

THOUSANDS OF WORKERS PROTEST IN SARAJEVO

"We Hit the Rock Bottom"

The protest walk of Bosnian independent trade unions in Sarajevo, with heavy police protection, ended without incidents. Several thousands workers gathered in the capital to demand their rights, despite the rain

President of the umbrella trade union organization, Ismet Bajramovic, said the demands they addressed to the authorities remain the same.

"Any protest, this one included, should generate pressure on the authorities. We demand rights for workers," said Bajramovic.

Concretely, workers demanded stronger fight against corruption, better work conditions, and measures to tackle black labor market.

Miners from the central Bosnian coal mine Breza arrived to Sarajevo to protest against the bad situation in their industry. Their union president, Atif Smajic, said that workers should have protested earlier, and hopes that the Thursday's protest will yield concrete results.

"I hope that this rally will produce more influence than those before. The situation of miners is tough and I hope the time comes when we won't be sinking any further," Smajic said.

Esma Radzovic, a teacher from Visoko in central Bosnia, also joined the protest. "A lot of people came, I hope the govern-



Government officials ignored the protest
ment will finally see the real position of workers. I, as an education practitioner, should have all the conditions I need and serve as a role model for my students,

and I can't afford that. We hit the rock bottom," Radzovic said.

Although the protesters walked to the BiH parliament, the Federation's government and the BiH presidency building, not a single government official addressed them.

Stanisic and Simatovic Walk Free

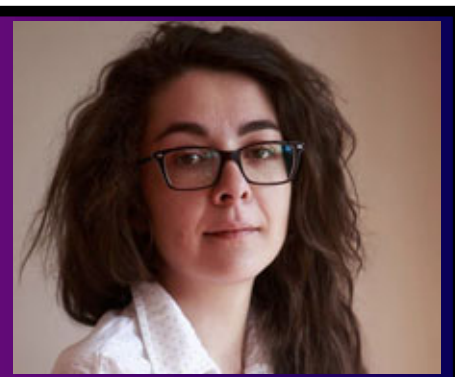
ICTY acquitted former top officials of Serbia's state security service for war crimes in Bosnia and Croatia. Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic, accused of crimes against humanity, murders, deportations and other inhumane acts, were released by the court order. According to the indictment, Stanisic and Simatovic managed funding, training, logistical support and other types of help and support to special units of the Republic of Serbia's state security service and other Serb forces involved in crimes in Croatia and Bosnia.



Nina Suomalainen, OSCE: Some positive steps have been taken in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Decade for Roma Inclusion, but greater action is needed



Andy McGuffie, EU delegation: Bosnia and Herzegovina is constitutionally a complex country - that is well known. But aside from that there is no reason why faster progress has not been made



Vesna Malenica, Populari think tank: It seems like when it comes to the state institutions, everyone wants to be in charge of something, but no one wants to be responsible for anything

OSCE Project Presents Regional Report on Anti-Discrimination of Roma

The OSCE/ODIHR Best Practices for Roma Integration project released a resource containing good practices compiled from the Western Balkans to help eliminate discrimination against members of Roma communities and to promote increased participation of Roma in local decision-making at a meeting held from 28 to 30 May in Sarajevo

Some 100 representatives of municipal authorities and NGOs in the Western Balkans, many of whom are members of a regional working group of local self-government bodies established in September 2012 with support from the BPRI project, gathered for the launch of the Regional Report on Anti-Discrimination and Participation of Roma in Local Decision-making" and to share further information about the practices. "There is a long way to go in addressing Roma human rights violations and raise the living standards of Roma," said Nina Suomalainen, Acting Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Roma unemployment rates in Bosnia and

Herzegovina remain at around 98 per cent, a significant number of children still do not attend school, up to 20 per cent are without running water and electricity, and political representation and participation remain at very low levels. Some positive steps have been taken in Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Decade for Roma Inclusion, but greater action is needed."

Judith Kiers, the BPRI Project Manager, said the examples of good practice provided in the report should inspire more action for the inclusion of the Roma throughout the Western Balkans: "With this report, we are not only supporting the exchange of experience, through the mechanisms such as the

Self-Governance Working Group, but also striving to raise awareness about the Roma issues in general."

The members of the working group also had the opportunity to better acquaint themselves with the Good Practice Protocol that was published together with the report, and is aimed at providing guidance to municipalities in increasing inclusion and co-operation in their work with Roma communities.

BPRI is a regional project funded by the European Union, supported by OSCE participating States and implemented by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

European Commission Cancels Interim Sub-Committee Meeting

The 5th Interim Sub-committee meeting on Innovation, Information Society, Social Policy and Public Health, scheduled for 4 June in Sarajevo, has been cancelled by the European Commission, due to the inability of the BiH authorities to reach a common position on the topics to be discussed. A structure of Committees and Sub-committees has been established under the Stabilization and Association/Interim Agreement as joint EU-BiH bodies. These are fora for policy dialogue between the EU institutions and the authorities to review the country's progress regarding approximation, implementation and enforcement of legislation in relevant areas.

They also serve as fora for further clarification of the EU law, and review the progress made by BiH in conforming to the EU law in line with the commitments made in the Interim Agreement. The European Commission provides advice, recommendations and technical support to BiH authorities in pursuing necessary reforms. This is the fifth year of the work of such joint structures under the Interim Agreement, because the Stabilization and Association Agreement could not enter into force yet. This structure is an important tool for the BiH authorities to achieve progress in the EU Integration process.

The latest cycle of the sub-committee meet-

ings has been marked by the inability by BiH participants to present a clear position on the transposition of the EU legislation and their sectorial policies. Unfortunately, these are reforms in areas which have a significant impact on citizens' everyday life. As an example, due to this cancellation, issues such as better education, improving health policies, achieving a more targeted social policy, stronger innovation, a real information society and better quality media, could not be discussed. We regret that BiH has lost the opportunity to benefit from this meeting, which is primarily in the interest of its citizens.

Dodik, Italian Ambassador Discuss Bosnia's Political Progress

Republika Srpska President Milorad Dodik and Italian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Raimondo De Cardona agreed in Banja Luka that Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks political progress, especially when it comes to the implementation of the European Court of Human Rights' ruling in the case of Sejdic-Finci vs. BiH and the state property issues. Dodik stated that the RS was interested to see BiH function in line with the provisions of the



Raimondo De Cardona and Milorad Dodik

Dayton Accords and pointed to the RS's constructive approach and willingness for resolving the Sejdic-Finci issue, the presidential office said. The RS president emphasized that an obstacle to overcoming the problem was, above all, the undefined situation in the Federation of BiH.

The two officials also discussed improving economic cooperation between the RS and Italy, primarily in terms of joint energy projects.

US Embassy Supports Service for Foreigners' Affairs: Hill

Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Nicholas Hill, met in Sarajevo with the Director of the Service for Foreigners' Affairs Dragan Mektic, the Service for Foreigners' Affairs informed

With praise for the former efficient operations, during his first official visit to the Service, Hill expressed strong support of the U.S. Embassy to the activities of the Service, stressing that it can serve as an example of successful state institution in BiH.

Hill said that the United States fully supports the work of the Service as a BiH security agency, whose effect has had a significant impact on improving the image of BiH in the world, especially bearing in mind its

decisive dealing with the problem of people who represent a security threat.

Director Mektic stressed that the Service personnel now firmly oppose all forms of illegal migration, trafficking and smuggling. He added that the U.S. authorities have considerable merit for the successful results of the Service, for unreserved support to the education and training of personnel and technical assistance since the foundation of this security agency.

Hill said that the United States will continue to

provide strong support to BiH on its path of European integration, and in this sense will continue to provide the Service with technical assistance and the organization of training.

It was pointed out that the role of the Service becomes essential in the security system of BiH, since it represents the first barrier in protecting the BiH safety from global threats of illegal migration, terrorism and crime.

Working meeting, which lasted more than an hour, was also attended by James Tillman, Director of the International Criminal Investigative

EUFOR and BiH Law Enforcement Agencies to Sign Information Exchange Agreement

A Memorandum of Understanding between EUFOR and the 17 Law Enforcement Agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be signed at EUFOR Headquarters, Camp Butmir, Sarajevo on June 5.

This agreement represents a significant milestone in formalizing security cooperation between EUFOR and BiH LEAs and it is expected senior representatives from BiH organizations will be in attendance for the signing ceremony, including Ministry of Security of Bosnia

and Herzegovina, Directorate for Coordination of the Police Bodies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Border Police of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republika Srpska, Cantonal Ministries of Internal Affairs of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Police of Breko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BiH Transport Minister to Discuss Census with EUROSTAT Director

BiH Minister of Transport and Communications Damir Hadzic will talk today in Sarajevo with Director of the European Commission Office of Statistics EUROSTAT Pieter Everaeson about preparations for population census in BiH. The meeting will also be attended by the director of BiH Statistics Agency Zdenko Milinovic and the deputy head of the EU Delegation to BiH Renzo Daviddi.

BOOK DONATIONS TO BIH INSTITUTIONS 100 Books for Understanding Contemporary Japan

The Nippon Foundation for Social Innovation, in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan in BiH, has donated books on Japan to six educational institutions and organizations in BiH. Each institution received 100 books selected by a committee of Japanese and foreign scholars, journalists etc., which cover 5 categories: Politics and International Relations, Economy and Business, Society and Culture, Literature and Arts, History.

The institutions and organizations from BiH that have successfully applied for and received the donation within 100 Books for Understanding Contemporary Japan project are the University of Banja Luka, the University of Zenica, the National and

University Library of Republika Srpska, the Public and University Library Dervis Susic in Tuzla, the BiH - Japanese Friendship Association (BHJFA) and the Sarajevo Association for Japanese Studies.

The Nippon Foundation is a private institution in Japan whose main purpose is social innovation. It provides support in various areas such as society, education, culture, medicine, security and youth through various projects, grant programs, scholarships and fellowships.

100 Books for Understanding Contemporary Japan is part of the Read Japan program which annually donates books about contemporary Japan to libraries overseas.

PHOTO



Defense Minister Zekerijah Osmic receives a Spanish delegation in the Defense Ministry

Why May 31?

The author participated in a trip organized by the "Because It Concerns Me" initiative of young activists from Bosnia, who travelled from Sarajevo to the Croatian coast and visited the sites of war crimes against civilians. Activists will gather today in Prijedor to mark May 31, the White Armband Day

"Trip to the sea" made me realize something, perhaps even more horrifying than the fact I was standing on the ground where evil happened - we didn't even start to become aware of what happened twenty years ago.

At the sites where civilians suffered, there are no signs of the horrors that happened there. Their purpose is the same today as it was before the war. Only Dretelj reminds of a camp - a deserted barracks of the Yugoslav army, hangars in the distance, behind barb wire. I conclude - at the same time worried for my mental health - "finally a camp that looks like a camp".

I compared the trip with the last year's commemoration at Omarska - it didn't feel like that, I guess because there were a lot of people, speeches, and tapes that marked the areas of allowed movement. All of that distracts from the certain conclusion that somebody's everyday life goes on there today.

The feeling of discomfort haunts me, days before the White Armband Day in Prijedor, the town where I was born and where I lived my whole life. I realized a long time ago that Prijedor is an excellent starting point for a new interpretation of the past. Not only the events from the war, but also the politicians' interpretation of those events, is enough to make that place a focal point for creation of new policies and the approach to the process of facing and explaining the past.

Prijedor is a town with double reality. It has its everyday life, in which the traces of recent past were erased. It is a "perspective and pro-European town", according to the mayor. It is also a town notorious not only for the horrors of war, but also the discrimination and human rights violations, even today.

When the initiative "Because It Concerns Me" started this year, I wasn't particularly thrilled, although some people who I believe know what they talk about joined it. Now I know it is an attempt of a new view of the past, the war and especially the civilian victims.

I am still not sure about my motives to

join the initiative. Sometimes I am disappointed in me when spite and defiance prevail, when the urge to hit where it hurts the most overcomes compassion and justice. Work with children from the rural parts of the Prijedor municipality gave me a bitter experience of watching lives that just started, whose chances of any success shrink with every new day.

Lack of basic existential rights, denying the right to remember, to assembly - the link between the two seems so direct that I wonder how come so few people see such

an obvious thing. Were everybody collectively lobotomized? It is a vicious circle that lasts for 20 years, us and them, defense of "our" national interests, elections won just and exclusively because of that, lack of any political responsibility. That is the simplified interpretation of reality, but the mechanism is clear.

"Because It Concerns Me" is a chance to break the vicious circle that brutalizes the civilian war victims and the children from Ljubija, and me watching that. I don't think that the civil sector can trigger a major social revolt at this moment, so an action to strip the "us vs. them" discourse of legitimacy seems to be the most efficient approach to social changes in BiH, in particular in Prijedor. It is necessary to restore the dignity of victims by humanizing, instead of reducing to ethnic and religious identity. We have a chance to realize that all those taken lives were OUR victims.

These days, while preparations for the White Armband Day are intensified, there is a sense of discomfort, even anxiousness, but for different reasons. Correspondence with the municipality and the police about the gathering, letters to ministries, possible bans and manipulations, as well as the unsurpassed ability of the local political establishment to induce autocensorship and paranoia in individuals...

And the point of all of this, the initiative as well, is to finally break the chains and live in a society free from fear, discomfort, autocensorship.

And yes, I hope I see you in Prijedor on Friday.

By Goran Zoric
Diskriminacija.ba

❖The signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations Development Program and four partner local government units from Bosnia and Herzegovina will be organized today in the building of the Delegation of the European Union in BiH. The present will be addressed by the head of Operations at the EU Delegation in BiH Holger Schroeder, Deputy BiH Minister of Justice Srdjan Radulj and Deputy Resident Representative UNDP BiH Zahira Virani. UNDP BiH continues its work in supporting the partner local governments and their citizens within the Department of Rural and Regional Development, contributing to the further development of a democratic society through better engagement of government institutions with civil society, and through the promotion of sustainable local development.

❖Leader of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Sulejman Tihic and U.S. Ambassador to BiH Patrick Moon talked about the current situation in BiH and the problems that a long wait for solutions, namely the implementation of the verdict of the European Court of Human Rights in the case "Sejdic-Finci," military assets, Mostar, the reform of the Constitution of the Federation of BiH and the census, reads the statement. "It has been more than three years from the date of the verdict in the case 'Sejdic - Finci' and the proposals for its implementation must eventually be considered in parliamentary procedure. Solution can be found if there is political will and sincere commitment to implement the verdict," reads the statement.

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BiH Ministers Council Okays Controversial Laws

BiH Ministers Council has adopted changes to the electoral law and a law on the Foreign Trade Chamber - both of which have been criticized as undermining state-level institutions

The government has accepted two controversial laws that formed part of a deal agreed last year between the ruling Social Democratic Party and the main Bosnian Serb party. Opposition parties criticized the deal signed in October as an attempt to increase party political control over - and at the same time weaken - key state-level institutions. The changes to the electoral law and a new law on the Foreign Trade Chamber form part of a package agreed between Zlatko Lagumdžijas Social Democratic Party, SDP, and Milorad Dodik's Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, SNSD. Under the amended electoral law, the counting of ballots will in future be done at local and not national level. Only postal votes and complaints from a municipal electoral commission or a political party will be handled by the Central Electoral Commission.

Bosnia's constitution has until now placed the electoral process under the overall jurisdiction of state-level authorities and the Central Electoral Commission is currently in charge of the job. Officials of this institution criticized the planned changes last

year, saying they would place the process of election counts under the closer control of political parties. The SDP-SNSD proposal for closed voting lists also drew criticism as intending to concentrate more power in the hands of party bosses. Closed voting lists mean that voters will only be able to cast ballots for parties, which will then choose who sits in parliament according to the level of support each party obtains. The current system allows citizens to vote for a party or to support individual candidates, if they want to do so. The Council of Ministers has also approved changes to the law on Foreign Trade Chamber which stipulates different membership fees from those currently in operation.

Duljko Hasic, of the FTC, told Balkan Insight after the proposed law was presented that the law was worrying. This was because the new method of financing the chamber would mean far less money coming in from the membership, which he said would bring the institution to its knees. Hasic claimed the two parties wanted to undermine another state-level institution as a part of a wider political plan. Opposition parties meanwhile accused Lagumdžija of caving in to all the terms that Dodik had demanded in order to keep his seat as Bosnia's Foreign Minister. The SDP and the SNSD dismiss the complaints. They insist that all the changes will improve the functioning of government and the economy.

Two chambers of the Bosnia's parliament have yet to approve the changes.



Commission in Favor of Budimir's Dismissal

The ad hoc commission of the Federation's House of Representatives, tasked with determining whether FBiH President Zivko Budimir is worthy of exercising his functions on the basis of collected facts, has finished its work and come to two conclusions. The commission found that there is justification that, in accordance with the FBiH Constitution, the House of Representatives may launch the procedure to determine the worthiness of the FBiH President and possible violation of the oath given in performing duties. The commission has prepared a draft request for the dismissal of the FBiH President to the Constitutional Court and delivered it to the House of Representatives.

The conclusions and draft request for the Constitutional Court will be forwarded to House leadership. The leadership should call a continuation of the extraordinary session from 7 May.

Tuzla Canton Overcomes Budget Stalemate

The Tuzla Canton Assembly approved the 2013 budget, worth 323.6 million KM, thus unblocking the work of Canton authorities after almost four months. Assembly delegates face a period in which they need to form a new government. Delegates are expected to reach a final decision on who will make the new government at a session today.

The Garden of Delights

For the first time in 10 years, Bosnia will take part to the Venice Biennale with its own national Pavilion. Mladen Miljanovic, the artist who will represent the country, gave an interview to the Osservatorio Balcane e Caucasso

You have been entrusted with the task of representing Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Biennale after a break of ten years. How does it feel?

I feel happy, and excited too - especially since it's been 10 years. For us it is not a Biennale, but a "Decennale". The reason why I'm happy is that I hope this is a new beginning. On the other hand, I feel a great responsibility. This is not about representing my country for what it has produced in the last two years, but in the last ten. For ten years, politics and culture in BiH have not even been able to agree on how to participate in the Venice Biennale.

Why?

We Bosnian artists have always been present on the international art scene, but only as individuals, while Bosnia and Herzegovina did not have a strategy to present itself as a country. Now, and this is the reason for my happiness, I think we are finally there.

That is?

With the support of the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the BiH Council of Ministers, we have now developed a procedure to select commissioners and artists. Every two years, two commissioners are appointed by the Ministry, and designate the artist who will represent the country. The Pavilion of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be organized alternately by the National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Banja Luka.

Opposite of Visitor's Expectations

Could this be the beginning of the solution of the problems that have so far characterized the situation of culture in Bosnia, including that of the seven museums now closed?

I hope so. It is obvious that problems exist, but also that now there is a will to solve them. For this reason I feel a great responsibility in the organization of this pavilion. If we lose this opportunity, that comes once every 10 years, we may not have a second one.

What is the Garden of Earthly Delights?

When I was asked to submit a project for the Biennale, I began to think about the international image of Bosnia and Herzegovina and about Bosnian identity. I think we can use the word social-pathetic. Much of the art created and performed after the war is social-pathetic, and successful as such.



Mladen Miljanovic engraved tombstones before enrolling to an art academy

What is social-pathetic art?

The one that exploits trauma, plight, and the pathetic. The result, 15 years later, is that if you do not present the pathetic side of Bosnia, you do not fall into the stereotype and therefore are not understood. I decided to try to use this energy as in Aikido, i.e. to use it to reject it. That's why I thought that the right concept for the Bosnian Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale would be "The Garden of Earthly Delights", the exact opposite of what the visitor would expect from Bosnia, something good, to taste.

How much of your personal experience can we find in these installations?

A lot. Before enrolling at the Academy of Art in Banja Luka, I was engraving tombstones for a living.

For cemeteries?

Yes, the hyper realistic drawings we find on tombstones in Bosnia. During the Academy, I began to wonder about the reasons that drove people to choose a particular image to be placed on the grave of their loved ones. People would ask me to draw the strangest things. Eventually, I realized that they wanted to put on the grave the picture of the thing

in life that had delighted them more, what they liked to do.

For example?

The guitarist wanted the guitar, the hunter wanted a hare or other animal. They wanted a picture of what they had chosen in life. For me, it is the image of the eternal delight.

Individual Pleasure and Collective Torture

The question of Bosnian identity is very controversial. Did you manage to confront this issue?

I tried to, including in the installation of the Rose Garden, which you can also find in the Pavilion. Cultural richness lies in diversity - the beauty of the garden is not in a flower, but in its being a garden. This is the basis for explaining the question of nationality, nationalism, and current Bosnian society.

In the Pavilion, visitors will find three different environments - one for thinking, one for seeing, and one for listening. Can you explain?

The first space features a few sentences - this is the environment of thoughts, that prepares the visitor to the exhibition. Then you enter the visual space, with the different themes of the Garden of Earthly Delights. Then there are two rooms - the Rose Garden and one where I present the work performed by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Banja Luka. I invited the Orchestra to record a short, 5-minute video. When they arrived, they were annoyed by the fact that I had not told them which piece they would have to play, because they wanted to rehearse before. I asked musicians to stage one at a time, playing the piece they liked best. So, enter the flautist, and she plays a wonderful piece. Then goes the violinist, and you can follow them both. Then the third, fourth, until the twenty-fifth, and you just can no longer tell them apart. I sought to show the collective absurd from the point of view of sound, how individual pleasure can become a collective torture.

Lagumdzija Opens BiH - Russian Federation Economic Forum

Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina Zlatko Lagumdzija is in a two-day visit to the Russian Federation, at the invitation of the Russian Government

On the first day of the visit, Lagumdzija gave a lecture in Moscow at the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on "New regional paradigm in the Balkans - The role of stakeholders", after which he opened Economic Forum Bosnia and Herzegovina - Russia. The Forum involves representatives of 27 companies from across the country, representatives of the Agency for Foreign Investment Promotion (FIPA) BiH, BiH Foreign Trade Chamber, the Chamber of Commerce of the Russian Federation, and representatives of more than 100 Russian companies, Fena reports. While opening Economic Forum, Lagumdzija said that Russia is the world's relevant market, rich in natural resources, interesting to BiH companies. He pointed out that the economic relations between the two countries have positive memories from the old days, and that

BiH companies in the Russian Federation are not unknown or new, but the return of BiH businessmen to Russia is the process of rediscovery of the market, because it changed. He said that export-oriented BiH firms and Russian investors should be the



Zlatko Lagumdzija

focus of further cooperation, and that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH will be in function of their increased presence in BiH. Lagumdzija underlined that so far the best economic cooperation was achieved in the sectors of energy, construction, pharmaceu-

tical industry, the manufacturing sector and the food processing and tourism, and assessed that the cooperation can be achieved in almost all economic sectors. He pointed out that for that reason, representatives of around 30 BiH companies came to Moscow, all with good ideas and good quality projects, and urged the Forum participants to use that to establish new, high quality business contacts, and conclude specific business projects.

Trebinje's Jugopetrol Sells All Three Gas Stations

The company Jugopetrol Trebinje is being shut down, they sold the property, fired all the workers, there is just left to collect residual claims, Milica Bulatovic from the agency Posednik confirmed for ekapija.ba. "All the gas stations are sold, so that practically Jugopetrol no longer exists as a company. Actually, it does but is not engaged in selling products anymore, it practically still is there if it is necessary to perform tasks that are not completed, the collection from customers, etc.," Bulatovic says, adding that the company will not be completely shut down until all tasks related to billing are done.

IMF Wants Bankruptcy of Balkan Investment Bank

Everyone want to see how it looks like when a bank goes bankrupt, the International Monetary Fund wants that, but we shouldn't let that happen and the RS Government will recapitalize Balkan Investment Bank, we will not let it go bankrupt, RS Finance Minister Zoran Tegeltija said.

"Balkan Investment Bank is small, one percent of the banking sector in BiH, so they want to try a little test on what it looks like to secure deposits. Should we allow it? No," Tegeltija said, Indikator.ba writes.

"Someone will have to be found responsi-

ble, i.e. all those who have made the related loans, those who took the money via the Balkan Bank. But is that a reason to give up the property of 200 million, to close branches and fire the people who work in the bank, and some of the other banks to simply pick up the positive portfolios in that bank," stressed Tegeltija.

SDS MP Ljiljana Bogdanovic previously said that out of the total collected public revenue, about 37 million went through Balkan Investment Bank, and that about 10 million KM were on the single treasury account at the bank.

Draft Law Adopted on Registration of Business Entities in RS

The National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted a Draft Law on the registration of business entities in RS, which foresees their registration within three days, Onasa reports. The draft law provides for the introduction of "one window system" registration through the Agency for interme-

diary and IT and financial services (APIF). Upon receipt of the application for registration, the Agency verifies the identity of the applicant, the exclusivity of the company subject to registration, and payment of a fee if required by law, according to an explanation of the draft law.

First Wizz Air Plane Took Off From Tuzla

Tuzla-Malmo flight was launched on Thursday. Flight Tuzla-Basel is also announced and it will go as of June 15. One-way ticket will cost 59 KM and roundtrip 98 KM. Flight Tuzla-Gothenburg will be launched on June 17. Tickets will be 79 KM one-way and 255 KM roundtrip, Klix.ba writes. The goal of business cooperation is to boost tourism with low prices, but also stimulate growth of business with foreign markets.

CROATIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP

Trouble for Bosnian Farmers

Croatia is set to join the EU in July, but when it does, Bosnia and Herzegovina will lose its main market for its farming exports. And without it, the country's already fragile economy may falter, reports Deutsche Welle

In the hills of Visoko, some 30 kilometers outside of Sarajevo, Nihad Dokso works on one of the three farms he owns in Bosnia. He raises 100,000 chicks every 40 days using state-of-the-art technology that's relatively new to the region. The chicks are housed in a long and spacious barn, and are fed by a mechanized system that also warms and ventilates the space. Dokso sells the grown chickens to a nearby slaughterhouse, which manages their export to neighboring Croatia.

He's invested about 600,000 Euros in his business and employs five people. So far, the farm has provided Dokso with a good standard of living, but he's worried about what will happen when Croatia becomes the newest member of the European Union in July.

"If we're not able to export food to Croatia, then we'll shut down the farm because we don't have anyone else to sell to," he told DW.

"We don't yet have reliable information about what the government is doing about this issue. But if no solution is found by July, it will be a difficult time for chicken farmers."

Meeting Standards Isn't Enough

Bosnia is not permitted to sell food to EU nations because the country's ethnically divided government cannot agree on how to meet EU hygiene codes. While farms already meet many EU regulations, such as those concerning sanitation standards, until Bosnia and Herzegovina's multiple governments can agree on how to prove they're up to code, meeting those standards is just not good enough.

Dokso's concerns are shared by the dozens of farmers and distributors throughout Bosnia. The country's foreign trade council has said the sector will shrink by some 200 million Euros as a result of losing the Croatian market.

"It is absurd that we are discussing right

now this topic because this topic should have been discussed two years ago," Vesna Malenica of the Sarajevo-based think tank Populari told DW.

She said the main reason politicians have failed to solve this issue is because the government has been fractured ever since the brutal war of the 1990s. The



Farmers in Bosnia protested government agriculture policies

peace agreement that ended that war created what is now a politically paralyzed administration. Bosnia is split by two entities, Malenica said, the Republika Srpska, which is predominantly Serb, and the other entity is called the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is shared among Bosniak and Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most governmental departments in the country are similarly fractured. The government split means that the country has two ministries of agriculture, each of which is responsible for its own region. Difficulties for farmers like Dokso stem from the ministries not being able to reach an agreement on how inspections should be conducted across the country. "It seems like when it comes to the state institutions, everyone wants to be in charge of something, but no one wants to be responsible for anything," Malenica said.

Croatia's EU Membership Is No Surprise

Like Malenica, Andy McGuffie, a spokesperson with the EU's delegation in

Bosnia, said more progress should have been made by now in dealing with Bosnia and Herzegovina's agricultural exports.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina is constitutionally a complex country; that is well known, because it has a structure of entities and the state level," he told DW.

"But aside from that there is no reason why faster progress has not been made." He said an export gap would be inevitable when Croatia joins the EU's other 27 members on July 1, and added that it's still up to Bosnia's politicians to at least mitigate that damage.

"It has not been a secret that Croatia was looking to join the European Union," McGuffie said.

"It is down to the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to decide how long that gap of time is. It is within their power, I think, to get on with the legislative changes, establish systems and make an agreement as to how the system is going to work."

Farmers Left in the Lurch

But time for people in Bosnia and Herzegovina is running out, and the country's economy, with unemployment currently at 40 percent, is hardly in a position to absorb such a substantial loss agricultural exports. At his farm in the hills of Visoko, farmer Nihad Dokso now must worry about joining the ranks of the unemployed.

"Our government doesn't currently offer any support for the private sector," he said.

"As far as the authorities are concerned there's a lot of negligence when it comes to agriculture in general in Bosnia Herzegovina, and regarding the export of our products. We are left to rely on ourselves."

Survival, Not Revival

Two decades on from conflict, Bosniak villages in Serb-majority area have been rebuilt, but not many former residents have chosen to remake their lives there, IWPR reports

"I said I'd never go back to Rizvanovici, and now I'm wondering why I did," Adila Aliskovic said with a slight shrug of her shoulders.

"I guess I was driven by the simple desire to be in my own home."

Aliskovic, 48, lives in the village of Rizvanovici in Republika Srpska, one of Bosnia's two administrative entities. She was driven from her home in 1992, during the Bosnian war, and returned there in 2001 after nine years living as a refugee. Once a vibrant community of 4,000, Rizvanovici is a shadow of its former self. Many of the houses lie empty, and only 263 people live there.

Better Off Somewhere Else

Rizvanovici is one of six Bosniak villages ranged along the right bank of the river Sana river, looking onto the predominantly Serb town of Prijedor in northwestern Bosnia. Only 4,000 of the original 16,000 inhabitants of these settlements came back after the end of the 1992-95 war. Aliskovic still has painful memories of events 21 years ago. On July 20, 1992, the Bosnian Serb army launched an attack on Rizvanovici and overran it. The men, including Aliskovic's husband and two brothers, were rounded up and taken to prison camps around Prijedor.

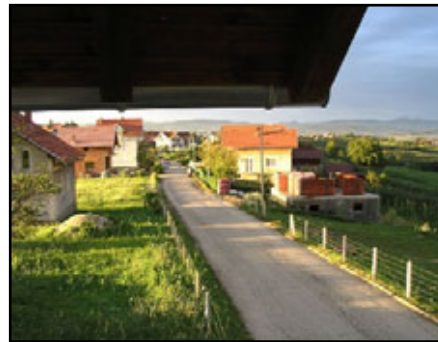
Three days later, women in Rizvanovici started falling victim to rape and other forms of persecution. Aliskovic spent two nights hiding out in the woods with her daughters, then aged two and four. When she returned home, she was detained and taken to a Serb-run prison camp, where she and her daughters spent a month and a half. When she was released, Aliskovic left for Croatia.

Now she lives alone in Rizvanovici. Her husband and two brothers never returned. Their remains were found in a mass grave near Prijedor after the war. Her two daughters have grown up and are away studying in the Bosnian capital Sarajevo. They rarely come to visit her.

"They tell me, 'If it hadn't been for you, we would never have come to Prijedor. There's nothing going on here, no places to go out, and all our friends have left. They will all try to stay away from Rizvanovici,'" Aliskovic said.

"Then I ask myself whether I did the right thing by returning."

Saha Karagic, an elderly woman who returned to Rizvanovici after the conflict, says very few things can make her happy these days. She lost her husband



Rizvanovici

and two of her sons during the war, as well as 40 other relatives all from Rizvanovici.

"There isn't a single house in this village that hasn't lost someone," she said.

Karagic has never found the remains of her husband and sons.

Her third son, Sead, survived only because he was in Croatia when the Bosnian war began, and managed to get away to Germany. He too has returned to Rizvanovici, and now struggles to make a living by raising cattle, growing wheat and selling milk and cheese.

Sead Karagic says things are tough in Rizvanovici and there is little chance of finding work in the Prijedor municipality, since most of the factories have closed down and only a school, municipal offices, police station and a few shops are functioning.

An organized return to the Bosniak villages around Prijedor began in 1998. Despite problems including intimidation by local Serbs, the villagers were determined to make it, and slept in tents and trucks while their homes, destroyed during the war, were repaired.

Even though the houses have been rebuilt, the villages have mains water and electricity, and the roads repaired, most homeowners live abroad. They come back and stay for a few weeks during the summer months.

"Why would anybody come back when they're better off somewhere else? They have jobs there, whereas here they'd struggle to survive," Sead said.

"These people usually return from abroad only when they reach pensionable age."

Aliskovic recalls the optimism that lasted for a few years after the return, fading when the realities struck home - high unemployment, poor economic conditions, and a lack of good schools.

Distance

Most of the younger people went off to find work in other Bosnian towns, to study at universities, or to other countries where they often married and settled down. Aliskovic doubts that many of them will come and live back in the village. Of Rizvanovici's 263 residents, only four are in employment. They farm the land, but that is not enough to support them, as there is no market for their produce.

Most of the villagers are older people who live on their pensions or on money sent by relatives abroad. With an aging demographic mix, children are rarely born in the village.

"There is no life here," Aliskovic said.

"Everything is shutting down."

Aliskovic, who is unemployed, is trying to make herself useful as a member of an association called Mostovi Prijateljstva or "Bridges of Friendship".

With about 30 members, all of them women, the association serves as a focal point and support group for the community.

"We have a kitchen and a living room where we meet and where the elderly people come and visit us. We help out by cooking and organizing parties from

time to time. We mostly cook when someone has a birthday, a wedding or a funeral," Aliskovic said.

When former residents come back for the summer, the association is at its busiest, arranging parties for children's birthdays and other occasions.

When the Bosniaks started returning to villages near Prijedor, there were some tensions between them and the local Serbs, but things have eased as time has gone by.

Nevertheless, Sead Karagic believes there will always be a distance between Bosniaks and Serbs in the area.

"It's hard to forget the recent history and act as if nothing happened," he said.

Aliskovic says the uneasy relationship makes itself felt when it comes to public remembrance of wartime events. When her association launched a proposal last year to put up a monument to Bosniak victims in the Prijedor area, the Serb-run local authorities blocked it.

The same applies when the association tries to hold events to commemorate the anniversary of the killings of Bosniaks.

"No one attacks or insults us, but we are unable to mark the anniversaries of murders committed during the war. We are not allowed to do so. Members of our association have been detained a few times for marking these anniversaries," she said.

"That is really a shame".

Looking back, Aliskovic says she still finds it difficult to comprehend how people could change so much, almost overnight.

"We [Bosniaks and Serbs] went to school together and worked together. We were always together, so I don't know how all this happened. We used to celebrate Christmas and 'eids' [Muslim festivals] together," she said.

"Nevertheless, I do believe ordinary people can find ways of getting along. It's the politicians who sow hatred among people."

This article was produced as part of IWPR's Tales of Transition project funded by the Norwegian embassy in Sarajevo. IWPR is carrying out this project in cooperation with the Sarajevo Centre for Contemporary Arts and EFM Student Radio

Is the Future of the Balkans within the European Union?

There are two occurrences that will make striking balance of the Balkan countries' European Union accession process easier in 2013 than in few previous years

By Hajrudin Somun
Today's Zaman

Croatia is expected to join the EU on July 1 upon ratification of the Accession Treaty by all other 27 member states. Following the April 19 EU-led agreement between Serbian and Kosovar prime ministers the European Commission recommended that Serbia should be granted a start date for EU accession talks and that a Stabilization and Association Agreement be launched with Kosovo as well. Both events should become significant gain for the EU and the region as a whole and enhance the ability for cooperation among all Balkan countries. "The future of the Balkans is within the European union", a slogan repeated in many occasions since it was adopted at the EU-Western Balkans summit in Thessaloniki in June 2003 is still the official EU policy. However, the developments in the region as well as financial crisis and transformation within the union itself have slowed down that process and raised a big question mark what the Balkan countries really will gain by admittance to the "European family".

Enlargement Fatigue

In regard to the European integration it is widely believed that the Balkans is most complicated and fragile area. In spite of the British calculative considerations on its further membership, the EU has no problems on its Atlantic coasts. The Scandinavian north has been solving its matters being or not being incorporated into the EU. The tiny Iceland is still reluctant to join the union. The Euro-Atlantic integrative march toward the east was brought to a standstill by consolidation of Putin's Russia. Remnants from the Balkan wars, which century anniversary is being marked just this year, as well as legacy from the communist rule and bloody dismemberment of Yugoslavia make the biggest troubles for the EU enlargement to the continent southeast.

With Slovenia that joined the union 2004 and Croatia that will become its 28th member state, the EU is narrowing this uncovered geopolitical European corner. However, due to troubles that it had with Croatia's ten years long accession process, possibilities that the remaining Balkan countries might be received to the EU before beginning of the next decade are reduced almost to a zero. As a result of difficulties the EU met in dealing with the Balkans the term "enlargement fatigue" became popular in Brussels circles. After the experience with Bulgaria and Romania, that became member states thanks to their strategic position more than to fulfillment of the economic and political conditions called the Copenhagen criteria, that "fatigue" would rather be called a restraint, even aloofness. Not to repeat such a mistake, the EU has been dragging Croatia "through needle's eyes", as we say in Slavic languages, spoken by majority of Balkan peoples. When it completed extradition of all those indicted by The Hague war crimes tribunal, the condition specific for countries that were involved in the 1990s regional wars, Croatia still was not sure it would finish accession talks successfully. And when there was not any suspicion left that it will join the EU middle of 2013, European Commission has requested from Croatia to continue the fight against corruption in spite of the fact that a former prime minister and many other high ranking officials and businessmen accused for corruption were already sent behind bars. Such an exhaustive experience is expecting all remaining Balkan countries seeking to join the EU. To satisfying the terms of membership, they shouldn't only adopt hundreds of new laws and regulations. They are also requested to change radically their mentality inherited

from the socialist political and economic system they have belonged to. Following Copenhagen criteria and the Maastricht Treaty, those countries - Albania, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo - have to sign Stabilization and Association Agreements before applying for membership. Except Kosovo, which is expecting to obtain approval for negotiating SAA next month, all have done so. Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia are official candidates. Albania applied for membership but has not yet been recognized as a candidate. Bosnia and Herzegovina has concluded the association agreement, but is still preparing an application for the membership. Both Albania and Bosnia are classified only as "potential candidates". When a candidate country gets the date for negotiations, only then the real accession process may be opened.

Waiting List

Officials in Belgrade expect Serbia will be granted a start date for accession talks at the European Council summit on June 27-28. However, they might be disappointed since the EU General Affairs Council has suddenly postponed discussion on negotiations for Serbia and left it to be debated by foreign ministers, who will meet a day before the heads of state. An important flaw that would be hard to clarify before the end of June was found in the initial agreement prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo reached in Brussels on the status of the Serbian state-run institutions in northern Kosovo inhabited mainly by Serbs. It was, anyhow, the crucial point in the April deal between Belgrade and Pristina. While Kosovo insists on the immediate closure of the parallel institutions and extension of the Pristina government to the country's north, Serbia requests they should remain until the local elections that will be held by the end of the year.

The Kosovo-Serbia agreement facilitated by the head of the EU diplomacy Catharine Ashton, unimaginable before few years, shows in the best way attractive power of the European Union. "Surprisingly, EU membership is more powerful than what we sometimes expect", says Florian Bieber, the Balkan

expert from the University of Graz. Strong interest in approaching toward the EU brought the prime ministers of Serbia and Kosovo to a compromising formula that caused anger among extreme nationalists in both countries who called them "national traitors". For getting green light for EU accession negotiations Serbia was ready to leave in the lurch Kosovo's Serbs. For getting a promise it will be also once an EU can-



Exhaustive experience is expecting all remaining Balkan countries seeking to join the EU

didate member - moreover still being far from the UN membership and not being recognized by five EU countries - Kosovo was satisfied with limited jurisdiction over its north.

The greatest visible benefit from the EU enlargement policy for ordinary citizens and business people of the region was the granting of visa-free travel to the Schengen area. They felt a kind of freedom and relaxation after being relieved from long queues in front of the western European embassies that reminded them on the Cold War times. The people from governments expected the EU will help their countries' economic growth and solving the rising unemployment by funding infrastructural and development projects. Even if falling to deep economic and financial crisis, as it happened to Greece and in a less degree in other regional countries already in the union, the people from the EU "waiting list" hope they will be saved by the German conjurer's wind.

From the Brussels angle, however, including the remaining Balkan countries in the circle of white stars on the blue EU flag is regarded primarily as securing lasting peace and stability in the region that has passed through political tensions, interethnic violence and bloody conflicts when the rest of the continent

was enjoying peace and overall development. Giving priority to security issues, besides the NATO involvement, the EU also has deployed some completely new foreign policy means as the EU military mission in Macedonia and EU police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After achieving relative stabilization, the emphasis has been given to the institution building, rule of law and the juridical, constitutional and economic reforms required for EU integration. However, as the former EU ambassador to Macedonia Erwan Fouere wrote these days in Centre for European Policy Studies, "at the same time recent developments in some of the countries of the region highlight fundamental weaknesses, such as lack of a culture of political dialogue and consensus building, which continue to undermine prospects for long term stability and cannot be ignored". He specifies the actual situation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia. Croatia is most probably the only regional country that will join the EU in the current decade. If the remaining candidates have to overpass the same or similar accession obstacles, it might last even longer. Some of them, including Serbia and Kosovo, will be informed about the level of their accession possibilities at the EU summit, the end of June.

Dream Turned into Nightmare

In moments when Croatia, Serbia and other EU candidates have great expectations from Brussels perhaps it wouldn't be fair questioning if hopes that they will find salvation for all their economic and social problems might soon be dashed to the ground. That side of the EU enlargement agenda needs a special review. For this occasion it would be enough to recall experience of Slovenia. For that country, long considered as a great "transitional winner", by words of the Croatian young economic analyst Stipe Curkovic, "the European dream was very quickly was turned into nightmare" after its entrance to the Euro-zone. In spite of all that the regional political leaders will be happy that the slogan "The future of the Balkans is within the European union" will be certainly repeated in the final Brussels summit's document.

WEATHER OUTLOOK



Sarajevo

Today: Partly cloudy. High 16C.

Tonight: Low 6C.

Saturday: Rain. Close to 15C.

Banja Luka

Today: Partly cloudy. High 17C.

Tonight: Low 7C.

Saturday: Partly cloudy. High close to 18C.

Tuzla

Today: Partly cloudy. High 17C.

Tonight: Low 5C.

Saturday: Rain. High close to 14C.

Mostar

Today: Partly cloudy. High 17C.

Tonight: Low 12C.

Saturday: Rain. 16C.

BIO METEO



Air pollution in Sarajevo
MODERATE

UV Index
Moderate

GLOBE IN PICTURES



A man rides a motorcycle near a burned building that housed an orphanage for Muslim children in Lashio, northern Shan State, Myanmar. Many Buddhists and Muslims stayed locked inside their homes and shops were shuttered after two-days of violence in Lashio town, near the border with China



Spectators shield themselves as rain interrupts matches as the French Open tennis tournament, at Roland Garros stadium in Paris



Ugandan police arrest a journalist outside the Daily Monitor offices. Journalists struggled with police as they protest outside the Daily Monitor newspaper head office, in downtown Kampala

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