

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 31/3/2004

RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	RTRS (19,30 hrs)
Mostar Fair 2004	RSNA on RS capital
FBiH HoP in session	RSNA in session
BiH MoD on generals	RSNA on newest initiatives
SDS on Tihic's initiative	EC about BiH progress

Note: Due to technical problems, we did not receive summaries of FTV and BHTV 1.

Oslobodjenje	SDS threatens it would bring into question Bosnia and Herzegovina; Restitution Law: Robbery by government "in communist style"; EC report: Not everything is so black in BiH; Ashdown and Bond visited Potocari: 'Mothers of Srebrenica [give] directions for building Memorial Centre'
Dnevni Avaz	Vuksic goes back to leadership of FOSS?; Chris Patten: BiH already did a lot; Tihic: Nobody can blackmail me
Dnevni List	Mostar: Seventh international economic fair opened; Ashdown suspends funding of HDZ
Vecernji List	Indictments against six Croats from BiH arrived; Mostar: Fair opened
Slobodna Dalmacija	Islamists threaten people from Vitez in jail with death
Glas Srpske	Severe reactions upon initiative by Bosniak member to BiH Presidency: Dam for Sulejman; Hydro Power Plant at Trebisnjica: Ridiculous accusations
Nezavisne Novine	EC published report on BiH Association: Only 2 conditions out of 16 met; Sarajevo: Paddy Ashdown bans HDZ financing from the budget; Session of RS NA : Sarajevo remains the capital of Republika Srpska; The Hague Tribunal: Miroslav Deronjic sentenced to 10 years

Initiatives re entities' names

SDS: Bringing RS into question leads to bringing existence of BiH into question

RHB, RTRS, Oslobođenje cover splash, pg 6 'SDS threatens to bring BiH into question', Glas Srpske cover page story 'Dam for Sulejman' – SDS floor group in the RS National Assembly at the session on Tuesday threatened of bringing existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina into question if the SDA and its chairman Sulejman Tihic bring RS into question. They also asked their partners in the assembly majority to reexamine the participation of the SDA in the executive and legislative authorities in the RS. The statement issued by the SDS deputies sharply condemned Tihic's announcement of the initiative aimed at abolishing the name of the Serb Republic and described it as "anti-Serb and anti-Dayton".

Dnevni Avaz pg 4 'If Tihic brings the RS into question, SDS will bring the existence of BIH into question', SRNA – "If Tihic and the SDA bring Republika Srpska into question we will also bring the existence of BIH into question," the SDS deputies said and warned that they would call for the withdrawal of RS representatives from the Council of Ministers and the BiH Parliament. The SDS urged the parliamentary majority to replace SDA representatives in the RS government with Bosniaks who accepted the Serb Republic as a historic and permanent fact.

Tihic: 'I will not give up on initiative to change RS name'

Oslobodjenje cover splash, pg 6 'SDS threats to bring BiH into question' – BiH Presidency Chairman Sulejman Tihic deems that the name of the BiH entity Republika Srpska is discriminatory against the constituent and other ethnicities, hence it ought to be changed. Tihic comments that he was not worried with threats coming from SDS and that he did not intend to give up on intention to file demand with the BiH Constitution Court for the change of RS name. Tihic's cabinet issued on Tuesday a statement citing that the initiative for abolishment of term "Srpska" from the name of the entity is a constitutional obligations and it is not directed against the Serb, or any other people in BiH. Additionally, in an interview to FENA news agency Tihic underlined, commenting on demand by SDS for a reassessment of the participation of SDA representatives in the executive and judicial authority: "No serious Bosniak, from any political party, sees the RS as a historical and definitive fact. If someone should nevertheless say this in public, they do not mean it."

FENA – "One of BiH's entry responsibilities during its accession to the Council of Europe was to coordinate its legislature with the conventions on human rights and all other conventions which are an integral part of the BiH Constitution in Annex 1. Therefore, it is my duty as one of the authorized proposers of the initiation of the procedure for the coordination of the legislature of BiH with the convention on human rights to initiate such moves, while the Constitutional Court will, of course, have the final say on this," Tihic told FENA. He stressed that "the initiation of this procedure is not aimed against any people, including the Serb people".

Dnevni Avaz cover 'Nobody can blackmail me', pg 4
'I use my constitutional right, nobody can blackmail me' – carries Tihic's statements given to Fena.

<p>Mikerevic: SDA participation in RS authorities to be re- examined</p>	<p>RHB, Oslobođenje pg 5 'We will reexamine SDA', Dnevni List pg 18 'Tihic cannot revise Constitution', Slobodna Dalmacija pg 16 'SDS throws out SDA Government ministers', Glas Srpske cover page story 'Dam for Sulejman' – RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic said on Tuesday that he would reexamine further participation of the SDA representatives in the RS government, following SDA leader Sulejman Tihic's announcement that he would demand the name of this entity to be changed.</p> <p>SRNA – "The obvious efforts to revise the BiH Constitution through the announced initiative must be met with a clear response by RS politicians and, as far as I am concerned, further participation of the SDA in the government of the RS must be reexamined," Mikerevic told SRNA. He said that it was possible to do this as part of the Serb Republic government reshuffle which had been announced for April.</p>
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<p>RSNA discussion on initiatives to change RS name</p>	<p>RTRS – RSNA also included into its agenda the discussion on initiatives by Bosniak politicians, which are disputing the constitutional organization of RS and its name. RS Prime Minister, Dragan Mikerevic said that after the statements of Sulejman Tihic, he will re-examine the further participation of SDA Deputies in RS Government. Drago Kalabic from DNS, who was the first to ask deputies to declare themselves on the latest initiatives, said that he was surprised that ruling parties didn't initiate this discussion before him. "We want SDS and PDP to state what SDA ministers are doing in the RS Government, [what they] lobby, as a party whose legitimate president is Mr Tihic, who lobbies for destruction of the RS constitutional order" said Drago Kalabic. SDS Deputies have in written asked their partners in Government to re-examine the participation of SDA Deputies in RS Government. SDS has also warned SDA that if they bring into the question the existence of RS, SDS will bring into the question existence of whole BiH. "It is obvious that Tihic has a problem with everything with prefix Srpski, but I think that going into the public with these kinds of statements and announcement of some kind of initiatives, doesn't bring any good to BiH and leads us to polluted relations," said Dusan Stojicic of SDS. Milorad Dodik said that RS is a constitutional category and that no one, not even Sulejman Tihic can question its existence. "If I was Mr [Borislav] Paravac I would initiate the question is it constitutional for RS citizens to decide on some issue trough referendum, so that we see where will all this bring us," said Milorad Dodik. Tarik Sadovic from SDA said that Tihic's initiative is legitimate and legal, stressing: "We don't question RS as Entity, but we question its name, that is key problem".</p>
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<p>RS Ass of PoWs demand referendum on separating RS from BiH</p>	<p>RTRS – RS Association of Former Prisoners of War will urge RSNA to call a referendum on separation of the RS from the constitutional, legal and territorial system of BiH if the chairman of the BiH Presidency, Sulejman Tihic, initiates the issue of the constitutionality of the RS name before the BiH Constitutional Court, the deputy head of this association, Slavko Jovicic, told SRNA. In that case the association would also call on all Serb representatives to withdraw from the joint BiH institutions, Jovicic added.</p>
<p>Oslobodjenje ed on SDS announcement of bringing BiH existence into question</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 2 'Facts' op-ed by <u>Senka Kurtovic</u> – Referring to the warning by SDS that it would bring into question existence of BiH, if SDA brings into question RS, author reads that this was familiar and not even a bit naïve: "There are several years that SDS leader at the time, Radovan Karadzic, spoke at [parliamentary session of] former Republic of BiH warned against disappearance of one people." Further accusing SDS of the gravest crimes that took place in BiH during the war, author concludes: "When will Serb acknowledge that BiH is historic and definitive fact. Without [BiH], there would be no RS."</p>

Political developments

**EC presents
report on
BiH**

Vecernji List pg 7 'Progress is obvious, but insufficient' – On Tuesday, EC presented an annual report on accession and stabilization of western Balkans countries, which stressed that BiH has made a considerable progress in many areas that are covered by reforms, adding that the progress is still not sufficient enough. The report, which was presented by the Head of EC Mission to BiH, Michael Humphreys, says the government at the State level is not developed enough, and that the tensions between the State and entity governments have a negative impact on reforms. The report commends reforms in defence and indirect taxation areas, however it says that the cooperation with the ICTY is insufficient enough, albeit it has progressed this year. Dnevni List pg 3 'Humphreys: Grade for BiH 'good, but it must get better'', Oslobodjenje cover, pg 8 'Not everything is so black', Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'Readiness of BiH to assist BiH confirmed' – report on the highlights of the report.

Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'State government still not developed enough' – Humphreys also stated that the state authorities are still not developed enough.

Nezavisne Novine cover, pg 3 'Only 2 conditions out of 16 met' – The Chairperson of BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic, is of the view that the report is realistic.

<p>Patten: 'Hard work in BiH will be rewarded'</p>	<p>Vecernji List pg 7 'Patten: Hard work in BiH will be rewarded' by <u>Chris Patten</u> – VL carries an article signed by the EC Commissioner, Chris Patten, who writes about what BiH has achieved and what's to be achieved in BiH, if the country wants to join the EU. Commissioner Patten notes the moderate progress achieved in BiH, citing the beginning of the public administration reform, first verdicts in cases of people trafficking and first steps in setting up indirect taxation authorities. Commissioner Patten writes: "But a lot more needs to be done and a lot faster. If you do not pick up the pace, you will miss your targets. Too many reforms have not been completed, some have not even started. Even when there is progress, in many case it is because of the international pressure. It is of utmost importance that BiH assumes more responsibility for its future. Tough words? Sometimes friends have to give an honest criticism".</p> <p>Dnevni Avaz cover 'BiH already did a lot', pg 5 'BiH achieved very moderate improvement' – DA also brings an article by Chris Patten.</p>
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<p>Ashdown suspends funding of HDZ from state, entity and cantonal budgets</p>	<p>Dnevni List front, pg 3 'Ashdown suspends funding of HDZ' – OHR issued a press release, which says that the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, has placed a temporary freeze on disbursements of political party funding to the HDZ from all cantonal, entity and state level budgets. The press release also says that this party funding will be made available again immediately after the competent authorities in the Central Bosnia and Herzegovina-Neretva Cantons have adopted the Decision on legal and administrative unification of the remaining "two schools under one roof". Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'Ashdown temporarily suspends HDZ financing from budget', Vecernji List front, pg 2 'Ashdown banned financing of HDZ', Slobodna Dalmacija pg 7 'HDZ funding temporary suspended', Nezavisne Novine cover, pg 5 'Paddy Ashdown bans HDZ financing from the budget'; Glas Srpske pg 2 'Deadlock on cash registry' – also carries the news on suspension.</p>
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<p>RSNA in session; Sarajevo remains capital of RS</p>	<p>RTRS – RS National Assembly failed to pass either of the two proposed amendments to the RS Constitution regarding the capital of the RS. Pursuant to the constitution, the Assembly will be able to discuss the amendments against in three months, until which time Sarajevo remains the capital. SNSD suggested an amendment to declare Banja Luka the capital of the RS. The party said that their amendments is hindered by two political factors: the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court to abolish the “Serb” prefix in the names of certain cities in the RS, and the opinion of the Bosniak caucus in the RS Council of Peoples that Sarajevo should remain the capital. The party’s second amendment, which stated that Banja Luka should be the capital of the RS, while BiH institutions should be located in Srpsko Sarajevo and Banja Luka, was rejected as well. RSNA Speaker, Dragan Kalinic explained to Deputies that if change regarding the capital is not accepted the proposal on the same issue could be submitted in three months. “New chance exists for Serb Parties from RS to come into their senses and reach the consensus on this issue”- said Dragan Kalinic, RSNA Speaker. Leader of SNSD, Milorad Dodik said that this initiative was unnecessarily politicise: “I first of all express my deepest regrets regarding the attitudes of SDS and PDP Deputies, who have succeeded to animate whole SDA that RS Capital City is Banja Luka.” Oslobodjenje pg 4 ‘Sarajevo still capital of RS’, Dnevni Avaz pg 9 ‘Sarajevo stays capital for RS’, Nezavisne Novine cover, pg 4 ‘Sarajevo remains the capital of Republika Srpska’; Glas Srpske pg 2 ‘Old address remains with capital’ – media covered session.</p>
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<p>PIC directors meet in Sarajevo</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 8 'Wil BiH into Europe?', Dnevni Avaz pg 10 'PIC directors to discuss integration into Europe' – The Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council will meet in Sarajevo today and on Thursday. The meeting comes immediately after the European Commission announces its interim assessment of BiH's progress in fulfilling the Feasibility Study requirements. The process of integration in Europe, and BiH's progress towards Partnership in Peace will be key topics at this PIC, explained OHR spokesperson Oleg Milisic and reiterated that at the December PIC in Brussels the BiH authorities committed themselves to an ambitious programme of economic, political and administrative reforms. "Progress in turning these commitments into reality has been mixed. The Intelligence Law has been adopted by the BiH Parliament, for example, and competencies have been assumed by the State in order to enable the creation of a single BiH-wide High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council. But many other key reforms have been jeopardized as a result of political gridlock", he said.</p>
<p>FBiH proposal budget harmonized</p>	<p>RHB – The joint commission of both Houses in the Federation Parliament harmonized the text of the Proposal FBiH Budget for 2004. FBiH House of Representatives today accepted the report of the joint commission. FBiH House of Peoples will consider the report tomorrow, and if the House of Peoples accepts the report, the FBiH Budget for 2004 will finally be adopted. The joint commission of both Houses in the Federation Parliament had to harmonize the budgetary text due to different amendments submitted in the House of Representatives and the House of Peoples, respectively. FBiH Budget for 2004 is estimated at 1.25bn KM.</p>

**Ashdown: BiH
in EU in
five years**

Nezavisne Novine pg 6 'BiH in EU in five years'
– The High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, yesterday expressed his conviction that within five years time, BiH would find its place as a member of the European community. He said that he knows of no such state, which as BiH "has gone so far after the war ended". Ashdown yesterday visited the Memorial Centre at Potocari, Konjevic Polje and Krizevici settlements near Zvornik.

War crimes

<p>Ashdown, Bond visit Potocari Memorial Centre</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje cover, pg 7 'Mothers of Srebrenica [give] directions for building Memorial Centre', Dnevni Avaz pg 3 'Mothers want to have a memorial room in Factory' – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, visited Srebrenica and Potocari memorial center where held a meeting with the Advisory Board of the Foundation "Srebrenica-Potocari" and the Association "Mothers of Srebrenica" on the future purpose of the facility of the former accumulator factory, which was handed over to the Memorial Centre by the High Representative's Decision. Chairman of the Foundation's Executive Board Beriz Belkic said it was possible to form a task force, which would design a program on basis of which concourse for an idea solution would be issued. The first stage of Potocari memorial center has been completed. "In the first stage of building facilities, mothers of Srebrenica have to [lead us]. Without their opinion, and suggestions, we will certainly fail to bring relief to survivors. The building of the first phase will be painful and long," stressed Ashdown. US Ambassador to BiH said that job he is doing on the Memorial Centre represents the most important part of the work he is doing as an Ambassador in BiH. Reisu-l-ulema of BiH Islamic Community, effendi Mustafa Ceric, also attended the meeting.</p> <p>Glas Srpske pg 2 'Deficit of money' – Beriz Belkic said that the Foundation does not have enough resources to reconstruct and decorate the Facility of Potocari. He also said that the Foundation would like to hear the views of the mothers of the Srebrenica victims.</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine pg 6 'BiH in EU in five years' – brings that HR visited the region.</p>
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<p>Arsovic: report by Srebrenica Commission in mid June</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 7 'We will demand documents from Serbia' – Chairman of the Commission appointed to investigate the events that took place in Srebrenica in July 1995, Marko Arsovic said that Commission's report could be in hands of BiH Human Rights Chamber in mid June. He explained for Oslobodjenje that the Commission would complete its work on time if all institutions that they had demanded information from did so. Arsovic adds that the Commission will also ask Interior Ministry of Serbia to share documents, as "we know that they have a lot of documents taken from RS which would help us to analyze events from UN secured zone."</p>
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**Media: ICTY
indictments
against 6
BiH Croats
arrived in
Sarajevo**

Vecernji List front splash, pg 10 'Indictments against six Croats from BiH arrived' by Zvonimir Despot – VL claims that the Croatian Justice Ministry, although nobody wants to officially confirm the news, yesterday received indictments against former senior civilian and military officials of the so-called Croat Republic of Herzeg Bosnia. VL notes that the indictments arrived to Sarajevo last week, and were forwarded to Zagreb yesterday because the Chief ICTY Prosecutor believes the indictees are Croatian citizens with residence in Republic of Croatia. VL says that according to available information, the indictees are: Jadranko Prlic, Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petkovic, Bruno Stojic and Valentin Coric. With regard to the 6th indictee, VL says the word is it is either Bozo Rajic or Berislav Pusic. Slobodna Dalmacija front 'Sixth indictment for Berislav Pusic after all?', pg 2 'Sixth indictment for Berislav Pusic, Coric's former assistant, after all?' – SD claims that Berislav Pusic, former Deputy Commander of HVO Military Police [Deputy to Valentin Coric] is the 6th indictee. Dnevni Avaz pg 4 'Government in Zagreb to receive indictments against six Croats today?' – DA brings that claims that the indictments will be given to the Government in Zagreb today, or latest by the end of this week. The DA's source claims that the indictments would arrive from Sarajevo, where they arrived several days ago.

Oslobodjenje cover, pg 3 'Indictments against former leaders of Herceg-Bosna' – Oslobodjenje carries that indictments refer to the crimes committed against Bosniaks, which includes establishment of concentration camps Dretelj, Gabela, Heliodrom, in Ljubuski and Kaonik; persecution of Bosniaks in area of Stolac and Ljubuski; crimes committed in Stupni Dol and Ahmici [near Sarajevo]; and destruction of Old Bridge.

RS Officials meet US state official in charge of SEE	<p>RTRS, RHB, Dnevni Avaz pg 8 'Cooperation with the Hague one of the most important conditions for BiH', Nezavisne Novine pg 5 'Arrest of Karadzic is main demand of USA', Glas Srpske pg 3 'Washington demands arrests' – According to press release issued by the Cabinet of the Republika Srpska President, Dragan Cavic, after the meeting he had with Charles English, US Head of Department for South East Europe, and Rafy Gregorian, his deputy, the surrender or the arrest of the former Republika Srpska President, Radovan Karadzic, is a uncompromising demand of the USA, which is to determine the US approach, but also the approach of the international community, towards the Republika Srpska. The senior officials of the US Government stressed the priority is the full co-operation with the Hague Tribunal. They reiterated their demand for the arrest or surrender of war crime suspects. US officials warned Cavic the current situation on this matter when the arrests of war crime suspects do not take place cannot last any longer.</p>
German press on alleged search for Karadzic	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 2 'Johnson learns of action the moment it starts', Glas Srpske pg 3 'Fear from "moles" – "Berliner Zeitung" today reports that the NATO has increased the level of secrecy, in regard to the pursuit for Radovan Karadzic, upto the level that the Alliance Chief Commander, American General James Johnson, learns of action only after the action is launched.</p>

Economic and social issues

<p>Mostar International Fair opens</p>	<p>Vecernji List front splash 'Mostar: Fair opened', pg 3 'Exhibitors from 20 countries have arrived!', pgs 56&57 'International Mostar Fair 2004' – The Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic, opened the 7th Mostar Fair 2004 on Tuesday. On the occasion, Terzic invited all businessmen presented to invest in BiH. VL says that over 450 exhibitors from about 20 countries are present at the fair and this is the record number of the exhibitors.</p> <p>RHB, Slobodna Dalmacija pg 8 'New economic relations after May 1', pg 19 'Slovenia leads towards EU', Dnevni List front 'Mostar: 7th international fair has been opened', pg 11 'Mostar Fair keeps breaking record in number of exhibitors', Oslobodjenje pg 17 '450 companies from 20 countries exhibited' – also covered the conference opening.</p>
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<p>FBiH HoR adopts Law amending Bankruptcy Law; Syndicate announces lawsuit against Govt</p>	<p>RHB – At the session held on Tuesday, FBiH House of Representatives adopted the Law amending the Law on the Bankruptcy Procedure. Together with the Law, the FBiH HoR also accepted the program, prepared by the Government, of measures for social care of employees who will lose their jobs in the process of privatisation, bankruptcy, liquidation and restructuring of companies. FBiH Government anticipates that approx. 10.000 workers will lose their jobs in this year in the process of liquidation and full implementation of the regulations on bankruptcy and liquidation of companies.</p> <p>Oslobodjenje pg 9 ‘Syndicate announced lawsuit against the Government’, Dnevni Avaz pg 2 ‘Biber announces lawsuit against FBiH Govt’ – FBiH Social Policy and Labour</p> <p>Radovan Vignjevic explains that the measures will include providing social care to the workers laid off from the companies with at least 51% of state capital. Over 25 million KM at least is necessary to secure for this plan. The president of BiH Syndicates, Edhem Biber, says that amendments adopted were against international standards. He also announced that the syndicate would sue the Government.</p> <p>Dnevni List pg 5 ‘Law on Bankruptcy brought miners in front of FBiH Parliament building’, Slobodna Dalmacija pg 18 ‘New 10 000 workers to end up on street?’ – also bring reaction by Syndicate.</p>
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<p>Farmers warn Terzic of general strike; announce lawsuit against Terzic and Doko</p>	<p>RHB, Oslobođenje pg 3 'General protests on 1 April', Dnevni Avaz pg 4 'Protest will last by the time requests are fulfilled' – The Association of Agricultural Producers in BiH addressed an open letter to BiH Council of Ministers Chair Adnan Terzic, stressing that the agricultural producers would launch a general strike on April 1, which will not be stopped until their requests are met. The letter states that Terzic's decision not to hold the announced meeting on March 24, has practically led to the one-sided disruption of dialogue, and that he will have to take responsibility for the events that will follow after April 1.</p> <p>Vecernji List pg 5 'Blockade of border crossing with Croatia tomorrow', Dnevni List pg 7 'Blockade of 6 border crossings tomorrow', Slobodna Dalmacija pg 19 'Criminal charges against Terzic and Doko' – The letter also says that the farmers will file criminal charges against Terzic and BiH Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Dragan Doko, because of damage caused to BiH agriculture and acting against Law on Foreign Trade.</p>
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<p>Reactions to FBiH Govt amendments to three housing laws</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje cover, pgs 4&5 'Government's robbery 'in communist manner'' – Following the session of the FBiH Government focused at three laws on housing matters on Tuesday, Oslobodjenje carries that both those lobbying for and those against restitution were dissatisfied with the set of laws that halted embargo at buy out of nationalized apartments, enabling compensations to religious communities and original owners. Association of tenancy holders of nationalized parties welcome the abolishment of embargo, however underline that citizens living in private apartments taken away from original owners in 70s were exempted from the decision. On the other hand, Oslobodjenje carries reactions by religious communities [who all had property taken from them in communist regime], all slamming decision by the FBiH Govt. OSCE also estimates that the package of three laws on housing matters will only make the situation worse. As OSCE spokesperson Emir Salihovic stated, the amendments cannot be justified in light of Human Rights Chamber decisions since 1997, all requiring that all those who concluded purchase contracts for such apartments before the conflict be allowed to register their ownership now, and raise a number of other issues.</p> <p>Dnevni Avaz pg 8 ''Dom' satisfied, owners of property seek Mehmedagic's resignation', pg8 'Amendments do not solve the issue of military apartments' – also covers OSCE statement, and that the Association of nationalised property owners seek resignation of the Minister Mehmedagic.</p>
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**GS on decision
regarding JNA
apartments**

Glas Srpske pg 5 'Square metres – war trophy' – At its session on Monday, the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina set the Draft changes to the Law on sale of apartments. If the Draft were adopted, those JNA officers, who have already got apartments in some other state, would lose their right to be property reinstated. Ramiz Mehmedagic, FBiH Minister of Urban Planning and Environment, said that the former JNA officers "would get the money back with the interest rate calculated, if they paid any sum for the purchase of apartments in the FBiH". He also said that if this Law were adopted, the current occupants of the apartments would be allowed to instantly purchase the apartments. GS carries that it is well known that current occupants of those apartments are high-ranking officers of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Army. According to GS, such decision of F BiH Government implies it is re-attempting to legalise the illegally confiscated property. Nikola Spiric, Speaker of the BiH House of Representatives, told GS he is not surprised at all with such a conduct by Government of F BiH, because it is clear that "criminals from the Army are exerting pressure against criminals within the Government". He added: "Anybody living in somebody else's apartment is a criminal."

**Popovo polje
flooding [VL: RS
project causes
floods; HET
Trebisnjica denies
responsibility; EP
HZHB blames RS EP]**

Vecernji List pg 6 ‘‘Horizons’ will keep Popovo Polje under water all the time’ by F. Matic – VL carries that a big ecological disaster in flooded Popovo Polje has already grew into an inter-ethnic problem and even a scandal. VL claims that the project ‘Upper Horizons’ in the RS, whose purpose is to bring all underground waters to Bileca Lake, caused the flood in Popovo Polje. The author concludes that this means that on one hand the aforementioned project will be causing floods, such as the flood in Popovo Polje, and on the other hand it will be causing droughts.

Glas Srpske cover page story ‘Ridiculous accusations’ – General Manager of the Hydro Power Plants at Trebisnjica [HET], Slobodan Sarabra, denied accusations that this company is responsible for the flooding of some parts of Popovo Polje in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He said that if there were not the Plant System at Trebisnjica, the area of Popovo Polje would be completely under water.

Dnevni List pg 9 ‘Compensation of damage caused by flood in Popovo Polje questionable’ – The assistant of the HET General Manager, Dragan Andjelic, stated that he visited Popovo Polje and concluded that the flood took place but not to the extent as it was reported.

Dnevni List pg 9 ‘EP HZ HB is trying to reduce consequences of flood’, Slobodna Dalmacija pg 16 ‘They will keep letting water out of hydro-electric power plant’ by D. Juka – Elektroprivreda of Herceg Bosna [EP HZHB] issued a press release saying that leaking water out of lake Gorica, under control of RS Elektroprivreda, caused floods in the area of hydro-electric power plant Capljina. The press release also says that EP HZHB is powerless since they were informed that such letting water out of the Trebinje hydro-electric power plant will continue since the level of water is still high.

<p>Banovici coal mine workers meet FBiH Industry Minister Zigic</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 3 'Representatives fled before minders' – More than a hundred of miners of Banovici coal mine gathered on Tuesday in front of the FBiH Parliament building in Sarajevo, demanding to talk with the FBiH Industry and Energy Minister Izet Zigic and Speaker of the House of Representatives Muhamed Ibrahimovic. Oslobodjenje carries that just before miners arrive, Ibrahimovic "without any explanation halted the session, and after that representatives and members of [FBiH] Govt were fast to leave the building." On the other hand, miners assumed talks with Zigic, and refused to comment for media the reason for their arrival. Oslobodjenje unofficially learns that the reason was dissatisfaction of the absence of government's representatives at the stockholders' session held on Tuesday. Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'Zigic received miners form Banovici', Dnevni List pg 5 'Law on Bankruptcy brought miners in front of FBiH Parliament building', Slobodna Dalmacija pg 18 'New 10 000 workers to end up on street?' – also cover the meeting between miners and Minister Zigic.</p>
<p>HR visits returnees in Konjevic polje</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 3 'BiH destiny is hands of its citizens' – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, yesterday visited Konjevic Polje in Municipality Bratunac, and visited the farm of chickens owned by sisters returnees to the region. On the occasion, Ashdown underlined that BiH's future is in the development of small companies, adding that economic development and new jobs will not be created by revitalization of the old formerly great companies. "This country can develop if ordinary people with moderate funds take advantage of the potentials and launch their own production", said Ashdown.</p>

<p>OHR welcomes B3 credit rating for BiH</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 4 'Credit rating is significant step towards International Community' -OHR spokesperson Oleg Milisic stated at the press conference that the announcement by Moody's Investor Service that it has accorded Bosnia and Herzegovina a B3 credit rating is a significant step forward in integrating BiH with the international financial community, and attracting the investment that generates jobs. Milisic added that on the long run that will mean greater access to bank loans to finance further economic development and improve services to citizens. Also covered by Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodjenje in the sections dedicated to business.</p>
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<p>DL on Ashdown/Silajdzic's recent visit to Kuwait</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 6 'Kuwaitis interested in Aluminij of Mostar' by <u>M. Batarelo</u> – DL claims that the joint trip of the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, and Haris Silajdzic to Kuwait shows that BiH is far from Europe and normal democracy, wondering as to who is Silajdzic and what institution he represents to accompany "the international administrator for BiH" on an official trip to Kuwait. DL goes on to say that when one scratches under the surface of the imposed Statute of Mostar, one can see that the Statute is almost identical to the proposal of the Party for BiH, which Silajdzic founded. In that context, DL claims that a certain number of people are influencing very important decisions of the High Representative through private channels. DL also claims Silajdzic is well known for his radical statements and activities relating to companies in Croat majority areas, claiming that his "appetite" for the energy sector and "Aluminij" Company of Mostar is "huge". In that context, DL wonders what's the real reason behind the joint trip of the HR and Silajdzic to Kuwait, since Kuwaitis are especially interested in investing into Herzegovina, foremost the "Aluminij".</p>
<p>Third phase of Bulldozer initiative beings in April</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 10 'Third phase of Bulldozer Commission starts in April', Oslobodjenje pg 17 'Third Bulldozer starts in April' – The third phase of Bulldozer initiative to implement economic reforms and improve business environment in BiH will commence in April and will last till August. According to Fena news agency, in this phase the role of the international community, including OHR, will be reduced to the level of monitoring and offering legal or political assistance to local communities when necessary.</p>

Defence and security

RSNA adopt amendments to RS Law on Defence and Army

RTRS – The joint committee of RS National Assembly and RS Chamber of Peoples decided that a provision in the Law on amendments to the Law on RS Defence and Army stipulating a four-month military service be applied as a transitional solution until the end of 2005. “The RSNA will by 31 December 2005 at the latest make a decision on conscription-based military service or on setting up a professional army,” states the adopted amendment that in line with the principle of automatism becomes a part of the law on defence and army. The joint committee approved the initiative on the protection of the national vital interest of the Serb people, according to which the military industry will no longer be under the Ministry of Defence, but the Ministry of Energy, Industry and development.

DA wonders whether Vuskic goes back to

Dnevni Avaz cover splash, pg 11 ‘Vuksic goes back to top of FOSS?’ – DA brings that – following the court’s verdict which acquitted Ivan Vuksic, former FOSS Deputy Director, from charges of hostage situation in Hercegovacka Bank in 2001 – Vuksic rejected to comment whether he would go back into Federation Intelligence and Security Service. FBiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic did not want to comment on this possibility either, as while OHR Spokesperson Mario Brkic said OHR has not been commenting judicial processes.

FOSS NN editorial on Vuksic	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg 7 'Vuksic case' editorial by <u>Almedin Sisic</u> – The author is writing about the acquittal passed to Ivan Vuksic in the case of Hercegovacka Banka. He makes a reference to the slogan that “nobody is guilty until proved otherwise”. However, he then lists all the affairs Vuksic has been involved in, including tapping affair, and says that Vuksic may be (temporarily) acquitted, but other cases are to follow and show the level of implementation of judicial rules in this state.</p>
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