OHR BiH TV News Summary, 17 March 1998

BiH TV brought excerpts from tomorrow's BiH President Izetbegovic's interview to "Dnevni Avaz" – Asked if he was surprised with the arbitration decision over Brcko, Izetbegovic answered: "Frankly, I am not surprised. When it comes to the world and the IC, if you like, I stopped wondering to anything long ago. Commenting the claims by journalists that Dodik drawn far more attention than the Bosniak delegation, Izetbegovic said: "This latter is a true one, but it does not have much to do with the arbitration decision. Truth is that Dodik was quite noticed, but for another reason; finally, after seven years, a normal Serb appeared on the BiH political scene. The people went to see this wonder as a rare natural appearance. Of course, there are plenty normal Serbs among common people, but in politics they are very rare. Izetbegovic also commented on the question how this is a political decision, saying: "Well, the pre-elections campaign is proceeding. Europe and the US wish to firm Dodik's position. Decision over Brcko, as it is, is a clear message to Serbs not to vote for the Pale regime in September, but to vote for Dodik. For now, we are paying the price."
5:00

Alternative Council of Ministers held a press conference with Brcko decision as their main subject. Alternative CoM said that the decision was not surprising, but first reactions of the Federation President Ganic and CoM Co-chairman Ganic were like they suffered a real shock. It was also said that it could not be expected that in a moment of democratization process beginning in the RS, the IC would possibly put this issue under a question.
2:30

BiH Mediator, Schwartz-Schilling held a press conference commenting on refugee return. Schwartz-Schilling said that the decision over Brcko is in function of refugee return. Schwartz-Schilling also said that he is ensured the IC will do anything to realize refugee return, but that local authorities are not taking it seriously. Schwartz-Schilling added he was shocked that HDZ authorities in Orasje risked a loss of an important rehabilitation program, only to keep their Canton symbols that symbolize division.
2:00

German Special Envoy for refugees, Schlee made a promotion of the rehabilitation program for Breza municipality, for the amount of 2.9 million ECU, provided by the EU, and being realized by German SFOR and Equilibrium. The project should enable about 180 apartments for living, and secure about 100-150 families with building material.
2:00

BiH President Izetbegovic received Schlee's visit, discussing exclusively the refugee return. Presidency Member Zubak received a visit of the HR Westendorp, discussing the matters of reconciliation progress in BiH, as well as OHR standpoint regarding the constitution of all three nations in BiH. Forthcoming elections were also discussed as well as the joint residence of the institutions, return of Croats to Bosanski Brod and resolving the matters of Mostar traffic communications. CoM Co-chairman Silajdzic received the World Bank Director in BiH, Portmann, and O'sullivan, the WB director in Sarajevo, discussing the matters of privatization.
2:00

BiH Ambassador in Turkey and Georgian Embassy Charge d'affaires signed the protocol on establishment of diplomatic relations between two countries.
1:30

European Parliament Committee for Political Affairs held a

session in Paris. BiH delegation was also present, led by Federation Prime Minister Bicakcic, and one of the subjects was opening of the procedure for BiH entry to the European Council.
1:30

Newly named HR deputy for Human Rights, Hicks praised the decision of the Federation Parliament to adopt the Law on Abolishing the Law on Abandoned Apartments. Hicks said this decision is essential for DPA Annex 7 implementation. Hick said that this law and the two other property laws ensure the legal framework for refugee return to their pre-war houses.
1:30

Federal Parliament Commission for Investigating Improper Usage of Donations held a press conference. The Commission also stated those whose cooperation is under Commission's objections. It was said that the RBiH Federal Reserves Directorate did not fulfill its obligations. Sector for International Finances of Ministry of Finances did not submitted their report, while the Banking Agency did not answer the essential matters. The report of Federal Ministry of Health is not complete, as well as the report of FA Ministry. The Commission clearly stated that none of these cases means the money was misused. Only one name was mentioned – Hasan Muratovic's, but instead answering Commission's demands, he sent his instructions for behavior, suggested the Commission what to do next, and finally, what to publish regarding the Commission work.
2:30

OHR spokesman Haselock said that HR Westendorp used his authority to re-open the Mostar airport. Westendorp sent a letter to the Mostar Mayor Orucevic and Vice-Mayor Prskalo, in which he informs them on temporary solution of opening the airport for civilian traffic.
1:00

The first exhumations in Mostar area commenced today on the Balinovac locality. 31 unidentified persons were exhumed yesterday and today, as said by the President of the State Commission for Missing Persons, Masovic. The exhumation will continue tomorrow, because it was assessed that there are 15 more bodies in this location. HR deputy, Klein was also supposed to visit this location, but it was cancelled because of weather conditions.
1:00