

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 6/8/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18:00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19:00 hrs)	FED TV (19:30 hrs)	RT RS (19:30 hrs)
Elektroprivreda BiH	Elektroprivreda	Contract with 'Debis'	BL Clinical Centre
Ashdown in Mostar	BL Clinical Centre	Ombudsmen on boards	Mikerevic statement
Croatian national holiday	5c Corridor	Car explosion in SA	Excise goods
Weather	Explosion in Jakarta		Portugal in fire

Oslobodjenje	Electricity 13% more expensive for 'Debis'; HR visited Mostar – new statute by the end of the year; After HR's letter – Hadzipasic agreed to review removals of the steering boards; Potocari Memorial – capital comes with Bill Clinton
Dnevni Avaz	What Lozancic and Tihic object Ashdown; Ingram – I don't know details of Bosmal's offer
Dnevni List	Warning to anti-reform forces in Mostar; Electricity for Aluminij goes up for 13%; Vlado Maric – first construction works on power plant Mostarsko Blato in October
Vecernji List	New explosion forces Croats from BiH; Electricity for Aluminij goes up for 13%
Slobodna Dalmacija	'Storm' of jobs is ahead of us; Dino Radja revealed another 16 million Kunas of debt
Glas Srpski	Why isn't the Human Rights Chamber decision on payment of pensions respected – no one wants pensioners

Nezavisne Novine	Protest in Banjaluka – health workers addressed a message to the government: pack your suitcases and leave; Agreement between Telekom and ‘Siemens’ – Vracar: Dokic insisted on contract with ‘Siemens’; Gradiska – border crossing officers stabbed in shoulder
Blic	Robert Beecroft – there will be job for all teachers- returnees

Economic Affairs

**Vrankic on
Aluminij**

CRHB at 18:00 hrs by Milan Vego – an interview with Deputy FBiH Prime Minister and FBiH Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, on negotiations between the Elektroprivreda BiH, 'Debis', government representatives and 'Aluminij'. The interview was conducted before companies reached an agreement.

Vrankic reminded that the contract between the Elektroprivreda and Debis was signed in 2001, and that at the time agreed prices were acceptable for Elektroprivreda. "However, the price is not as suitable due to the currency exchange differences that took place, and the Elektroprivreda BiH supplies 'Debis', that is 'Aluminij', at the somewhat lower price from the one on the market.

But, that is not the reason for the Elektroprivreda BiH to take an ultimate stand towards 'Debis' and I think that in business relations between those companies there should have been more fair approach... There will be no termination of the contract for a simple reason that the 'Aluminij' was very fair, I will say too fair, as it accepted the increase in the prices, and it actually proposed that increase to be accepted," stated Vrankic. adding that the entire issue should not have been politicized. Answering the question on whether this entire situation was a political game, Vrankic said the following. "In any case, it can be said that in the case of 'Aluminij', which has its reputation, many take an unfair approach towards it... In this case, I cannot say that... During a discussion yesterday, I have to say that some things worry me when it comes to Aluminij and we don't have certain criteria in regard to the company such as 'Aluminij', our biggest export company. I will repeat once more that if it was not for the 'Aluminij's' contribution in foreign trade balance, our macro-economy and measure we take would look very differently, negative for this country."

Opposition on Telecom Srpske affair	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 4 'Opposition will demand that affairs at Telecom Srpske are investigated' – the Republika Srpska opposition will demand from the Republika Srpska National Assembly to form a Board that will investigate the disputable agreement between the former Republika Srpska premier, Mladen Ivanic, and Telecom Director, Zeljko Jungic, with EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development). The leading opposition leaders (Milorad Dodik, Slobodan Popovic, Mirko Blagojevic, Mirko Banjac) share this view. According to an NN inset, Branko Dokic, BiH Minister of Traffic and Communication, stated that the agreement between the Telecom Srpske and EBRD did not violate the Law. He added that it was unnecessary to accuse Mladen Ivanic of that contract. "If somebody is to be blamed for that contract, that should be Dokic, not Ivanic."</p>
A letter to Ashdown	<p>Vecernji List pg. 4 'Savers write Ashdown about old foreign currency savings' – following recent articles about the issue of old foreign currency savings, according to which there are rumours the BiH institution will, under the IMF pressure, write off the savings, a group of people from Ljubuski wrote High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, saying the HR Ashdown 'gave human rights to state groups and banks because they do not have to give (return) savings to the citizenry and salaries to those who work'. "Stop killing us, give us back our savings," concludes the letter.</p>

<p>Ashdown in Mostar</p>	<p>CRHB at 18:00 hrs by <u>Ana Babic</u> – after the Commission for Mostar City Statute failed to agree on a draft Statute, High Representative Paddy Ashdown on Tuesday talked to Commission members, Major and Deputy Major of Mostar. During his visit to Mostar, Ashdown visited the construction site of Old Bridge and on that occasion explained the reasons behind his visit. “I am here to hear the views of the people of Mostar and the Commission, and I will then go away over the summer holidays and reflect on what should happen next to correct the missed opportunity to give this city a City Council, the kind of administration that will serve the citizens well.” The OHR also stated that the failure of the Commission to agree on the draft Statute must not be used to cease the process of solving issues in the city. BHTV at 19:00 hrs by <u>Angela Cvitanovic</u> – Ashdown also presented to the Mostar authorities the new PDHR Werner Wnendt, who will be in charge of supervising the compilation of the Statute. The Agency will continue its work in September. FTV at 19:30 hrs by <u>Ivan Pavkovic</u> – a member of the Commission, Bakir Krpo, said that more work was to be performed in the next weeks, while Josip Merdzo said that eight basic principles, set out by the High Representative, had to be respected as foundations for the new Statute. Ashdown had a separate meeting with Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the OHR explained that there were different messages for each of them. RTRS at 19:30 hrs – after visiting Mostar on Tuesday High Representative Paddy Ashdown did not want to comment on future actions regarding the political crisis that occurred after the Commission for Mostar City Statute failed to agree on the Statute. Ashdown said that he would present his decisions in a few weeks during his next visit to Mostar. Vecernji List pg. 3 ‘New deadline for making of Statute of Mostar extended by end August’ – members of the Commission that had left the work of it, namely Damir Sadovic, Edin Music and Radmilo Braca Andric met with HR Ashdown yesterday and that SDHR Wnendt will, in the next three weeks, go again through all disputable issues of the Interim Statute. Furthermore, VL says the end August should see a compromise solution (i.e. a joint proposal of statute otherwise the HR will ‘pass another verdict’ at the end of the summer). It is also worth to note that VL reports that Sadovic, during his meeting with Ashdown, directly opposed that Mostar became a single unit of local self-government and that HR Ashdown ‘unexpectedly’ held talks with Speaker of the Canton 7 Assembly, Omer Cevra, and Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Mostar, Hamdija Jahic and Ljubo Beslic respectively. Dnevni List pg. 1, 4 and 5 – the daily unofficially learns that during a meeting with members of the Mostar Commission, the HR Ashdown often interrupted members of the Commission from the line of Bosniak people ‘letting them know that he was not that much interested in their justification for the failed attempt to make Mostar a unified city’. DL also unofficially learns that HR Ashdown had different messages for Mayor and Deputy Mayor Jahic and Beslic, and that HR Ashdown was dissatisfied with the work of the Mayor ‘who was, according to the OHR, the main man in Mostar when it came to obstruction’. Under a title ‘Jahic: Fundamental principles of High Representative will be observed’ pg. 3, DL says Mayor Jahic angrily left the City Administration not wanting to give a statement to the press, only to return ‘probably realizing what consequences the lack of cooperation with journalists it could have caused’.</p> <p>“The talks discussed the status, in other words the making of a Statute of the City of Mostar. I have been informed during the talks with the HR that the work on the statute will continue, but not through the Commission or in the way it has been done so far. The fundamental principles of the HR will be generally observed and all proposals will be equally treated,” said Mayor Jahic. The visit is also covered in Slobodna Dalmacija pg. 15 ‘I am open to all proposals’. Also carried in the Sarajevo papers – Avaz pg. 3 ‘The negotiations on the new Statute to be continued in September’ and Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 7. Nezavisne Novine pg. 6 ‘Paddy Ashdown in Mostar over city statute’</p>
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<p>Cipra and Racic on Mostar Statute</p>	<p>CRHB at 18:00 hrs – Members of the Commission for Mostar City Statute, Erna Cipra and Dusan Racic, on Tuesday issued a press release that reads that due to tendentious reports by some media they were forced to explain their attitudes in regard to the draft Mostar Statute. Cipra and Racic said it was unfair of the other Commission members to be silent. “It is true that we stressed that by signing the Statute we agreed on what the Commission accepted while it worked in its full capacity, that is in the presence of Bosniak representatives, and that we were of an opinion that the city should be organized as a unit of the local self-rule with three electoral units, which was proposed by returnees from all three peoples.” Avaz pg. 3 ‘We are for the city with three election units’ – carried their statement.</p>
<p>BHTV on 5c corridor</p>	<p>BHTV at 19:00 hrs by <u>Gvozden Sarac</u> – the 5c corridor, marked as the ‘investment of the future’, has been often lately considered as an exchange good between the BiH and countries in the region. Besides recent statements by some BiH officials on the 5c corridor being related to the Ploce harbour agreement, BHTV sources have discovered new interests related to the construction of the corridor. The unofficial information says that the Serbian and Montenegro authorities have offered BiH free construction of 100 km of the corridor in exchange for BiH dropping the lawsuit against this country before the ICTY. At this moment, there are no indications that the BiH authorities will give up the lawsuit. The only possibility is Serbian and Montenegro recognition of the guilt, in which case the BiH authorities will be prepared to discuss the amount and type of war reparations. BiH Agent before the ICTY, Sakib Softic, stated that no official proposals had been submitted yet, however, he was pleased with the fact that countries in the region were starting to feel remorse for what had happened in BiH between 1992 and 1995. ICG Political Analyst in BiH, Senad Slatina, does not believe that any BiH politician would agree to such agreements, since it would equal political suicide. “The construction of the 5c corridor is a huge economical project that BiH needs to carry out using the economical instruments and financial deals, and not in any case use it for political or court compensations,” said Slatina. The Serbia and Montenegro embassy in BiH has no information on the matter.</p>

Hadzipasic and ombudsmen on steering boards	<p>BHTV at 19:00 hrs – Regarding the Federation government’s decision on replacements in the public companies steering boards, FBiH Prime Minister, Ahmet Hadzipasic, stated the following. “The decision will not become valid until published in the FBiH Official Gazette, according to the law regulations.” Until then, the existing administration boards will continue their work. Federation government is going to reconsider with ombudsman the recent decision on dismissal and appointment of the steering boards in public companies. Ombudsmen are suspicious that the Federation government breached the Law on Appointments, but ombudsmen still have not received documentation to give their final opinion. Ombudsman for Federation, Branka Raguz, made the following comment. “Since there has not been an open selection of candidates then Article 3 may be violated. The authorities have to understand they should select competent, not only loyal persons.” In a press statement, Prime Minister Hadzipasic said the decision on appointments was still not legally valid since it had not been published in the Official Gazette and additional consultations with ombudsmen are to be made during next days. Oslobodjenje pg. 1 and 3 – Hadzipasic told the daily that the newly appointed boards have not started working yet, as the decision on their appointment has not been announced in the Official Gazette. Added it was the best to review the legality of the decisions and then act accordingly. The daily also carried an insert with a PR from the SDA where they express their support to the decision made by the Federation govt. Avaz pg. 2 ‘Ombudsmen support the OHR position’ – Federation Ombudsmen Jovanovic, Raguz and Muhibic started an investigation on dismissals and appointments in steering boards of the Federation public companies. Vecernji List pg. 2 ‘Decision that violates law’ – “Depending on the interpretation by the Ombudsman, the Decision will be published or the Government will annul it,” said PM Hadzipasic. Dnevni List pg. 1 and 3 – Raguz saying that she is expecting the FBiH government to reply to ombudsmen’s requests either today or tomorrow, within the set deadlines, otherwise the ombudsmen will go public with the information that the FBiH government did not respect the legal procedure. The daily also carries OHR Spokesman, Kevin Sullivan as saying that this is a matter for the Office of Ombudsmen to come up with an official opinion on the FBiH government’s decision. Dnevni List pg. 3 ‘‘The SDA supports FBiH government’s decision on the appointment of steering boards’ – SDA PR.</p>
Sharp reactions to decision on steering boards	<p>Avaz pg. 1 and 2 – the biggest front-page story carrying statements by a member of the BiH Presidency, Sulejman Tihic, and Federation President Niko Loncagic. They both support a decision by the Federation government on the dismissals and appointing of the new steering boards. The SDA, said Tihic, thinks there are legal grounds for the government’s decision, as many companies dealt with losses and revisions and inspections should business irregularities in those firms. As for Ashdown’s decision, Tihic said he cancelled government’s decision, therefore he found it worrying and immature that the HR made decisions based on media reports instead of documents on appointments that the Fed government could have forwarded to him. Lozancic said he regrets the HR did not send the letter on the steering boards, which was given to the media, to the government President too. He said he personally believed the FBiH government took care of legal aspects in the process of making the decision. “If they are denied via legal procedures and not media headlines then I will respect it,” said Loncagic.</p>
Circle 99 writes to Ashdown	<p>FTV at 19:30 hrs – the Club 99 intellectual circles sent an open letter with four questions to the High Representative. Ashdown was asked if he opted for the division of BiH, why was he supporting aspirations for the separations as in Mostar, what happened to ‘Jobs and Justice’ project, and if he was ready to talk to other political options but nationalistic ones. Nezavisne Novine pg. 2 ‘Concern for BiH perspective’. Oslobodjenje pg. 6 ‘Your alliance with national parties leads to division of BiH’ – “Very concerned with a very bad rule of the national parties, in alliance with You, and the increase of not only social poverty, but social one too of the most BiH population, we demand an answer to the question whether you are in favour of political and territorial division of BiH,” reads the letter and continues with posing three more questions for the HR.</p>

RS War Inmates write to Ashdown	<p>RTRS at 19:30 hrs – The RS Association of War Inmates sent a request to HR Paddy Ashdown to use his authority to help them in organizing the placing of a commemorative plaque in the former military barracks ‘Viktor Bubanj’ in Sarajevo. The barracks have been used in the previous war as a Muslim war camp for Serbs. Blic pg. 6 ‘Inmates write to OHR’ – reported on the letter. Nezavisne Novine pg. 2 ‘Assistance sought for the placement of a commemorative plaque at the former military barracks of Viktor Bubanj’, Glas Srpske pg. 2 ‘A long list of casemates’ – According to Association database, over 1760 Serbs were captured at the camp of Viktor Bubanj during the war. Also, 47 inmates lost their lives in this camp. The Association stressed that over 126 camps, where Bosniaks detained Serb civilians, existed in ‘multiethnic Sarajevo’.</p>
DL editorial on HR’s decision related to steering boards	<p>Dnevni List pg. 2 by <u>Zvonimir Jukic</u> ‘Encouragement again’ (the author was playing with words in the title; encouragement is ‘ohrabrenje’ in the local languages and implying to the OHR the author wrote OHRabreneje in the title) – the author is welcoming the decision passed by High Representative Paddy Ashdown on the suspension of illegal appointments in steering boards of public companies. The editorial says that this HR’s decision will spoil the plans of national oligarchies, which wanted to take over an absolute power in the country and legalize robberies of public companies carried out in the first half of the nineties. “In this way the HR has shown that he does not care about his position exclusively, as it was ascribed to him, but that he is aware of the need to preserve democratic relations in BiH.” According to the editorial, this decision can be interpreted in a way that the HR offered his hand to the opposition, which should send positive signals towards the OHR and Ashdown in order to change gradually the OHR’s policy towards the ruling ones. The editorial also says that the FBiH government, with the support of the OHR, has to change the incapable management of the companies, however, the management of the companies that work successfully should be supported.</p>
NN editorial	<p>Nezavisne Novine by <u>Josip Blazevic</u> ‘A firm hand’ – according to the author, the recent example of a failure of local politicians to reach an agreement on the re-organisation of Mostar clearly shows that it is still too early to raise an issue concerning the eventual re-definition of the role of the international community in BiH, mainly the OHR. He is of the opinion that owing to obvious incapability of local politicians to reach any agreement on many issues, including status of Mostar, the presence of the IC in BiH is still extremely necessary. He also stresses that if the authority of the HR were to be abolished, the interest of citizens would not be the local authorities’ priority.</p>
Racan	<p>Avaz pg. 2 ‘Ploce port and 5c corridor are not burdening relations between Croatia and BiH’ – in a statement for Dnevni Avaz, Croatian PM Ivica Racan said the issues of the Ploce port and 5c corridor were not burdening the relations between the BiH and Croatia. The general impression is, writes the daily, that the Croatian government established better or at least more intensive cooperation with the new authorities from so-called national parties rather than with former Alliance authorities. Racan refused to compare the two and said that responsible people in both states are obligated to cooperate independently of their political beliefs.</p>

Property Affairs

<p>Implementation of property laws</p>	<p>BHTV at 19:00 hrs by <u>Lejla Redzovic</u> – representatives of international organizations discussed with members of the Sarajevo Canton government the property laws implementation. This is the first in the entire round of meetings that will be held in almost every city in the country. Chief of the OSCE Mission in BiH, Robert Beecroft, emphasized the importance of the property laws implementation, and of providing the new financial assistance for its realization. One of the important issues to be solved is providing the alternative accommodation. The final deadline for the property laws implementation is January 1st 2004. According to cantonal Minister for Housing Issues, Samir Silajdzic, there are only 167 property cases to be solved in the Sarajevo Canton.</p> <p>FTV at 19:30 hrs by <u>Dzenana Zolton</u> – the Sarajevo Canton authorities and international organizations discussed return process in Sarajevo Canton. It was said that property claims were solved with 99,5%. The Sarajevo Canton intends to use apartments without claims for the accommodation of vulnerable groups, which normally are not eligible for an alternative accommodation. Minister Silajdžić informed there were 880 apartments for these groups and international organizations should recognize the gravity of the problem. It seems though that the IC opposes such ideas and Beecroft said the following. "There has been enough misuses of abandoned apartments and Sarajevo as a capital should be example for others". End of December 2003 is set as a deadline for resolving all property claims.</p>
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Potocari Memorial Center

Reactions to Clinton's arrival

Oslobodjenje pg 1, 4 and 5 – OHR Spokesperson stated that a decision to invite former US President Bill Clinton to open the Potocari Memorial was made upon a request by members of the four members of the Advisory Working Group, which was cooperating with the Foundation for the Construction of the Memorial Centre. Those four members are Sadik Selimovic, Hasan Nuhanovic, Abdurahman Malkic (Srebrenica Municipality Head) and Husein ef. Kavazovic (Tuzla mufti). The fifth member of the Advisory group, Ibran Mustafic, labelled the decision as scandalous. Malkic said he hoped all shortcomings related to Srebrenica would be corrected by activities that would follow the opening of the Centre, primarily the attracting of the US capital and better access to the US financial funds. Fadila Memisevic, President of the Association for Endangered Peoples, said that they were surprised by the news since the UN and US viewed the worst crime after the WWII as a weather change and not as a horrible war and genocide. Beriz Belkic said he was angered by Mustafic's statement and that he, as a man and a member of the Foundation, was insulted by the statement (Mustafic said the Centre was in the hands of accomplice and those who participated in genocide). Nura Begovic, secretary of the Women of Srebrenica Association, said they did not care who would open the Memorial, but cared more about finances for maintaining the memorial. Added they though Mustafic obstructed the work of all Srebrenica associations and that he was against the construction of the Memorial. Therefore they would start activities towards proclaiming him persona non grata in Srebrenica.

Oslobodjenje commentary	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 2 'Clinton' by <u>Daniel Omeragic</u> – the author opens up by saying that BiH cannot do without scandals, the latest one being the decision that the Potocari Memorial Centre be opened by Bill Clinton. He goes on to say that the US Administration, at the time Clinton was heading it, could have done much more to prevent slaughter of Bosniaks and stop the bloody war. Also adds as indisputable that the suffering of the BiH citizens would continue to this day unless the US president at the time and his associates – Holbrooke, Albright and Voren Christopher – had not decided to finally stop the crimes. "It is certain that in this country and worldwide there are people more deserved than the former US president to open the Memorial Center Srebrenica-Potocari. However, including Clinton with Karadzic and Mladic, which was done by Mustafic, is a shame for BiH."</p>
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Media Affairs

<p>PDP critical of NN reports</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 8 'Court verdict will represent an end of your journalism', Glas Srpske pg. 2 'False information between the lines' – the PDP Information Service yesterday addressed a letter to Editor-in-Chief of Nezavisne Novine severely criticising NN reports regarding a contract between the Telecom Srpske and EBRD. It accused the editor of having deliberately omitted some bits and pieces from the document so that readers could get the false picture. The PDP letter also criticised NN reports that are in support of Milorad Dodik, 'NN house pet' and accuse the PDP of every affair in the Republika Srpska. The letter also stresses that some responses to issues raised in the letter will be read in the court verdict. According to an NN inset, which is actually a response by Dragan Jerinic, the NN has just launched this campaign, related to Telecom Srpske. The question Jerinic raises is why the Telecom Srpske affair hurts the PDP so much! According to him, the response will be clear after the international audit report on Telecom is publicised. Avaz pg. 4 'The PDP will prosecute Nezavisne Novine'.</p>
<p>SNSD supports NN journalism</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine pg. 8 'We hope you will not succumb to pressures' – the SNSD Secretariat for Public Affairs addressed a letter of support Nezavisne Novine in its effort to disclose criminal activities of Mladen Ivanic and his former Cabinet.</p>