

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 23/7/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Droughts in Europe	ICG report	Changes in taxation	BL Clinical Centre
Sepsis in BL hospital	5C corridor	House of People on taxes	Fires in Herzegovina
Mostar Statute	Law on Taxes	Conviction for war crimes	Oil market in BiH
Fights in Liberia	World news	Exhumation in Zepce	ICTY

Oslobodjenje	Hasan Cengic must may back to the state a million KM; ICG report: BiH authorities cannot implement reforms
Dnevni Avaz	Ashdown: We are here investing and not pulling out the money'
Dnevni List	"Seada Palavric: SDA ready for compromise"; "9 KM will be given to pensioners as late as in autumn"; " 'Bosmal d.o.o..' only decided on Corridor Vc route"
Vecernji List	"They write off old foreign currency savings"; "Abdic's supporters only enemies"
Slobodna Dalmacija	"Vehicles stolen in RS were sold at junkyard in Siroki Brijeg"; "Another 70 citizenships suspicious"
Glas Srpske	Preparations for the new Law on veterans' categories: The theft of lists with rights

Nezavisne Novine	International Crisis Group of BiH in one year work of Paddy Ashdown: ICG: Illegal influx of money to nationalistic parties should be cut off; Following disclosure of irregularities in the lottery of "MOBI's' Fun" Jungic: There will be removals at MOBI'' leadership; InterPol and Police of BiH are not informed that the murder of Skrbo was ordered from Sarajevo; Bijeljina: The reduction of the number of localities for ammunition and army agreed
Blic	PM's salary 2,500 KM, Ministers' 1,800 KM; 2,000 signatures for Mikerevic's removal; Health workers in strike, babies infected with sepsis

BiH/International Community

<p>Latest ICG report on BiH</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 5, 'Illegal influx of money to national parties should be cut off', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'BiH CoM mainly reacts instead of to launch things' – In the latest report on BiH entitled "Nationalistic governments of BiH: Paddy Ashdown and paradoxes in state building', the International Crisis Group recommended to the international community to accept that the nationalistic parties are natural and legitimate phenomenon in BiH. However, IC should not hesitate to exert an ultimate pressure, starting with attacks on illegal flux of their financing, which provide them power and superior behavior. ICG also recommended to IC to provide a full support to HiReo in his efforts to fully support reforms in BiH.</p> <p>Further ICG recommendation is that pressure should be exerted against entity and cantonal authorities to fully implement constitutional amendments from 2002 related to proportional representation of constitutive nations at all public institutions. The re-establishment on authority by nationalistic parties following 2002 elections was regarded as a major misfortune.</p> <p>Oslobodjenje presents the ICG report on pages 4-5 'Local authorities cannot implement reforms'. In the framework of the article, the newspaper carried a statement by ICG analyst Senad Slatina, who commented on the ESI criticism against Ashdown. Slatina said that the High Representative was not using the best methods but that he had no choice.</p> <p>BHTV 1 – Eight years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, the situation in BiH is worrying for many international officials, including High Representative Paddy Ashdown. He hoped to be the last High Representative of the international community in BiH. 'Longer the people and politicians in BiH rely on foreigners to bring difficult decision on their behalf and pay for their bills, harder will be to say goodbye' – this is just a part of the latest report by the International Crisis Group. The report invited all involved parties in the reforms of intelligence services, army and indirect taxation administration not to accept compromises, but rather to work for the benefit of the entire country. The last efforts of the international community to prepare BiH to become self-sustainable state will be paradox. To leave BiH, its international guardians would have to engage much more. In regard to the critics from both international and local public directed at OHR, Paddy Ashdown suggested citizens should ignore this as 'work goes on, tempo is not slowing down, we are working with our partners, among who ICG is pretty critical.</p> <p>Director of the International Crisis Group [ICG], Mark Wheeler said: 'I think that at this stage, 9 months after the elections and 6 months after establishment of the government, we have reason to worry. Governments at the entities and state levels say right things, but there are just few indications that they are doing the right things, beside the fact that they are adopting different reforms as requested by High Representative and other international officials.' ICG believes that it was necessary to clearly define when and under which conditions High Representative could dismiss local politicians. Wheeler added: 'So in fact, while High Representative is here with his large authorities there should be more clear when those would be used and when they would stop in cooperation with Presidency or Council of Ministers.'</p>
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<p>Ashdown: BiH on irreversible path towards the establishment of a functional state</p>	<p>BHTV 1 – Commenting on the report, the High Representative stated: ‘I believe that we will go progressively towards the point where the international community to leave the country and my mandate implementation plan means decrease of our activities and handing over responsibilities to local authorities.’ Differently from the report of European Stabilisation Institution, report by ICG was much less critical of High Representative.</p> <p>It is a task of the international community in this country to set grounds for the irreversible path towards statehood before accessing the European integration. This is also my task to which I am dedicated – to make this a functional state – and as soon as we fulfil this task we are leaving BiH, said on Tuesday at a meeting with the press (FENA, SRNA, BETA, Reuters, AFP, BBC) at his office in Sarajevo the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. “We are here because the people in BiH requested this from us. The international community will remain present here as long as the people in BiH require this and it will leave at that moment when the people ask us to leave the country”, said Ashdown. When asked to comment on critics of his work on the post of the High Representative, Ashdown said that he did not wish to apologize to anybody because he was advocating for reforms, adding that “such tempo of travelling leaves dust behind, but the dust remains, and the travel continues”. “This country does not have much time at its disposal. We need impatient people who will work on the task of building the state,” he said. Reacting on the criticism that he is trying to implement reforms with parties that are currently in power, Ashdown said that reform of political and economic system in BiH is his priority, and that this is the only criterion for measuring dedication to the reformatory process. The High Representative emphasised that he does not estimate political parties by the labels they gain in public nor by their names, but by their true commitment to reform. Responding to a question on how he sees the future role of OHR in BiH, Ashdown expressed hope that this role would in time become “less visible, there will a smaller need for our interference and our office will have a totally different form in BiH”. When asked if the eventual admission of BiH into the EU is possible with presence of numerous international organisations and missions in the country, Ashdown admitted that it is unrealistic to expect this in relatively reasonable time frameworks, but added that the presence of the international community in each transition country is obvious, “and especially in BiH, which is coming out of the period of healing great wounds into the period of building the state”.</p> <p>Dnevni List on page 2 carried FENA’s report.</p> <p>Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 2 also covered the High Representative’s meeting with a group of journalists. Commenting on the ESI criticism, Ashdown said he had been surprised with the institute’s report since neither BiH was India of 1947 nor the international community was a colonial force.</p>
<p>EUPM on Cegar case</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna, Oslobođenje pg. 3 ‘Interference of the politics in Cegar case’, Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 – EUPM says case of Commander of Federation Special Police Unit Zoran Cegar is an obvious attempt of political interference. EUPM Spokesperson Jon Oskar Solnes told journalists in Sarajevo on Tuesday that any political interference into internal police investigations was unacceptable.</p>

PDHR Hays visiting HNC today	Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 – On Wednesday, the Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, will visit Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. During his visit to Konjic and Mostar, he will focus on privatisation and the cost of governance. In Mostar, Hays will attend a roundtable on the topic of privatisation, at the Federation Government Building in Mostar. The roundtable will explore issues related to the governments' efforts to re-launch the BiH privatization program, boost exports and clean up the business environment.
RS Government on Shearer's decision	RTRS, Blic pg. 6 'Government's protest', Glas Srpske, pg. 2, 'Shearer versus the entire world'; Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5, 'OHR decision is unacceptable' – RS Government sent to the Office of the High Representative its conclusions reached at the session held on 17 July in regard to the latest decision on BiH PBS made by international broadcasting agent John Shearer. Government expects OHR to conduct detailed analysis of negative consequences of Shearer's decision and requested for announced changes in the Laws on three public broadcasting services to be agreed with entities, state institutions and public.

Political developments	
Session of the HNC Government	<p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, BHTV 1, Oslobođenje pg. 8 – Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Government held session on Tuesday. The Government adopted draft budget for 2003. Responding to the Monday's EU ambassadors' comment on work of cantonal authorities in regard to the education reform, HN Cantonal Prime Minister said cantonal education ministry would work on merging divided schools even without help from the International Community.</p> <p>Vecernji List page 3, by Fena, "HNC Government adopted draft of 'sanction budget' ", Slobodna Dalmacija page 17, by Zoran Zekic, "Grammar School has technical and not political problems" and Dnevni List page 13, by J.D., "Budget for 2003 will be recovery and not developing and investing one" also reported on the session. Cantonal Prime Minister Miroslav Coric stated following the session that two out of 8 OHR demands were adopted during yesterday's session. Coric added: "I am sure that we shall process all 8 items that the International Community instructed, within a short period of time and in a more accelerated pace." Explaining his stand related to merging of schools, Coric said that the Government would work on the unification of 'two schools under one roof' even without the IC. However, Coric expressed doubt that something like that could have been realized before the next school year.</p>

<p>Mostar Statute</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna – The International Community continues to put pressure on SDA with regard to the obstruction of work of the Commission for Creation of the Mostar City Statute requesting its representatives to return into commission by end of July, unnamed international officials say. If that would have not happened, than a possibility remains that the High Representative imposes the statute.</p> <p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, Dnevni List front and page 9, by <u>Miso Relota</u>, “SDA ready for compromise”, Oslobođenje pg. 4, Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 “Even two entities are too much’ – SDA’s stand is that issue of Mostar statue should be solved through the statutory procedure and that means that there is the commission that should do its job, says SDA Deputy President Seada Palavric. SDA is the last member of the Coalition for a Single BiH, which have left the commission. Paravlic: “ That happened when we realised that Croat side is not going to accept our proposal, which is based on OHR’s stands and ensures equality of all Mostar citizens”.</p> <p>Vecernji List (page 2, by <u>M. Sutalo</u>, “Elections in Mostar in October 2004”) – the daily reports that Mostar could soon get a new, permanent statute which would mean an end to current six municipalities. “The intention of the IC is to organize Mostar like other cities in BiH whose administration will be financially self-sustainable” says Josip Merdzo, an HDZ member of the Mostar Commission. According to VL’s source within the OHR, the fact that representatives of the SDA and SBiH left the Commission will not postpone the reorganization of Mostar. Moreover, VL claims that the Commission will in the beginning of August propose the City Council of Mostar (CCM) a Proposal of permanent statute of Mostar adding that if the Proposal does not get the two thirds majority, because of probable rejections by councilors from the SDA and SBiH, the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, will impose his solution. According to the daily’s knowledge, Ashdown’s solution could be the Proposal of the statute which has been prepared by the Commission in the current composition regardless of the fact it has been left by the Bosniak reps, if the Proposal matched his guidelines. Apparently, the Proposal foresees abolishment of all six municipalities in Mostar including the Central Zone, the city administration would be formed pursuant to the 1991 census and the key offices in the city would be distributed in the way that the office of the Mayor would belong to the party or coalition with the majority in the City Parliament, whilst the President of the City Council would have to come from the line of other people i.e. not from the line of people that already occupies the office of Mayor of Mostar. According to “reliable source”, after a statute has been adopted or imposed and after a transitional period of implementation, there would be elections in Mostar – on first Saturday in October 2004.</p> <p>Vecernji List (page 2, by <u>Robert Bubalo</u>, “Mostar blackmails”) – an editorial on situation in Mostar saying that the Italian Ambassador to BiH, Saba D’Elia, sent a clear message to Mostarians: if you do not make city statute, it will be imposed by the High Representative. The author goes on to say that the SDA were surprised by the language used by the Ambassador, so the party rushed to say they were prepared to return to the talks, but under one condition: they should be treated differently. “So, they want to say they are offended with the behaviour towards them, there is some sort of blackmail, and that’s the main reason behind them boycotting the work of the Commission. And actually it is very clear that the party is advocating either the policy of divisions or unity, depending on the national structure”, says Bubalo. The author goes on to say that regardless of the SDA returning to the Mostar Commission or not, it is realistic to expect two outcomes of the Mostar issue. “First and more probable is imposition of the Statute by the High Representative. Second is signing of the already prepared Statute under pressure from the OHR”, says the author. Finally, Bubalo says there is even a bigger problem in Mostar, the problem being the supply of electricity to the “Aluminij” Company. In that context, the author wonders whether the HR could get involved and save “the only economic gem of Mostar” because what’s of use a city statute if people are hungry. “Why then the High Representative, when he already has unlimited authorities, does not solve the electrical blackmail?”, concludes the author.</p> <p>Dnevni List (page 8, by <u>Zvonimir Jukic</u>, “Returnees will propose single municipality with three constituencies”) reports that associations of returnees in Mostar, unhappy with the current situation in Mostar, will soon present their view on possible reorganization of Mostar that is consistent with the OHR’s principles. According to the draft of the plan, the returnees advocate single municipality in Mostar which would have three constituencies in it in order to achieve territorial and national representation. According to the draft, there would be three constituencies namely “North”, “South” and “Centre”. The end result means that the City Council of Mostar would consist of 18 councilors from the line of the Croat and Bosniak people each, 11 Serb councilors and three councilors from the line of others. Such national quota, according to the proponents, would remain until the Annex 7 of the DPA has been fully implemented. Moreover, the returnees will propose that the Mayor of Mostar be elected in direct elections, when he or she secures simple majority of votes in one or two rounds of voting.</p>
<p>RS Government increases its salaries</p>	<p>Blic pg. 7 ‘PM’s salary 2,500 KM, Ministers’ 1,800 KM’; Vecernje Novosti pg. 7 ‘1,800 KM to Ministers’ – The Republika Srpska Government recently brought a decision to increase salaries of the PM and Ministers. The decision came into effect as of 1 July. According to the decision, the PM will receive 2,500 KM per month, while Ministers’ salaries will be 1,800 KM.</p>

Economic/social issues

**5c corridor –
CoM accepts
BOSMAL's
offer**

BHTV 1 – BiH Council of Ministers accepted offer of Bosmal company in regard to building 5C corridor. Bosmal was given a four months deadline to secure 300 million Euros needed to finance project documentation, feasibility study and solve property issues. Building of motorway should take 5 years, including the time needed to draft project documentation. Experts estimated that entire project would cost approximately 3 billion Euros. In the letter of intention on preliminary acceptance of Bosmal's offer, there was no mention of deadline in regard to building deadline and its cost. Edin Sabanovic, executive director of Bosmal stated that the company has already worked 'on preparatory activities for about a year now in regard to collecting money. We obtained enough of the information and affirmative responds, so we are sure that we would secure these finances.' If not, the agreement will be cancelled and all means invested would stay with the state. However, both Council of Ministers and Bosmal believe and hope there would be no problems. In that case, concession agreement would be signed, and already ratified by BH Parliament. According to current Concession Law, concession could be granted for the period between 30 to 50 years. However, Sabanovic said that so far there were no discussions held on that matter. BiH authorities also expressed their opinion of local companies to work on the project, and Bosmal answered that they would have priority over international ones. 5C corridor will go through BiH from Samac to Ploce port, in length of 330 km.

With regard to the issue of construction of Corridor V c, Dnevni List (front and pages 4 and 5, by W. R) carries that according to the information coming from the sources close to the BiH Council of Ministers everything was not stated in the letter of intention of 'Bosmal' company and there is an agreement between the BiH CoM and 'Bosmal' saying that this company will have an exclusive right to determine a route of the future highway. DL says that the expert team, which is in charge of the highway construction, denied this information, however, having in mind the statements which have been given by the BiH CoM so far and the settled contract it is very possible that BiH will not have influence on the position of the future route. DL also says that it should not be reminded how big monopoly has the one who knows now which route will be chosen for the highway. DL also says that one of interesting information related to this issue is a close relation between Orhan Pasalic, who is an advisor and relative of Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Adnan Terzic, and brothers Sabanovic, who are co-owners of 'Bosmal' company. DL says that Pasalic was studying in Malaysia together with brothers Sabanovic and he was also working for 'Bosmal's' branch office in Malaysia.

<p>FBiH HoP amends tax legislation</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg-Bosna, BHTV 1, FTV, Oslobođenje pg. 8 'Sales tax obligation of the importers', Dnevni Avaz pg. 8, Dnevni List front and page 5, <u>by M.R.</u>, "An end has come to fictitious companies", Vecernji List page 3, <u>by E. Me.</u>, "Human Rights Court abolished", Slobodna Dalmacija last page, <u>by Z. Reerig, N. Dimitrijevic</u>, "Through new laws to rule of law" – At an extraordinary session held in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the FBiH House of Peoples adopted the changes in the tax legislation. The amendments were previously harmonized amongst the governments of both entities and Brcko District. By adoption of this legislation, BiH got a single economic space and unified conditions to fight 'black market'. If the changes are adopted by the House of Representatives at its session scheduled for Wednesday, they would come into force as of 1 August. According to the changes, taxes on high-tariff goods would be paid at the border crossing. Control by customs inspection will be eased by this provision, since it will be conducted at several border locations. "I strongly believe that we are all ready for this job, as this will be a big Law, big changes, and that it would be remembered in total income and decrease of black market," stated Dragan Vrankic, the FBiH Finance Minister. In urgent procedure, HoP also adopted changes and amendments to the Law on Taxes on alcohol, non-alcoholic beverages, oil product, coffee and bear, which is in accordance to the Bulldozer Commission request and will result in decrease of inter-entity trade in the mentioned high-tariff goods.</p>
<p>Tax legislation changes in BiH</p>	<p>FTV, Oslobođenje pg. 3 'Test for VAT introduction' – The BiH Council of Ministers approved last week changes in collection of excise taxes on import of alcohol, beverages, oil and coffee, which will be effective on August 1. Deadline for tax payment will be 60 days and expected increase in collected taxes is 300 million KM. Vojin Mitrovic, director of an oil company, expects these changes will reduce number of distributors of oil derivatives and eliminate grey market and fictitious companies. Dusko Bogdanovic, Head of the Board of Oil Industry within the Foreign Trade Chamber, said: "there will be no price increase of fuel since our reserve are sufficient". The amendments on tax changes should be adopted by the Parliaments of both Entities.</p>

<p>Pensions in FBiH</p>	<p>BHTV 1, Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 – While some media reported that FBiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic would bring a decision on possible increase of pensions for 5%, FBiH Government strongly denied this. FBiH Minister of Labour and Social Politics Radovan Vignjevic reminded the public the government had nothing to do with pensions, and that this kind of the decision should be considered by the Pension-Invalid Insurance Fund.</p> <p>FTV – Steering Board of the FBiH Pension Fund did not make decision to raise pensions in July for 5%. Federation Government and IMF suggested the increase of pensions should be postponed till September since there has not been sufficient funds at the time. Esad Sarajlic, member of the Board, said there was no agreement on this issue since 4 members had voted for the increase, 4 had been against and one had abstained from voting. Increase of pensions of 5% would require additional 3 millions KM in the Fund. Pensioners announced a protest in front of the Government premises and they declared more demands besides increase of pensions.</p> <p>Oslobodjenje pg. 6 ‘There will be no increase of pensions’, Dnevni List front and page 3, <u>by Arijana Beus</u>, “9 KM will be given to pensioners as late as autumn” also covered the issue.</p>
<p>RS pensioners to sue RS Government</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5, ‘Pensioners filed lawsuit against Government’ – Rade Rakulj, President of the Republika Srpska Association of Pensioners, yesterday confirmed that the Association filed a lawsuit against the Republika Srpska Government. The lawsuit is grounded on the fact that the reduced amounts of pensions have been paid out to pensioners in this BiH entity for a long time.</p>
<p>Sepsis in Banja Luka Clinical Centre</p>	<p>RTRS – A commission at Banja Luka Clinical Centre confirmed an increase in the number of newly-born babies infected with sepsis, blood poisoning. During the month of July, 9 babies with sepsis were being cured and released from the hospital. Increase of the patients with sepsis has been caused by poor hygienic conditions in the Centre, whose workers have been on strike for 55 days now.</p>

Reform of RS health-care system	<p>RTRS – Representatives of the RS National Assembly, Government, directors of the health institutions and representatives of health workers syndicate discussed on Tuesday measures which would solve problems in the health-care system. Difficult situation in BL Clinical Centre and other institutions in RS was in the focus of discussions, which also included difficult situation related to the position of workers in other institutions, health insurance of RS citizens and upcoming reforms in the health system. RS NA Speaker Dragan Kalinic believes that the Government should establish a commission, which would propose radical changes in the structures of entire RS health institutions and the way in which BL Clinical Centre works. 'This situation cannot continue. I would say that if there would be some additional financial interventions in next 10 days to solve problems with salaries, those would be last interventions of the kind.' – stated Kalinic. Commission would include all parties involved – government, respective ministry, syndicate – to also deal with the issue of health insurance. RS Health Minister Marin Kvaternik said that his Ministry had also taken a series of measures to solve problems in the health. 'At the same time, this session today was an introduction to a special session of RS National Assembly, which would take place at the end of September or at the beginning of October.' – added Kvaternik.</p>
BiH oil market	<p>BHTV 1, RTRS – Despite the increase in prices of oil in the world, distributors in FBiH and RS said at the meeting held in BiH Foreign Trade Chamber on Tuesday that there would be no increase in oil prices in BiH. Decision on increase in the prices would also depend on the implementation of a decision made by the BiH Council of Ministers on paying taxes on oil and its products at the border crossing to be valid as of 1 August. While RS distributors announced possible insignificant increase, FBiH association of distributors of oil and its product say there would be no increase at all. Both RS and FBiH Associations for oil distribution are interested in this new regulation of oil market, which will result in less distributors, disappearance of fictive companies and increase of taxes paid to the state.</p>

Mikerevic calls on companies from Vojvodina to take part in RS privatisation process	<p>RTRS, Blic pg. 6 'Offers for privatisation of firms' – Republika Srpska Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic on Tuesday called on companies and businessmen from Vojvodina to take part in privatisation of companies in the RS. "We are in a big process of transition and even on 24 July the RS Government will adopt the decision to put 30 companies in the stock exchange", Mikerevic underlined. Mikerevic said that RS is especially interested that the new international oil pipeline does not pass around the oil refinery in Bosanski Brod. "With the present state of affairs, that oil pipeline is to go around our refinery so we ask the Serbian Oil Industry to helps us to influence the international factors to include RS in that big oil deal", Mikerevic added.</p>
Update to RS Telecom Affair	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'There will be removals at MOBI'' leadership' – Zeljko Jungic, General Manager of Republika Srpska Telekom, stated that there will be removals at the leadership of the Republika Srpska MOBI's, following disclosure of irregularities in organisation of the lottery. He also said that the payments to "Stojic company", which printed lottery tickets, have been suspended until the Commission establishes the real printing price of the tickets.</p>

Other issues	
Update to Skrbo affair	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 2, 'InterPol and Police of BiH are not informed that the murder of Skrbo was ordered from Sarajevo' – During the police investigation, the arrested members of "Zemun clan" testified that a Sarajevo businessman of criminal background ordered the murder of Zeljko Skrbo (bodyguard of Momcilo Mandic) through Selman Hamidovic Seka, Zemun clan connection in Sarajevo. However, BiH InterPol and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Interior Ministry have not as yet received any piece of information from the Serbian police as to whether Seka paid advance payment of EURO 100000 to Zemun clan.</p>

<p>Defence Reform Commission met</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 6, 'The reduction of the number of localities for ammunition and army agreed' – The number of locations for the accommodation of soldiers and weapons storing will be significantly reduced at the end of defence reform in BiH. This was agreed at yesterday's meeting of the Defence Reform Commission. After the meeting, Atif Dudakovic, Commander of the Joint Command of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Army, stated that: "I think that BiH must have one army, if we want to build a normal state. Entities cannot have authorities in the field of defence."</p> <p>Cvjetko Savic, Commander of Republika Srpska Army, did not want to make any statement to the press. According to unofficial information, Savic does not want to make any public appearance and statement until the authorities of Republika Srpska agree on a joint stance, regarding the organisation of the future BiH armed troops.</p> <p>Vecernji List (page 5, by <u>Zeljka Mihaljevic</u>, "Right to compensation to inmates") – an interview with the Republika Srpska (RS) Prime Minister, Dragan Mikerevic. Talking about the ongoing reform to military in BiH, Mikerevic is optimistic BiH will meet pre-requisites for joining the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. "However, I want to say that we do not want to give up some of our conditions based on the Constitution of BiH, that being to ensure that the reform to defense system does not mean abolishment of the RS Army. It (RS Army) will remain, as well as the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Army. I think that in that context we can ensure what the process on PfP requires", says Mikerevic.</p>
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<p>Changes to Law on rights of veterans</p>	<p>Glas Srpske, cover page story, 'Theft of lists with rights' – The rights of the veterans, war invalids and families of the killed soldiers and civilians will most likely be cut down. This conclusion is made from the Interim bases for the draft law on changes and addenda to the existing Law on rights of veterans' categories. The explanation given was that World Bank has conditioned its loan to Republika Srpska with the social policy reform, which includes this category of population.</p>
<p>Sentence to Topalovic confirmed</p>	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 41, <u>by N. Dedic</u>, "35 years of imprisonment to Topalovic confirmed"), Vecernji List (page 21, <u>by rs</u>, "35 years of imprisonment to Topalovic confirmed") and Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 18, <u>by Darko Juka</u>, "Topalovic remains in Zenica for 35 years") carry that it has been confirmed at the Mostar Cantonal Court that the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Supreme Court rejected all appeals of the parties involved in the case of Muamer Topalovic, who was sentenced to 35 years imprisonment because of the murder of three members of Andjelic family in village Kostajnica near Konjic on Christmas Eve last year. This means that the sentence to Topalovic has become valid.</p>