers in Italy	Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 14 '8,000 jobs for BiH workers in Italy' – According to Huso Saric, the Director of the BiH Agency for Emplyment, the five Italian regions, with the EU assistance, have expressed readiness to hire more than 8,000 medical, metal and restaurant workers from BiH.
FBiH Government on Ombudsmen's recommendations re appointments to steering boards	Dnevni List (page 3, "Ombudsmen's recommendations were late", by Nina) carries that during its last session the Federation of BiH Government discussed numerous conclusions, analyses and recommendations of the FBiH Ombudsmen on the annulment of the dismissals and appointments of few steering boards (in public companies). Paying due respect to all observations and proposals of the ombudsmen, the FBiH Government concluded to start with changes and amendments to the Law on Government, Ministerial and Other Appointments immediately and the Government also concluded that the Ombudsmen's recommendations had been late.

Political developments/New Year's messages

BiH Presidency Chairman calls for more effort over reforms	BHTV on January 1, SRNA – The chairman of the BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, told the SRNA news agency in a New Year's interview that in the first three months of 2004 BiH had to do more in implementing reforms than in the whole of the last year. "I am satisfied with the level of reforms in the defence, taxation and customs sphere, but reforms in the intelligence services have been delayed until the first couple of months of the coming year. And, of course, we are yet to embark on major reforms of the business and economic systems," Covic said. The Presidency chairman is not pleased with the work so far of the legislative and executive authorities in encouraging investment in BiH that would help improve the citizens' economic and social situation. Covic accepted as justified the many objections to the reform of the judiciary, especially to some appointments. His view is that domestic institutions of authority would have made a better selection of judges and prosecutors, and with fewer problems. "I favour the view that local institutions of authority must have enough common sense, strength and determination to pass important decisions that are crucial for BiH's European future," Covic said, noting the practice of constant interventions by representatives of the international community over the meeting of criteria for Euro-Atlantic integration.

Terzic considers 2003 as key year for Dayton Agreement	Herceg-Bosna Radio, BHTV, FTV, RTRS on Dec 31, Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'We have made key step to Europe', Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 'Terzic: There was no BiH's bankruptcy', Dnevni List front and page 5, "Corridor Vc crucial developing project for BiH in 2004", by E. Mackic, Vecernji List page 3, "Announced protests were sponsored", by D. Jazvic, ONASA – Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Adnan Terzic said on Wednesday that it is the common opinion of international and local officials that 2003 was the key year for implementation of the Dayton agreement in BiH. "BiH institutions is 2003 registered significant strengthening and we have made steps towards returning citizens' confidence into BiH institutions," Terzic said. He stressed that the Council of Ministers in 2003 worked on stabilization of the macro-economic situation in BiH. The latest report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shows that good results were achieved in that field and that the current macro-economic situation in BiH is stable. "The system of passing of key reform laws was also changed. Before this composition of the BiH Council of Ministers, laws were written in the OHR and imposed by the High Representative. However, that system has changed and this year laws were written by experts from BiH with help from international officials," Terzic said. He said that the only flaw of the Council was that it did not send to parliamentary procedure the draft law intelligence service, which was done by the High Representative recently.

Mikerevic's New year's message	BHTV on January 1, FENA – RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic addressed on Tuesday a message to the citizens of RS and BiH on the occasion of New Year 2004, expressing the best wishes for a more successful year in social, economic, cultural, sport and every other field. "I hope that year 2004 will be much better than this year, that it will be marked with growth of production, creating of advantageous conditions for foreign investments, efficient working of controlling bodies and the overall social progress", is stated in Mikerevic's message. In his New Year's interview for SRNA, Mikerevic said that the government had not been "trying to put down the fire of social problems", but to implement reforms. "We made headway on the path of stable economic growth and development and conducted an economic policy which would have long-term effects, some of which our citizens will only feel in the years to come," Mikerevic said.

HR's New year's message	BHTV, FTV, RTRS on Dec 31 – In his message at end of 2003 High Representative Paddy Ashdown said BiH was on crossroad in 2003, but there is risk of reversing to the past in 2004. BiH may expect bright future within EU and NATO structures, but threat is a lack of political will to leave the past behind us. Whole progress can be lost in only few weeks of obstruction. Forces of nationalism, criminal and obstructionism are very much present. Even forces supporting state building started to make obstructions, like in case of discussion on judicial system. HR expressed full support for HJPC and warned all objections should be addressed to the Constitutional Court. It is wrong approach to use that problem for political gains. Some important issues are at stake and without successful solution it would threaten progress toward EU and NATO. Whole responsibility lies on BiH politicians and IC cannot make decision instead of BiH.

VL on reforms in BiH	Vecernji List (page 7 “Reforms, reforms and again reforms”, by Dejan Jazvic) – takes a look back on reforms in BiH that started in 2003 with a projection of events that should follow in 2004. Noting that it should be domestic authorities that should be making the reformatory moves, VL says it is obvious that the role of the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, will still be very important in the process, as admitted by the Chairman of BiH Council, Adnan Terzic, who said the help of the OHR’s experts was still needed in implementation of reforms. Regarding the ongoing reforms to military, tax system, intelligence sector etc., VL reckons that the real work is ahead of BiH in 2004 because only the framework legal system had been set up in 2003, believing that the reforms will for sure cause numerous political and social protests. The daily also lists events that should mark the year 2004. From the top, the 10 events are: Ongoing reforms in BiH (military, tax, intelligence); Mostar Investment Conference; BiH’s efforts in joining EU; George Bush visiting BiH in 2004; Getting to Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro with personal ID only; Opening of Mostar’s Old Bridge; Qualifications for football 2006 World Cup in Germany; Reforms to PBS; Construction of Corridor Vc and municipal elections in 2004.
Statement of the Day: SDA President Sulejman Tihic	Dnevni List (page 2) carries in its ‘Statement of Day’ SDA President Sulejman Tihic as saying: “Due to prejudice towards Islam, they consider Bosniaks ineligible.”

DL interview with Head of Mostar Southeast Zijo Isic	Dnevni List (page 7 “Why different standards towards Bosniaks?”, by Vedran Kljajic) – carries an interview with the Head of Municipality Southeast, Zijo Isic, ahead of the referendum in the said Municipality during which the citizenry will respond to the question whether the citizenry are in favour of the Municipality maintaining the status of unit of local self -rule organized as a municipality. Talking about the municipal borders in Mostar, Isic mentions the decision of the former HR, Wolfgang Petritsch, from 200,1 which integrated the Municipality of Zepce. “According to his decision, the pre-war Municipality of Zepce was added settlements with the Croat majority, namely parts of municipalities Maglaj and Zavidovici. The explanation then was the fear of the Croat minority in the Zenica-Doboj Canton in which the Bosniaks are the majority. That was the argument for protection of national interests at that level. It means that decisions for Zepce could be passed, borders could be tailored and concessions could be made, and when we are in the same situation, the criteria is different””, says Isic. In light of this statement, Isic notes that in single municipality of Mostar, the Croats would make two-thirds of the population, saying that the fear of the Bosniak is justified.

DL on effect of Serbian elections on BiH	Dnevni List (page 6, “Election sin”, by Pejo Gasparevic) – reflects on the outcome of the parliamentary elections in Serbia and effect it could have on BiH. With the Serbian Radical Party winning the most votes in the said elections, some 1 million votes, the author believes the results should be taken as a warning sign for BiH, despite the fact that the Serb Radical Party (SRS) does not have the military to realize its intentions, since the SRS is openly advocating the Great Serbia. The author also believes that the support to the radicals from Serbia could strengthen the radicalism in BiH.
VL: “SFOR does not trust Bosnian Police”	Vecernji List (page 18, by E. Medunjanin) carries that representatives of the State authority in BiH as well as some media express their dissatisfaction over the SFOR’s policy that does not involve domestic Police and Security Service structures in the control of facilities and persons suspected of being connected to war criminals, to international terrorists or those who represent a security threat to BiH and the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accord. VL says that Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic, stated that the SFOR’s behavior obviously shows that the International Community still does not have trust in the BiH Police and security institutions.

Process of refugees return

FTV story on return of refugees, displaced persons	FTV – Process of return in BiH is considered as very successful one and better then in other countries in region, but results on ground are not so excellent. In comparison with previous 2 years there were two times less returnees in 2003. Number of returnees in Federation is threefold then in RS. There are some 400 thousands refugees who would like to come back from neighbouring countries. Following current pace return would be completed in 10 years and BiH Minister for refugees Mirsad Kebo said: “Ten years are too long period, therefore we proposed strategy to complete whole process till 2006. It would require 430 million Euro and we don’t have capacities in our budgets, so international community need to assist. Sustainable return is something what will be treated more seriously and returnees should be provided with assistance in job creation, health, pension etc”. Budgets should have at least as much as in 2003 for process of return.

Media

No agreement on collection of RTV subscription fee in FBiH	BHTV, FTV on Dec 31 – BH Telecom and HPT Mostar could not reach contract with PBS on collection of TV subscription on Wednesday, what was deadline set by PIC. BiH authorities accepted this condition in Brussels, but the deadline was not respected. Director of PBS: "Telecoms and PBS will propose for approval a document to the Federation government with some solutions." If the government accepts this document then the contract will be signed with 7 days delay. Chairman of CoM Adnan Terzic also blamed international community for slow progress in public broadcasting system: "International community has been pushing project of PBS to total failure and then agreed to consult domestic authorities."
OHR on RTV tax collection	Herceg Bosna Radio, FTV on Dec 31, Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'Support to agreement with telecoms', Dnevni List page 6, "OHR supports collection of RTV subscription through Telekoms", by Fena – The OHR supports the efforts of the BiH Minister of Communications Branko Dokic and the Public TV broadcasters in BIH to make agreements with the telecom operators in BiH on collection of RTV subscription fees through telephone bills, stated the OHR Press Release. "Efficient way of collecting fees for TVs has important role in overcoming the PBS crisis who will be able to offer better program to the citizens," it added.

Vecernji List on payment of RTV subscription	Vecernji List (page 2, “State and OHR undermine Law on Protection of Consumers in BiH”, by Z. Jurilj) carries that that regardless of the fact that the Law on Protection of Consumers would be violated due to the decision on the payment of the RTV subscription through a phone bill, the OHR gave an official support to the BiH Council of Ministers for the introduction of this decision. VL goes on to say that the Association for Protection of Consumers in BiH strongly opposes this proposal. A secretary of this Association Mensud Lakota stated: “We do not have anything against payment of the RTV subscription, however, we are against the way in which it will be paid.” Lakota explains that two services cannot be paid through one bill since the EU countries banned this principle about 10 years ago. He added that the Association proposes that a special bill for payment of the RTV subscription should be issued and it should be delivered to owners of TV sets and radio receivers by a Post Office.