

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 27/2/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
HR dismisses Acimovic	HR removes Acimovic	Seselj in The Hague	HR dismissed Acimovic
Elektroprivreda inspections	Seselj before ICTY	HR removes Acimovic	RS PM to insist on invest.
Arizona market	War on Iraq	CIPS project	UK Ambassador
War against Iraq	System of values in BiH	Zenica steel factory	Plavsic's sentence

Oslobodjenje	Kikic new FOSS Director as of next week?; Rehearsals in Skenderija commence; Ashdown removed Acimovic; BiH Union – because of the government 50,000 jobless; BiH Presidency – reduced plans for travelling abroad; Prosecution in Sarajevo – Jelavic, Medic and Prce accused of abusing their positions
Dnevni Avaz	An investigation about six million KM!; They will save Adisa in Rome; Sidran – Pogorelica being used to exert pressure on Bosniaks; Kebo – we have ridiculous 4,4 million KM in the budget; Zenica – guards brutally beat prisoners; Fiuljanin on trial in March
Dnevni List	Elektroprivreda of Croat Community of Herceg Bosna donated 50. 000 KM for the Memorial Center in Srebrenica
Vecernji List	Rojs' members of Engineer Unit sue MORH
Slobodna Dalmacija	Eronet receives concession by April

Glas Srpski	Svetozar Acimovic denies criminal activities at the RS Elektroprivreda – there was no theft; Upon a decision of Paddy Ashdown – Director removed, further activities halted
Nezavisne Novine	Paddy Ashdown reacted to the Special Auditor Report on the RS EP – Acimovic and Lemez removed; Joly Dixon, Head of Indirect Tax Policy Commission – VAT revenues remain in entities; The Hague Tribunal – Seselj did not enter a plea
FRY Nacional	Seselj – I do not understand the Croatian language
Blic	Ashdown removed Elektroprivreda's Director Acimovic; Cavic – to establish the full responsibility for Orao case; Zoran Djerić – MoI's priority is the situation in EPRS; Kremenovic – the place of residence is not obstacle for pension; Milovan Stankovic – to PFP even without joint army; Sarovic – we share the responsibility in defence and security
Vecernje Novosti	Assassination attempt on Serbian PM – command in New Belgrade

<p>HR removes Acimovic and Lemez</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 2 'Mikerevic ordered to fix the situation in the RS Elektroprivreda' – at yesterday's press conference HR Paddy Ashdown announced he was removing RS Elektroprivreda Director, Svetozar Acimovic, and a member of the ERS Main Board, Bosko Lemez, due to the loss of 166 million-KM annually. Ashdown explained he was removing Acimovic due to his poor management, the neglecting of duties and most probably crime. Lemez on the other hand was being removed for two reasons. The first one being his failure to exercise his ministerial duties during 2001 and 2002 when he was RS Minister of Energy. The second reason – under the Conflict of Interest Law Lemez, as a former minister, was barred from taking up a position in a public corporation within one year of leaving office. HR further imposed the law on Ministerial and Government Appointments, which regulates appointments in institutions not covered by the Law on Public Service. "We said clearly to RS Pm Mikerevic what was expected from him – to dismiss the current Main and Monitoring ERS Board and establish a new one in a transparent manner." Ashdown emphasized that none of the activities were aimed against RS citizens, but those who robbed RS citizens. PDHR Donald Hays, US Ambassador Clifford Bond, OSCE Head Robert Beecroft and WB in BiH Head Joseph Ingram also attended the press conference.</p> <p>Oslobodjenje pg. 1, 4 and 5 – an extensive article carrying further details on a report prepared by the Special Auditor appointed by HR Ashdown. A statement by OHR Spokesperson, Avis Benes, who announced that next week the revisions of Elektroprivreda branches in Mostar and Sarajevo will take place. Ppaer also carried a short version of yesterday's press conference where the above-mentioned removals were announced as well as the imposing of the new law. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 5 by <u>B. Kristo</u>, and Slobodna Dalmacija last page 'General Manager of RS Elektroprivreda removed' – after a meeting of the Peace Implementation Council and representatives of the International Community, HR Paddy Ashdown passed many decisions with regard to the RS Elektroprivreda audit. The HR stated the results of audit of Elektroprivreda companies from Mostar and Sarajevo would be published soon. In addition to this article DL ('Acimovic – I learnt about removal by phone') carries that the RTRS informed that Acimovic stated the HR informed him by phone about his removal.</p> <p>DL pg. 11 'I am not familiar with OHR report on RS Elektroprivreda' – RS Minister of Energy, Economy and Development, Milan Bogicevic, stated he did not receive the report on the RS Elektroprivreda. "I have not received the report, but when I get it I will probably take some steps." Nezavisne Novine pg. 1 and 3, Glas Srpski pg. 1 – the report on yesterdays' press conference where the removals were announced and the new Law imposed. ATV bulletin at 19:00 on Wednesday – the second item was the RS Elektroprivreda and yesterday's press conf. The piece carried a statement by HR Ashdown and Acimovic who said he had no comment on HR's decision, but added that no money was stolen. Acimovic further said that Ivanic too signed a contract with the EFT. A statement by Mikerevic that the RS MoI and the judiciary would fully investigate. Blic pg. 7 'Ashdown replaced Acimovic', Nacional pg. 6 'Ashdown replaced Acimovic and Lemez', Vecernje Novosti pg. 17 'Acimovic replaced' – yesterday's press conf.</p>
---	--

<p>Ian Cliff on Elektroprivreda</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 2 'The embezzlement of 166 million-KM is only the tip of the iceberg' – Ian Cliff, UK Ambassador in BiH, met yesterday in Banja Luka with RS PM Dragan Mikerevic. Cliff said the embezzlement of 166 KM was only the tip of the iceberg and emphasized that the latest report by the IC was of key –importance to show people in BiH how certain public companies work. Added that drastic reform was necessary in order to bring RS institutions in line with European standards. Oslobodjenje pg. 4 'A lot of money under the rug' – again his statement that the report was the tips of the iceberg because the revision (the report by Special Auditor) was limited in a way. On the same issue Vecernji List pg. 3 'Robbed citizens' and Dnevni List pg. 11 'Through reforms to more efficient state administration – Ian Cliff stated in Banja Luka that the audit clearly shows that the RS citizens were robbed on two grounds. Glas Srpski pg. 2 'Higher salaries, less corruption', Nezavisne Novine pg. 7 'Administration staff be reduced through reform' – On yesterday's Cliff – Mikerevic meeting. They concluded that there is a surplus of manpower within the civil service that must be cut. Mikerevic stressed that the reformed civil service should consist of professionals rather than political members. Blic pg. 7 – carried Cliff's statement on Elektroprivreda.</p>
<p>Acimovic</p>	<p>Glas Srpski pg. 1 – Svetozar Acimovic, Director General at the RS Elektroprivreda (RSEP), yesterday denied claims presented in the Special Report on the RS EP. He claims that information in the report was all speculations and that the RS EP leadership did not steal the money from the citizens. According to Acimovic, the financial information in the report does not represent a theft, but rather points certain irregularities. However, along with that, the real amount of those is significantly lower than the one presented. "It is well known that the payment of services offered from the consumers was one of the biggest problems that the RS EP encountered. Significant progress, however, has been made lately in this aspect." Asked to comment on Auditor's claim that the EFT from London holds a monopoly over the tender for the electricity surplus, Acimovic said that there was no space for the preferential treatment, stressing that the bid was announced publicly. He further emphasised that the Auditor made a mistake by including the costs for supply of sources of energy, naphtha and fuel into the general costs of procurement of naphtha. Blic pg. 7 – also carried the statement.</p>

Reactions to the RS EP report	<p>Glas Srpski pg. 3 'The government announced a thorough investigation' – RS PM, Mikerevic yesterday announced that the RS government would do everything necessary to prevent the crime and hence seek to establish responsibility at all levels. He assessed that the HR's action on dismissal were expected.</p> <p>RS Minister of Internal Affairs, Zoran Djeric, yesterday confirmed that the priorities in the work of police would be to resolve the affair at RS EP.</p> <p>Jovan Spajic, RS Public Prosecutor, said he expected to receive a copy of the Report, so he could undertake some steps.</p> <p>Milan Bogicevic, RS Minister of Energy, Economy and Development, stated that this Ministry would support any measure by the RS institutions in charge of the matter. He added that the RS EP electro energetic system would be reorganised. Commenting on HR's action of halting further activities on tender for Buk Bijela, Bogicevic said that the offer 'would not have been accepted' after all, because only one potential bidder responded the tender.</p> <p>Velimir Sakan, PDP MP at RS NA, expressed his opposition to methods, which do not allow the other side to explain certain complaints, occurrences or findings.</p> <p>Milorad Dodik, SNSD President, claims that 'the SDS robbed the RS EP with premeditation, in the concert with the PDP'.</p> <p>Mirko Djukic, President of the RS Energetic Sector's Trade Union, claims there were crimes in the RS Elektroprivreda and that the Trade Union has been asking to investigate some cases for a long time (as reported in Blic pg. 7).</p> <p>Mirko Mijatovic, Deputy Director of the RS Elektroprivreda, denies that the business dealings of this firm are based on theft, bad management and negligence. He claims that everything was transparent and in line with procedure foreseen by the law. However, if it is proved that there were some illegal dealings, the responsible should be punished (also Blic pg. 7)</p>
EFT in Sarajevo	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 3 'EFT officials to come to Sarajevo on Saturday' – NN has learnt from the EFT Centre in London that EFT officials would come to Sarajevo on Saturday, where they would hold a press conference and take a stance on claims made in the Special Auditor's Report on the RS Elektroprivreda. Vojin Lazrevic, one of London's ETF Directors, told SRNA that ETF representatives would hold a press conference on Saturday in Banja Luka at which they would present their official stand on the auditor's report on RS Elektroprivreda.</p>

Political Affairs

<p>New FOSS Director</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 3 – Federation PM Ahmet Hadzipasic confirmed on Wednesday for the daily that he indeed requested from Federation President Lozancic and his deputies Dzihanovic and Radivojevic to give their consent for the appointment of Sead Kikic as the new FOSS Director. Hadzipasic said he expected Kikic to be appointed at the next session of the Federation government. According to Federation PM, the OHR did not either agree or disagree with Kikic's possible appointment. The daily points out that if Kikic was to be appointed at the next FBiH government session the ruling Federation government would not keep the promise they gave to HR Ashdown – not to make any further appointments until march 31 when the law on State Service is to be adopted.</p>
<p>Cavic on 'Orao'</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 2 'Cavic will respond to Ward's requests related to the Orao affair' – the RS Supreme Defence Council will discuss at the coming session a letter by SFOR General William Ward regarding the 'Orao' affair. According to RS President, Dragan Cavic that he requested from relevant RS institutions to submit further information requested by Ward. Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'The breach of sanctions evident' – Cavic said he did not want the RS to be qualified as a place supporting Iraq, and that the letter by ward was not sent to him but to the RS. ATV bulletin at 19:00 Wednesday – item no. 4 was Cavic's statement that he would deliver additional information by March 17 (supposedly a deadline). Blic pg. 7 'Reply by 17 March' – "I do not wish to accuse anyone in the present or former governments, as the investigation should resolve everything in order to get to the truth about the affair," Cavic said.</p>

<p>Benes on HNK Assembly and IDs</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 4 'A club of Bosniak councillors give support to parallelism' – Avis Benes, OHR Spokesperson in Mostar, commented on the last session of the HNK Assembly saying the OHR was disappointed the Assembly did not the Statute on the cantonal Health Institute Fund. She added the OHR believed the blocking of the adoption by Bosniak councillors represented a clear obstruction and support to parallelisms. Vecernji List pg. 4 'Bosniak councillors obstruct adoption of the Statute', Slobodna Dalmacija pg. 18 'Bosniak councillors obstruct', Dnevni List pg. 14 'It is high time unified Health Insurance Fund was created' – reported extensively on yesterday press conference of the IC. Benes quoted as saying that, bearing in mind the price of the new IDs, it is known that the cost of the previous IDs was 130% higher. The old IDs were more expensive, of a poorer quality, easier to forge. SD reports that, being asked to comment on the statement by Fatima Leho, HNK SDA official, that the Head of OHR (S), Jean Pierre-Bercot, had told her he feared Bosniaks would get side-lined by the majority should Mostar be organised as a single municipality, Avis Benes replied that 'Mr. Bercot has never said that and that this was not the official OHR position'.</p>
---	--

FBiH HoP – Serb caucus	<p>Avaz pg. 8 'Three options suggested to fill the Serb caucus' – President of the FBiH HoP Commission in charge of finding the solution for filling the Serb caucus in the HoP, Spomenka Micic, said they formulated three possible options. One, to fill the Serb caucus by already elected Serb delegates in the HoP. Two, that the procedure be carried out by cantonal assemblies and the third is that the BiH Election Commission awards mandates to candidates who won most votes on the elections lists. Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'According to the number of won votes' – a statement by Igor Rajner from the SDP on the issue. He thinks the Serb caucus should be filled in accordance with the BiH Election law, Article 10.17.</p>
Student Movement for Normal BiH	<p>Avaz pg. 10 'We expect that Ashdown bans Lagumdzija from any political activities' – a report from yesterday's press conference by the Student Movement for Normal BiH. Amer Bahtijar appealed to all citizens who have been exposed to Lagumdzija's pressures to resist them and speak publicly about it. He further announced a round table in front of the FTV unless this TV station agreed to broadcast a show on Pogorelica case, which would show the other side of the story (basically to argue in favour of people who have been suspects in the case). "What we expect, and what will represent the finale is for HR Ashdown to remove Lagumdzija and ban him from further political activities because this country does not need politicians like him." Oslobodjenje pg. 8 'The crusade to Europe' – "Lagumdzija is definitely defeated and it is a question of time before he leaves," said Bahtijar.</p>

<p>RS NA session</p>	<p>Glas Srpski pg. 3 'Security in accordance with the Constitution', Nezavisne Novine pg. 7 'MP's adopt the security policy of BiH'' – on yesterday's resumption of the RSNA session. Following a daylong discussion, the RSNA deputies finally adopted with a majority vote (68 votes for and 14 abstentions), the 'Security policy of BiH' document.</p> <p>According to Mirko Sarovic, the final version of the document (with remarks included by RS NA MPs) must be harmonised with the BiH Constitution. According to Dragan Cavic, RS President, it is necessary for BiH to be admitted into the Partnership for Peace. Velkimir Sakan, President of Defence and Internal Affairs Review Commission, presented the view of the Commission that the document is not in accordance with the BiH Constitution.</p> <p>Marko Pavic, DNS MP said the document is too general, stressing that it contains no single reference to the term of Republic of Srpska. Krstan Simic, SNSD MP, emphasised that the document contains no clear messages and tasks. Milanko Mihajlica, Serb Radical Party delegate, finds the document to be unacceptable because it violates the BiH Constitution and the Dayton Peace Agreement. BH Radio 1 bulletin at 12: 00 on Wednesday – the first piece of news was actually the update of the RS NA session. The daily quoted Sarovic in his opening speech as saying that some minor parts of the proposed Security Policy were not in compliance with the state and entities. Also, a quote by Cavic that the document had its good and bad parts. Blic pg. 7 'I will take into account the deputies' stand', Nacional pg. 11 'With compromise of all in BiH to a good solution' – RS Defence Minister, Milovan Stankovic, said that the government had discussed the document and concluded that it could be used as the basis for the final version. Stankovic added that the document included solutions, which were contrary to the Constitutions of BiH and RS.</p>
-----------------------------	---

Economic Affairs

CIPS

Avaz pg. 4 'The ID more expensive due to delays in the project realization' – on yesterday's meeting between the CoM Inter-Resource Working Group, in charge of establishing the final price of the new IDs, and OHR reps. It was concluded that there was a problem with the construction of the entire project. Apparently, the root of the problem is that the entire project has been delayed starting with the adoption of the Budget for 2002. The only thing that cannot be postponed is the paying off of loans taken for the realization of the project. The Working Group will forward their conclusions to the CoM, which will then make a final decision. Oslobođenje pg. 9 'The IDs have to have the names of municipalities' – Mirko Skrbic, CIPS project Director, replied to the recent complaint by former Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic (for more info see yesterday's Media Round-Up) saying that IDs issued in Mostar and Sarajevo have to state names of municipalities because only these two cities have a greater number of municipalities.

<p>CRO media on OHR's involvement in CIPS</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg. 1 and 5 by <u>Z. Jukic</u> – though the new authorities in the BiH Council of Ministers at first accused the former ones of wanting to rob the BiH citizens through the CIPS project, followed by Ashdown's officials who were kindly disposed towards them, they reduced the price of issuing the new IDs from 14.5 to 10 KM. Yet, this gift to the citizens given by the SDA, HDZ and SDS hardly lasted for some hours since the OHR representatives realized that the story on the intention to robe the citizens through the CIPS project was 'sold' to them. As Ashdown and his Office, ever since the removal of Nikola Grabovac, 'buy' any story on the alleged malversations of Lagumdžija's government, they 'bought' this story, too. However, when some more serious international officials made the calculations and realized the price of 14,5 KM was essentially an economic one and that its reduction was a result of the dilettante-like squaring accounts with the former authorities, they made a decision by which they denied the claims by the three national parties that the price could really be set at 10 KM. Another CIPS-related disgrace happened in Mostar. The project foresees that the new IDs issued in Mostar contain the names of the 6 national municipalities. DL says that Neven Tomic, who protested against it, is the only official who does not come from the HDZ, SDA, SDS, PDP and a part of Party for BiH who joined the mentioned parties. He said the new ID prejudices the maintaining of divisions in Mostar. The biggest disgrace will come to the surface when the issuing of the new IDs to the inhabitants of the Mostar Central Zone, as the IDs having the Central Zone or a District written on them are not foreseen. DL finds out that inhabitants of this part of Mostar will have to decide whether they want to belong to the eastern or western part of Mostar. Mostar OHR Office could not give an answer to this obvious paradox, and said the MoI was implementing the CIPS project. There has been no official explanation by the MoI either, and the OHR could not say what would happen if Mostar's administrative organization was changed (i.e whether Mostar citizens would have to pay for new documents again).</p>
--	--

<p>NHI on CIPS</p>	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija pg. 19 'Support to CIPS' and Dnevni List pg. 4 'NHI: Party support to CIPS project' – an NHI's press release offering their full support to the CIPS project. "The current obstructions in the implementation of the CIPS project are not directed at the protection of the social status of citizens. They are aimed at protecting those who committed various misdeeds in the process of issuing personal documents," the release reads.</p> <p>The NHI believes that price of the new personal documents must be harmonized with the costs of its production, but must not be an excuse or a justification for giving the project up, as some political options would like.</p>
<p>Commission for politics of indirect taxing</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 4 'How to prevent criminals from taking 1,4 billion KM annually' – the Commission for politics of indirect taxing held its first session yesterday. HR Paddy Ashdown said that in BiH 1,4 billion-KM annually goes in the hands of criminals instead in the hands of doctors, teachers, judges and hospitals. Added that the deadline for the work of the Commission was short. Joly Dixon, President of the Commission, said he was no politician but economist and that they would create functional tax system. Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'New tax system has to be functional' – "A lot of money has been lost. If it wasn't so we would not be here today. The new taxing system has to be functional and transparent, and the deadline is very short," said Dickson. ATV 19:00 bulletin on Wednesday – the first item was OHR press release on the inaugural meeting of the Indirect Tax Policy Commission. Blic pg. 7 'No damage from VAT' – the Commission for Indirect Tax Policy held its first meeting on Wednesday. The Commission Chairman Joly Dickson said that 'the aim was to establish modern principles of customs and tax policy in BiH', emphasising that 'the introduction of a joint customs and VAT would not damage anyone'.</p>

<p>Interview with Vrankic</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg. 1 and 7 – an interview with Federation Minister of Finances, Dragan Vrankic, who says that there is no time for postponing the reforms and that the implementation of structural reforms should be sped up. “First of all, we completely support reforms in the tax system and the establishment of the unique customs service and value added tax at the state level...The only right solution is a unique and harmonized system at the BiH level, which will, at the same time, have a high degree of decentralization.” Asked to comment on HR Paddy Ashdown’s decision that the changes of personnel in public services at the F BiH will not take place until the Law on Public Service was passed Vrankic said the following. “I will give a full support to the implementation of any reform in the state administration that has as a goal rational and efficient state administration, but which also implies a high degree of expertise for the implementation of reforms, responsibility, the reduction of corruption, the improving of quality and accessibility of public services... I cannot comment on the HR’s decision because it is the result of the agreement with the ruling parties and I will respect it.”</p>
<p>ATV recap on RS affairs</p>	<p>ATV bulletin at 19: 00 on Wednesday – third item was a review of some of the affairs that shook the RS in the past months including RS Elektroprivreda, Dobojski Bank, PIO Fund and customs frauds. RS Minister of Interior Djerić said he did not care who was in power because it will have no reflection on the investigations on cases listed above. RS President Čović said that the IC keeps pointing finger and the local authorities keep confirming that they there are criminals. Čović’s point being that the local authorities should deal with such matters on their own. A comment from the SDS saying that not enough proof reported in the cases. Finally, a statement by the SNSD saying that if the local authorities have proven to fail in fighting crime then the IC should put their foot down and become stricter about cleaning BiH up.</p>

Interview with Dixon	<p>Dnevni List pg. 6 'By introduction of new taxation system only criminals lose' – Chairman of the Commission for Indirect Tax Policy Joly Dixon judged that a new taxation system would considerably help in the reduction of a number of embezzlements and corruption, due to which 1,5 billion KM were lost every year. Dixon stressed that the task of this Commission would be to propose a draft law that would make possible the establishment of a modern and transparent taxation system.</p>
DL editorial on CIPS	<p>Dnevni List pg. 2 by <u>Arijana Beus</u> 'Who is in charge in BiH?' – an editorial which brings a chronology of the CIPS project case. The editorial wonders whether there is someone who thinks of ordinary people, who are faced with financial problems. "We are wondering whether we were wrong in our hopes? No we were not, the BiH Council of Ministers stood for us. The problem is however that no one asks them for anything. Since High Representative Paddy Ashdown with 'a heavy heart' annulled their decision and goes his own way. He tramples on all decisions that he does not like even if they are damaging for citizens of this country in which, it seems, he is the only one who is in charge."</p>

Humanitarian Affairs

<p>Kebo</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 9 ‘The return of refugees has been brought in question due to minimum means available’ – a warning by Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Mirsad Kebo, that the return process will become questionable unless more money was allocated to the Ministry. He said that if the process was to become questionable then the survival of BiH as a state will also become an issue. “if such thing happens, extremists would be able to rest then and conclude that they achieved in peace everything they did not during the war,” said Kebo. He said he was thinking about starting a procedure for taking loans to allow people who have not had a roof over their head for the past seven years to finally get one.</p>
<p>Commentary in Avaz</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 3 ‘The warning by Minister Kebo’ by <u>Edina Sarac</u> – the author points out a statement from Kebo’s appeal related to the return of refugees where he said that unless the necessary means were ensured then the ethnic cleansing would turn out to be a ‘profitable investment’. Sarac says that if Kebo is left lone in his fight the chances are pretty small for refugees to ever enter their reconstructed houses. “The situation is alarming. This year is probably the last chance for the return process. If we gamble it away then the darkest predictions will come true. The ethnic cleansing – a profitable investment.”</p>

<p>Donationa for Potocari memorial</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg. 1 and 2 – Elektropriverda of Croat Community of Herceg Bosna donated 50,000 KM for the Memorial Center in Srebrenica. DL says that this donation has shown that the memorial center built in honor of the Srebrenica victims should be universal issue that will gather all people from BiH. “Although during the last years it was almost impossible to expect that any of the local power-wielders and leaders of public companies even express their condolences to victims coming from the line of other people it seems that that time is behind us now.”</p>
---	---