

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 4/2/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
CoM on return	FRY appeal rejected	FRY appeal denied	FRY appeal rejected
Ashdown on VAT	CoM on return	Forged BiH docs issued	Sarovic on lawsuit
Orasje customs	VAT and single customs	CoM and OHR on CIPS	VAT and customs
Pope's visit	Iraq still a hot spot	OHR security checks	Annex 7 implementation

Oslobodjenje	Yugoslavia will answer in The Hague for aggression against BiH; Sarajevo factory of forged visas for entering Italy; BiH Presidency against Zilic and Pajic?; Skrbic – cheaper IDs for pensioners; Ismet Dahic released of charges of misuse
Dnevni Avaz	This week is crucial; Selver Mahmutovic's 'Audi' blown up; Graphic designers announcing general strike; Dahic, Gerin and Sabitovic released; Seselj sent terrorist 'white eagles' to BiH;
Vecernji List	Dragan Covic – Pope will come to Banja Luka if health serves him; Mostar – an explosion in front of 'Marul' café
Slobodna Dalmacija	Herzeg-Bosnia celebrates too – Croatian handball players set all streets 'on fire'; 500 suffering from AIDS
Glas Srpski	Prijedor – after charges have been pressed: policemen announce protests; Three day search for Goran Golubovic – state border service employee found dead

Nezavisne Novine	The International Court of Justice in The Hague – FRY appeal rejected; Workers in RS ‘Elektroprivreda’ begin with warning protests – a strike against the selling; Dragan Mikerevic – I will investigate the privatisation of Privredna Bank Dobo; Disputes – ‘Gas Promet’ reduces gas delivery to Sarajevo
Blic	Bisic – the RS may stay without 1/3 of budget; IDs 14.5 KM, driving licenses 30 KM; A dead SBS’s member found; Power-supply workers request the state to be majority owner of the RS ‘Elektroprivreda’

Economic Affairs

**HR Ashdown on
VAT and
customs**

Avaz pg. 1 and 2 – yesterday's special conference by HR Ashdown where he announced that this week crucial events were to take place in the process of the VAT and single customs introduction. He recalled that February 19 was the final deadline for local politicians to agree on basic principles of single customs and VAT. Also announced his Deputy Donald Hays would be in Banja Luka on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. Ashdown said the message that Hays was going to convey to RS officials was that they can negotiate on a number of issues, but VAT and single customs at the state level were not negotiable. Emphasized the IC was joint in the efforts. Oslobodjenje pg 15 'The RS authorities are deciding on the future of BiH citizens' – also on yesterday's press conference. Quoting Ashdown that a decision made on the issue by the BiH authorities, especially RS officials, will determine the future and standards of BiH citizens. An insert entitled 'Criminals or citizens!?' – that only by introducing the VAT and single customs the local politicians can ensure more jobs for BiH citizens, more investments for the country and more money for budget users. Nezavisne Novine pg. 3 'VAT and customs at the state level', Glas Srpski, pg. 2 'Customs for blackmails' – Ashdown warned once again yesterday that local authorities have to reach an agreement by 19th February on the principles based on which the single customs administration and VAT at the state level would be established. Slobodna Dalmacija back page 'Ashdown – without VAT road to Europe will be blocked' – Ashdown at yesterday's press conference in Sarajevo saying that this is the crucial week to reach a political agreement on the introduction of customs and VAT at the state level. Blic pg. 7 'There will be no negotiations' – "If we don't get agreement now, we will not be able to put in place the structures necessary to introduce VAT by January 2005 – this week is make-or-break week for customs and VAT," said Ashdown.

Bisic on VAT and customs	<p>Blic pg. 7 'RS to stay without 2/3 of budget' – "If the High Representative imposes the single customs and VAT on BiH level, which means a single tax and customs administration, the RS will stay without 2/3 of its budget," Director of the RS Tax Administration, Milica Bisic, claims. "Our proposal on the introducing of the single customs and VAT is feasible and in line with the European standards. It's functional in the sense of the implementation, provides an increase of efficiency and preservation of revenues as a whole. However, each of our proposals have been rejected by the OHR with an explanation that something is not good, while, on the other side, what they have been calling for is very bad for both entities," Bisic thinks. She adds that one of important things is that such law should not be imposed, as it would be senseless. "The High Representative has the power, but the question is whether he has the authority, because the IC has the obligation toward the DPA," Bisic explains.</p>
Mikerevic on privatisation of Privredna Banka Doboj	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg.3 'Mikerevic promised he would investigate the privatisation of Privredna Bank Doboj' – RS Prime Minister, Dragan Mikerevic, stated he would check all circumstances that led to the privatisation of Privredna Bank in Doboj, which in full secrecy presented Nova Banjalucka Bank with elite business premises in the centre of town for only one Euro. Mikerevic said he would have more information on this case in the next few days.</p>

<p>Graphic Designers Union</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 1 and 9 – the BiH Graphic Designers Union sent a letter to CoM Chair, Adnan Terzic, with a repeated request to reduce the price of the new ID from the current 14,5 KM to reasonable five to six KM. Again, they indicated a number of irregularities in the project. The Union also recalled that Beriz Belkic, while he was still the Presidency member, requested the project to be revised by the BiH Assembly Commission for Finances and Budget, but was never realized. Belkic confirmed for Avaz that he indeed made such a request in the past, but unfortunately nothing was done about it. Amer Toskic, Union President, said they requested from Terzic to make concrete moves, otherwise they could expect general strike of the graphic designers who, according to Toskic, would probably be joined by other groups inside the BiH Union.</p>
<p>BiH Consumer Union</p>	<p>An insert with the above article ‘A call for a boycott’ – that the Union of BiH Consumers too had not yet received a reply to their request addressed to the CoM (to abolish the issuing of IDs and reduce the price). Mesud Lakota, Union President, said that unless there was no reply to their request by the end of the week they would appeal to all BiH citizens to boycott the project.</p>

HR Ashdown	<p>Avaz pg. 9 'This problem has to be solved by the local institutions' – a statement by HR Ashdown related to the CIPS project. "There are local institutions that have to resolve the problem. It's their job, not mine," said Ashdown. Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'CIPS is not my job' – "You are familiar with my principle – when we establish a local institutions in accordance with the European standards then we restrain from any involvements in its work. We let the institutions do the job, which BiH citizens will benefit from." Slobodna Dalmacija on back page also quoted Ashdown as saying he would not interfere in the project as it was not his job.</p>
Avaz survey	<p>Avaz pg. 3 conducted a survey on the support to the BiH Union of Graphic designers and their requests that the project be stopped and prices reduced. 91% gave their support, 1% did not and 8% abstained.</p>
Skrbic	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 1, 4 and 5 – an extensive article carrying a short interview with Director of the CIPS Directorate, Mirko Skrbic. Asked whether he would resign since his resignation has been requested, Skrbic said he thought there were no reasons for him to do so. He however added that he planned to withdraw at the beginning of the second project phase due to personal reasons.</p>

<p>SDU</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 5 'BiH is continuously being robbed, and in the second phase money is being taken from citizens' pockets' – a statement by Sejfidin Tokic, Acting President of the SDU Main Board. Once again he emphasized there were number of irregularities in the course of the project. "Everything is non-transparent and rather illogical. In three days the longest I will have concrete information on illegal activities about the CIPS and let citizens see for themselves what's being done to them."</p>
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<p>Political Affairs</p>

<p>SDA</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 2 ‘Halilovic Minister of Police, Brankovic of Traffic and Communication’ – on SDA candidates for the new Federation government. The article basically repeats the names of their new candidates (see weekend round-up under Political Affairs).</p> <p>The only news is carried in an insert entitled ‘Hadzihafizbegovic in a post of Advisor’ – saying that famous BiH actor, Emir Hadzihafizbegovic, informed the SDA Presidency that he was withdrawing from the race for the Minister of Science and Education in the Federation government, and instead accepted the post of the cultural Advisor offered to him by the new Federation PM Ahmet Hadzipasic. Oslobodjenje pg. 3 ‘Hadzihafizebgovic will not be a minister but advisor’ by – informs that Hadzihafizbegovic offered three reasons for withdrawing his candidacy. First being unsuccessful talks between the SDA and SBiH about the change of ministerial posts, second his obligations in the theatre and third one the acceptance of the advisory post at the Federation government.</p>
<p>Ivanic-Bond meeting</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 10 ‘US continuing their engagement in BiH’ – on yesterday’s meeting between BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic and US Ambassador in BiH Clifford Bond. The two discussed the current political situation and agreed that activities of the new authorities had to be directed towards fulfilling the requirements, which will get them closer to the EU.</p>

<p>‘Orao’ report</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 10 ‘Analysing every little detail’ – a short report saying that the OSCE, OHR and SFOR are still analysing the Orao report submitted by the RS government. Even though it has been a month since the report has been completed, reps at the mentioned IC organizations claim the document is very long and requires a careful study of every little thing.</p>
<p>Pope’s visit</p>	<p>Avaz pg. 8 ‘A phantom letter against Pope’s visit to Banja Luka’ by <u>A. Bajric</u>– the Zagreb Information Catholic Agency (ICA) informed yesterday that around 20 intellectuals who were expelled from the RS during the war were against Pope’s visit to Banja Luka. No names were listed, only said that the intellectuals were Bosniaks expelled from Banja Luka, Prijedor, Zvornik, Gacko, Visegrad and Trebinje. One of the most famous expelled intellectuals from Banja Luka, writer Irfan Horozovic, said he knew nothing about it. An insert ‘No information in Tihic’s Cabinet’ – a statement by Sulejman Tihic that they never heard of such initiative and that Tihic supported Pope’s visit to Banja Luka and BiH. Jutarnji List pg. 4 by <u>Z. T.</u> ‘Expelled Bosniak intellectuals against Pope’s visit to Banja Luka’ – Bosniak intellectuals are against the visit to ‘‘the capitol of the criminal-like, so-called Republika Srpska, as long as war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic walk freely in it’.</p>

<p>Covic on Pope's visit</p>	<p>Vecernji List pg. 1 and 2 – the Croat member of BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, stated that talks regarding a possible visit of the Pope, John Paul II, are nowadays more concrete and that the Pope's visit to Banja Luka depends foremost on Pope's health. "The only obstacle now is Holy Father's health. Everything else is in the phase of final discussions although there is not a formal and final decision," says Covic. Questioned to comment on claims that the Pope's visit to Banja Luka could be interpreted as indirect support to survival of the RS, Covic said the claims were pure speculations and that there would be always some people to comment about every event from different angles. "The Holy Father would be received by all three members of the Presidency and institutions of the State and, of course, by representatives of the local Church. Therefore, I do not see a need for such speculations although the event itself creates possible connotations," says Covic.</p>
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DL on Covic

Slavo Kukic signs an editorial in Dnevni List pg. 6 'Anatomy of master of manipulation' in which the author says that something odd is going on lately. Kukic refers to Dragan Mikerevic's appeal to Radovan Karadzic to surrender saying that "it is another trick based on the Belgrade's recipe which wants to cause a reaction that it is about the change of political philosophy. Even if it were like that it's worth noticing because it happens, literally, for the first time (...) The Banja Luka turnaround is, in my book, a product of collective 'brain' and not some prophet-like wisdom of an individual." Kukic applies similar definition to the Croat member of BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, who said the other day that 'BiH Croats clearly determined to solve their issues by themselves, through BiH institutions'. Accusing Covic of political metamorphosis from the times Covic was allegedly 'an ideologist of Yugoslav democratic synthesis', followed by the 'Croat synthesis' when Covic was Tudjman's man in Herzegovina until present days when Covic advocates, according to Kukic, 'the BiH synthesis'. "By opting for the new, BiH synthesis, he estimated he would lose support of majority of people who voted for him. But they do not matter at the moment. The next four years, four years on the state throne, have been secured. But he gets the IC's favor and the favor of domestic institutions of authority. And much depends on both of them," says Kukic.

<p>Forging passports</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 7 'Sarajevo factory of forged visas' and 'Two Bosnians arrested?' – yesterday Italian paper II Messaggero printed a one-page article that a factory of forged visas for entering Italy was situated in Sarajevo. State Prosecutor from Rome, Marcelo Monteleone, raised a lawsuit against two Italian consular officials from an embassy in Sarajevo and their three Bosnian partners who jointly issued forged visas for Italy. Between 13 of July 1999 and 14 of March 2001 696 Bosnians entered Italy via this web.</p>
<p>Oslobodjenje Commentary</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 2 Commentary by <u>Mirko Sagolj</u> 'Sovereignty' – on yesterday's statement (see Morning Media Brief of Round-Up) by Dragan Covic related to Ploce port. Sagolj thinks that Covic's question in terms of relations between BiH and Croatia was partial. According to Sagolj as much as it is important for Croatia to respect BiH's sovereignty, it is even more important for BiH Croats and HDZ to accept Sarajevo as their capital. Same goes for Belgrade and BiH Serbs, writes Sagolj.</p>

<p>SNSD on war crime issues</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 7 'SDA should suggest the arrest of Izetbegovic', Glas Srpski pg. 3 'SDA accuses and arrests' – the SNSD expressed its amazement over an SDA call to the RS authorities to arrest all war crimes indictees. The SNSD recalls that the SDA, together with the SDS and PDP, makes the ruling coalition in the RS, thus it would be more logical if it started its initiative through the RS institutions rather than media. According to the SNSD, when it comes to appeals to surrender to the ICTY, it would be politically correct if the SDA also called its Honorary President, Alija Izetbegovic to do so.</p>
<p>Bijeljina SDS</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 7 'Semberians do not want to give up ministerial post'- the SDS board in Bijeljina announced that it would not give up its request to get at least one ministerial post in the RS government.</p>
<p>RS Council of Peoples</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 7 '14 Croats proposed for the RS Council of Peoples'- the RS Council of Peoples will have 28 members, eight delegates from each constituent people and four from Others. Serbs and Bosniaks have not come out with their proposals and Croats composed a list of 14 people, which is to be forwarded to the BiH Election Commission for the verification.</p>

<p>Fiuljanin's lawyer filing charges</p>	<p>Vecernji List pg. 2 'S. Fiuljanin's lawyer files charges against SFOR' – Sabahudin Fiuljanin's lawyer, Osman Mulahalilovic, will request NATO to pay financial compensation because SFOR troops held his client in custody for 94 days. According to Mulahalilovic, he will first try to settle outside the court and if that does not work he will file charges with international courts, most probably either in Brussels or Washington. "Sabahudin was illegally detained, he was in slavery for 94 days, and that's against international conventions on human rights and somebody needs to compensate that," says Mulahalilovic not citing the amount he is to request from the NATO. The request will be defined in the next two weeks.</p>
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<p>Arizona market</p>	<p>Vecernji List pg. 10 'Ravne Association dissatisfied: one should travel to Strasbourg to get justice for Arizona' – 'Ravne' Association of landowners at the Arizona market says that it is necessary to have an urgent adjustment of the Brcko District legislative, executive and court practice with the European legislative standards, especially in a field of the protection of human rights and freedoms. The Law on Expropriation from 1987 is still being applied in the Brcko District, as well as the Law on Construction Land from 1986, although these regulations of the former social-economic and legislative system are opposite to the regulations of the BiH Constitution. As the Association claims, instead of conducting privatisation process by returning confiscated property to owners, the authority is imposing confiscation of private-owned property. It is obvious that there could be no independent and impartial court or fair trial if a judge or a court, which decides on destiny of the Brcko District citizens, is 'in a pocket' of local authorities, as the Association points out. The Association also announced they would bring charges at the European Court of Justice in Strasbourg.</p>
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**CoM on
refugee
strategy**

Blic pg. 3 'Support to the return of all refugees and DPs' – the CoM adopted unanimously on Monday a strategy for implementing Annex 7 of the Dayton Agreement, which is the first framework document about the return of refugees at the BiH level. "It will be necessary to secure 460 million Euro for implementing the strategy," Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Mirsad Kebo, has announced. "The EU has secured 20 per cent of the necessary funds. We expect 30 per cent from donors and we shall have to find the remaining 50 per cent, which might include a donor conference," Kebo told a press conference in Sarajevo, held after a session of the Council of Ministers. He added that the Dutch government had already allocated 20 million Euro. He recalled that the Management Board of the Peace Implementation Council supported the strategy at a meeting in Brussels last week. The strategy presupposes legal and organizational changes, so that obstacles can be removed, specifically in the areas of employment, education, health and pension insurance. Also, all levels of authority in BiH will be involved in the implementation. Slobodna Dalmacija last page '500 thousand DPs waiting to return' – "The document is very significant as our public has now been informed that the IC is not withdrawing from the process. It is also very significant that, both in Brussels and the CoM session, particular attention was paid to the sustainability of returns," Kebo stated. Also, in Dnevni List pg. 1 and 5 'State strategy on return adopted'.

Kotorsko

Avaz pg. 11 'Owners of Bosniak land in Kotorsko demanding 5 million KM in damages' – the daily informs that the Kotorsko case has been extending to new dimensions in the past few days. After 59 people submitted charges against Doboј municipality for the illegal re-possession of their land by Serb refugees (who built 126 houses on the same land), more charges are to be filled against the RS and another one against the Doboј municipality. This time for the exploitation of gravel. President of the Commission for Property-legal Affairs, Zijad Zecevic, said they would persist in the requests, which, according to him, were justified. He recalled that they organized protests in front of the OHR 29 times, visited OHR and warned Doboј authorities on time about illegal construction. "The situation is different today. Our judiciary is improving and we believe to soon have our properties back," said Zecevic.

VL editorial on Presidency	<p>Vecernji List pg. 4 by <u>Radoslav Dodig</u> ‘Group of expensive Excellencies’ – an editorial about the role and influence of BiH Presidency saying that ‘as the time goes on the role of the BiH Presidency weakens more. There have not been capable statesmen, striking personalities even less charismatic leaders’. With regards to the current composition of the Presidency, Dodig does not rate it and says it is weak and unnoticeable. Moreover, the author notes the members of the Presidency are labeled as ‘Excellency’ on the Presidency’s web page and says there’s more power in a drawer of a commissioner of the OHR than in all offices of the Presidency put together. “I am of an opinion that Sulejman Tihic, like his surname says (NB: tih means silent in Bosnian), is a silent and unnoticeable, Mirko Sarovic has problems in grasping Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state, whilst Dragan Covic has a mortgage on the participation in the suspicious deeds regarding Eronet ownership structure. All in all, alongside the almighty High Representative for BiH, the BiH Presidency is a parade and expensive institution for a state like Bosnia and Herzegovina,” says Dodig.</p>
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<p>FRY request denied</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 3, Avaz pg. 4 'Yugoslavia facing a trial for genocide and aggression on BiH' – reports that The Hague yesterday confirmed once again their jurisdiction in the BiH-FRY lawsuit. Avaz on the same page carries another article on the issue with reactions to the decision 'Serious politicians should not question Court's decisions' – Fon Van Bizen, Deputy BiH Agent at the Hague Court, said he was very happy with the decision. He said they were preparing for a presentation. Sulejman Tihic said that no other decision than the one made could have been expected. He also added that lawsuit was not aimed against the RS citizens, but a different state and that all BiH citizens will benefit from the lawsuit. Barisa Colak, Security Minister, said no serious politicians would allow a court verdict to determine his or hers political actions. Nezavisne Novine pg. 3 'FRY appeal rejected', Glas Srpski pg. 3 'The Court confirms its authority' – Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Mirko Sarovic, stated that even though such decision was expected, the Serb side had the same view on the case. 'Without the approval of one constituent people and one part of the Dayton BiH we will not accept BiH charges against FRY, no matter how the Yugoslav side is to proceed and regardless of the outcome of this law suit.' Vecernje Novosti pg. 4 'Yugoslavia's appeal rejected' – ten judges voted in favour of rejecting the Yugoslav demand, while three judges voted in favour of FRY appeal, including an 'ad hoc' judge from FRY, Vojin Dimitrijevic. Nacional pg. 9 'FRY is not sued by the whole BiH' – also reported Sarovic's statement. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 3 – reports that the International Court of Justice (IJC) declared itself competent for BiH lawsuit against FRY for violation of convention on genocide "thus ruling out an attempt by Belgrade to contest the jurisdiction of that body to examine FRY's responsibility". Vjesnik pg. 2 'Court of Justice declared itself competent for BiH lawsuit against FRY. The news also reported in some of the international media – New York Times, BBC and Associated Press.</p>
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Avaz Commentary	Avaz pg. 3 Comment of the Day by <u>Sead Numanovic</u> 'The victory of justice' – on the latest decision by The Hague Court to deny FRY's appeal. Numanovic thinks this is one of the legal victories for our country on the road of 'proving the obvious'. He however points out that what's stronger than the verdict itself is the truth that the aggression was carried out against BiH.
FRY compensation	Vecernji List pg. 3 by <u>Zdenko Jurilj</u> 'Compensation from Yugoslavia a \$100 billion'- about the possibility of FRY compensating BiH on account of war damages, and saying that BiH does not need big teams of lawyers or lengthy litigation to prove that Yugoslav military conducted an aggression against BiH. VL says that BiH owes the good position it is currently in to the ICTY Prosecution which will prove through trials against Slobodan Milosevic that Yugoslavia was an aggressor on BiH. "The indictment has been set up in such a way that Slobodan Milosevic and the rest will be easily shown that they had a clear vision of occupation of BiH and Croatia, during the times he (Milosevic) took over the CK of Serbia (NB: Serb communist party Main Board). Things are clear and it does not require a years long process on basis of which Serbia and Monte Negro will have to pay war damages and reparation to BiH," said Faruk Balijagic, that VL describes as 'the most controversial BiH lawyer. Unlike Balijagic, reads VL, Jadranko Prlic believes the damages will not be paid because of the difficult economic situation in FRY.
SDS	Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'Unfounded statements that we help Karadzic' – a statement by SDS Spokesperson Dusan Stojicic. He said that claims by certain IC reps the SDS was helping Karadzic's web support were unfounded. "The SDS does not have the budget, service or any other means and instruments to deal with such issues," said Stojicic.

Judicial Affairs

**Election of
BiH judge
for
Strasbourg**

Avaz pg. 2 'The CoM did not stop the nomination procedure for BiH judge in Strasbourg' by A. Bajric– a statement by Lidija Topic, Deputy BiH Foreign Minister, that the Ministry would forward to the Presidency information on the nomination procedure for BiH judges at the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg. According to Topic, additional consultations will be carried out with the Presidency members. According to the article, the Presidency requested the stopping of the nomination procedure explaining that constitutional authorities of the CoM were breached. The nomination of BiH reps in international organization is under the jurisdiction of the BiH Presidency.

Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 6 by V. Zivak– reading that no one is quite clear as to why the Presidency members tried to take over the jurisdiction in the matter. The speculations are that nominated Pajic and Zilic are not suitable in the eyes of the Presidency members, and apparently they only agree on Miovic's nomination.