

## Improving the Lives of BiH Citizens Welcomed

Joint Embassy's and EUD/EUSR Statements Welcomes the Adoption of the New Package of Socio-Economic Reforms

"The Embassy of the United States, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Embassy of the United Kingdom welcome the adoption of the new package of socio-economic reforms, by the two Entity governments, at their parallel sessions.

It is vital that governments in BiH proceed with implementation of reforms to improve the lives of its citizens. The adoption of reform commitments by the FBiH and the RS governments is a positive step towards this goal. These include steps to improve the business environment and stimulate growth and competitiveness; to depoliticise state-owned enterprises; to reform the healthcare system; and to provide better opportunities for youth, women and other vulnerable groups. We welcome the fact that the Entities coordinated amongst themselves this important step. Finally, we call for government formation, in keeping with BiH's established obligations, at all levels, so this important work can continue," said joint statement of the US, UK and Germany Embassy's.

"As outlined in the European Commission Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership, a new set of socio-economic reform measures needs to be agreed and implemented by the governments at all levels in the country, in full alignment with the Economic Reform Programme and the related policy guidance.

The EUD/EUSR welcomes, as a first good step, the endorsement of a new package of socio-economic reforms by both entity governments at their parallel sessions today. The entity governments committed to adopt reforms in their sphere of competencies to: improve business environment and stimulate growth and

competitiveness; to depoliticise state-owned enterprises; to reform the healthcare system; and to provide better opportunities for youth, women and vulnerable groups. To ensure countrywide ownership and consistent political support to socio-economic reforms, implementation of these reforms will need to be coordinated among all authorities, including the state level, through a common action plan.

We reiterate the call for the swift formation of a state-level government, so this important work may continue and governments at all levels in BiH embark on consistent reforms to improve lives of citizens of the country," it was said in a statement.

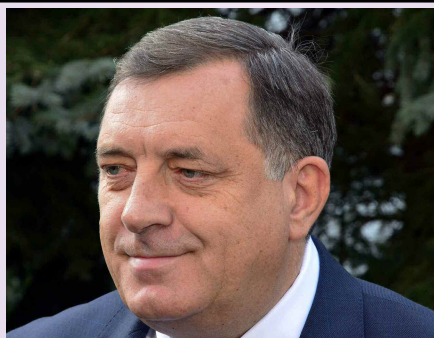
## Deportation BH Citizens Delayed

The announced deportation of Bosnian citizens from Syria has been delayed until further notice, Bosnia's Security Minister Dragan Mektić said on Thursday. "Regarding the return of Bosnian citizens from Syria, I can say

that the first group to arrive to Bosnia was announced but due to the events in the past 24 hours and new circumstances that have arisen in Syria, the deportation is delayed until further notice," Mektić pointed out.



**Zijad Becirovic**, Director of IFIMES, Ljubljana: "Albin Kurti believes that the left in the Balkans should take on the role and offer solutions to key national issues, so far it has largely been left to right-wingers, often extremists, (pro) fascists"



**Milorad Dodik**: "Double standards cannot be enforced in the Balkans. If something is allowed to others, as provocateur Albin Kurti advocates for Albanians and Albanians, then why should Serbs not be allowed the same?"



**Aleksandar Vucic** Serbia President: "Serbia is on the EU path, but it makes our own decisions about who wants to cooperate with, and if we want to cooperate with Turkey, China, Russia and other countries than why not?"

## Trischak: EUFOR Proves to Respond Quickly in Crisis Situations



EUFOR troops and security agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina are ready to respond in the shortest possible time to a potential crisis or terrorist activity and to protect lives of citizens and their property, it was stated after the "Quick Response 2019" EUFOR exercise at Banja Luka International Airport

**T**he exercise included a crisis in which the airport was threatened, violent form of demonstrations was broken and a hostage situation was resolved. EUFOR Commander Major General Reinhard Trischak told reporters that this is the largest annual exercise organized by EUFOR to show their capabilities.

"We have brought EUFOR's reserve forces from Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, Romania, Greece and tactical reserves within KFOR," said Trischak. Major General Trischak stated how impressed he was with how all parties dealt with the situation and with the reaction of members of BiH law enforcement agencies and EUFOR.

"We have shown the ability to act together," EUFOR Commander Major General Reinhard Trischak said.

Minister of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina Dragan Mektic believes that there are forces in the country that can respond in the event of a crisis.

"Recognizing the extremely serious security challenges that we face in BiH, we have been seriously practicing various crisis situations that could occur," said Mektic. He says airports are a very challenging security target, primarily for terrorist attacks.

"In order to better protect these objects and people's lives, we simulated several crisis situations today in Banja Luka that we have jointly solved," said Mektic. He expressed his appreciation to the Border Police, the Investigation and Protection Agency, the Ministry of the Interior and EUFOR, as well as the staff of Banja Luka Airport for their participation in the Quick Response exercise.

## Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec Visited CEC Staff

Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, Ambassador Kathleen Kavalec visited BiH Central Election Commission (CEC BiH), where she discussed activities with a focus on joint projects of CEC BiH and OSCE Missions in BiH, as well as future joint activities with the President and members of the CEC BiH. Cooperation between the BiH Central Election Commission and the OSCE Mission to BiH has been highly successful on both sides, and they expressed expectation that such



good cooperation will continue in the future, the CEC BiH stated.

# Daily Markers

## The Spiral of Maestral Destruction

**I**n the state of BiH are sitting members of the BiH Concessions Commission who have not awarded any concessions for 15 years. Why? Because awarding concessions is the responsibility of the entities.

There is also the Anti-Corruption and Corruption Prevention Agency, yes.

Members of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly collected KM 2.1 million between them from December 2018 to August 2019: one minute of their work costs KM 2,800.

There are all kinds of stupidities in BiH, and who is surprised?

Three murders were committed in Herzegovina late last week in the course of three days. Citizens are rightly concerned, seeking the rule of law and wondering what are the causes of the increased number of serious crimes and what will be the consequences for life in Herzegovina.

A certain starlet, Sunita Hindic-Bosnjakovic, is suspected of the first murder that happened last Friday in the early hours of the morning at Buna. Nino Ivankovic, a restaurant owner, was the victim. A day later, on Saturday, in a village near Bileca, a shepherd killed a migrant from a rifle, wrapped him in a blanket, carried him outside the village and threw him into a pit. He told the police that he was tending to livestock and after returning to the village, he saw that the door on the house he was house-sitting was broken and he heard some noise from the house. He went to his house, took his M48 rifle and returned to the house where, he said, there were about a dozen people at the time who he thought were migrants. After a scuffle, he accidentally or intentionally shot one person in the forehead.

The third case, a complete mystery, happened on Sunday. Lana Bijedic (19), the great-granddaughter of Dzemal Bijedic, a high-ranking BiH official in former Yugoslavia, was found dead in a small river near Ljubuski. An autopsy showed the woman was shot in the head and strangled. Police in two Herzegovina cantons still have no leads when it comes to the motive of the horrific crime, and especially the perpetrator.

The spiral of maestral destruction goes down to the streets. Energy materializes and experiences absolute climaxes, tragic events then further tear a destabilized society and the downward spiral of decay deepens. And who is surprised?



# Don't Worry, Nothing's Changed, yet Everything Is New

What's in store for LGBTI rights after the First BiH Pride March?

**BY EMINA BOSNJAK**  
SARAJEVO OPEN CENTER,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Slippery slope arguments, a common logical fallacy often used by traditionalists and abundantly abused by vicious conservatives, prey upon the fears of disenfranchised people. Therein lies the strength of an earwormy idea: small changes, one after the other, creeping up incrementally, will bring upon all of us, our way of life, what we have always known to be of value, a powerful and negative change. People are already haunted with gripping thoughts (and rightfully so) that the world is in a bad state as it is. What if the LGBTIQ people march in the streets where they never marched in those numbers? What will come next? How will the future unfold before their eyes?

The first Pride March in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place a little more than a month ago. Most of our fellow citizens did not know what to expect, and their imagination was fueled by the selective images of pride marches from abroad, from places where sexual liberation took place decades ago. This liberation is still a hard pill to swallow for many, as it might surmise a society where women are not seen as sex objects, where sex is not just a transaction, but a space for enjoyment, where it doesn't happen without consent. On the 8th of September most of my fellow citizens had the first chance in their lives to see that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer does not mean that we are just concerned with sex and sexuality (which we are, by the way), but more deeply with the underlying conditions that make lives unbearable for many: violence, injustice, and discrimination. They could see that fight against these conditions can bring so many people together.

The first BH Pride March came after more than 15 years of LGBTIQ activism: steady and continual work of empowerment with our lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer community, oftentimes painstaking education of the representative of our local institutions. These efforts were accompanied by our efforts to give the voice to credible and actual stories of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer people from Bosnia and Herzegovina to be told

through stories, films, and photography. Not just their stories and voices, but the stories and voices of those who are the closest to us: friends, allies, parents, and siblings.

The Pride March is neither a beginning nor the end. Therefore, it brings new energy and aspirations that will not let us rest on laurels. We plan to tackle the issues that are still untackled in law and practice: same-sex partnership, the rights of transgender and intersex people. We will use the impetus of the Pride March to create space for acceptance and diversity in business sector, making it truly considerate and open not just to LGBTIQ people, but to other minorities as well. We will amplify the voices of parents whose love and support is abundant to overcome the fear and uneasiness caused by otherness. We will further test our place in law and order, bringing legal victories and justice to those LGBTIQ people who need due process to live their lives in a dignified manner, ushering systemic change to all those hungry for justice. We will be the support and safety net for all the LGBTIQ individuals willing to engage in activism, laying the groundwork for a stronger generation of visionaries and doers, in different corners of our country.

Historically, LGBTIQ people, together with other minority groups, have been an easy target in times of upheaval. More recently, together with cisgender, heterosexual women, we have been openly at the forefront of different social movements for justice that are of concern to everyone alive and even more so for those who will be born in this world: climate, ecology, labor and economic rights, just to mention a few. Disenfranchised people today are those who can have an almost impossible task of imagining the future being better than today, because their experience of life in Bosnia and Herzegovina convinces them, almost to a fault, that the things are getting worse: politically, economically, culturally. They live the slippery slope, day after day.

At the beginning of September, we brought a glint of hope that we as citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can overturn the tide, and do so much better, that we still have in us that flame of solidarity that can transcend so many divisions. In the coming period, all our future plans will boldly include the task of building the world of acceptance and inclusion for LGBTI people, never forgetting all those who are disenfranchised, trying to making our society better for all its citizens.

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# Conference on Water Utility Services: Improved Water Services for More than 71,000 Citizens

Conference on Water Utility Services in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Key Achievements and the Way Forward was held as a part of the Municipal Environmental and Economic Governance (MEG) Project, financed by the Government of Switzerland in partnership with local governments and the United Nations Development Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNDP BiH).

"The Government of Switzerland strongly believes that supporting the development of water services cannot be successful if it is not accompanied by support for improved management systems for water services. In other words: we must shift the approach from simply building infrastructure towards a more comprehensive approach that improves governance in the water services sector. Bosnia and Herzegovina has established the extremely ambitious goal that 90% of its citizens will have access to sustainable water services by 2035. This goal can only be achieved if all participants at all levels offer full cooperation", stated Barbara Dätwyler Scheuer, Director of Cooperation at the Embassy of Switzerland in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Over the past three years, municipalities and cities engaged in the MEG project have worked diligently on improving local public service delivery, monitoring and responding to the needs of their local communities, and better result-based performance management, which has led to greater cohesion, the



inclusion of vulnerable groups and responding to their needs, as well as the improvement of municipal services.

"Our partners are currently implementing infrastructural projects that are valued at more than 12 million KM, 40% of which is funded by the Government of Switzerland, while local governments fund the remaining 60%. Investments are being made in local infrastructure, such as municipal water supply networks, sewage systems, and business zones. Overall, more than 71,000 citi-

zens will benefit directly as a result of improved water and sanitation systems, while over 4,000 households will be connected to a controlled water or sewer network for the first time. These projects are important for local communities and citizens because they will enable local governments to improve the quality of life in their respective communities", said Steliana Nedera, United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This conference is an opportunity to discuss areas of improvement related to the organizational, operational and financial capacities of water utility companies, the limitations of the legal framework for the successful functioning of water utility companies, questions of ownership of utility infrastructure, as well as challenges in establishing appropriate prices for utilities.

## About the Project

The main goal of the MEG Project is to improve the institutional capacities of 18 core local partner governments (municipalities and cities) to enable the implementation of good governance principles, to ensure quality local services, to interact more effectively with rele-

vant stakeholders, as well in the creation of a business friendly environment that is conducive to new employment opportunities and economic growth. Deeply rooted within the Project activity framework is a specific focus on the economic and environmental sectors.

## Ambassador Field with RS Prime Minister

Prime Minister of the Republic of Srpska Radovan Viskovic met with Ambassador of Great Britain to BiH, H.E. Matthew Field in the Prime Minister's office in the Administrative Center of the Government in Banja Luka. Viskovic and Ambassador Field talked about current political and economic matters in Republic of Srpska and BiH with a focus on activities and measures being taken with regard to economic reforms. It has been emphasized during the meeting that government formation at



all levels was of great importance for designing and implementing econom-

ic reforms and in this regard expectations have been expressed that the Government of the Federation of BiH would be elected soon as well as a new Council of Ministers.

On this occasion, it was emphasized that Embassy of Great Britain in BiH was firmly committed to provide support on a partnership basis in implementation of economic and social reforms, improvement of the business climate, management of public enterprises as well as in the energy and education sectors.

# Komsic Met Austrian President mAlexander van der Bellen in Vienna

Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Željko Komsic met Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen in Vienna

**C**hairman Komsic was greeted in Vienna with military honors. During a long and open conversation, the interlocutors exchanged views on political and social processes in Europe and the region.

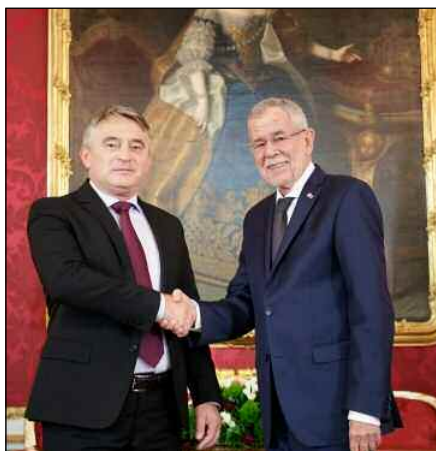
The two officials assessed bilateral cooperation between the Republic of Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina as excellent and expressed satisfaction with the overall relations between the two countries.

They also noted the fact that the Republic of Austria is the largest investor in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that there are about 200 thousand Bosnians living and working in the Republic of Austria.

Van der Bellen and Komsic pointed out that Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded a surplus in economic relations with the Republic of Austria.

On the other hand, they expressed expectations about further investments in BiH, especially in the wood industry. Both sides emphasized the extraordinary friendly, cultural, historical and educational ties between the two countries.

President of the Republic of Austria thanked the BiH Presidency Chairman Komsic for the support Bosnia and Herzegovina has provided for his initia-



tive in the field of climate change.

President Alexander van der Bellen said that Austria supports the entry of the entire region of Southeast Europe into the European Union, and was interested in relations in the region and the dynamics of the process of formation of a new government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He informed the President of the Republic of Austria about the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and warned that the reasons for not forming the government are of a deeper political nature, emphasizing that some politicians in BiH do not respect the laws and decisions of the institutions of the state of Bosnia and

Herzegovina regarding the EU and NATO integrations, even though they were adopted and signed precisely by those same politicians.

Komsic stressed that Austria's military neutrality, which is being misused in BiH's political discourse as an alleged argument against BiH's NATO integration, cannot be linked to the political intentions of opponents of NATO integration in BiH, because it is a completely different concept of neutrality.

Komsic added that NATO means security and stability for BiH, such that the Republic of Austria already possesses, the one which would eliminate the fear of conflict forever through the implementation of reforms.

Chairman Komsic said that he supports every word of the European Commission's Opinion, that is, recommendations and measures that need to be taken to bring Bosnia and Herzegovina closer to the EU by meeting European standards and rejecting anti-European concepts, since the EC Opinion excludes ethnic concepts.

President of the Republic of Austria, Alexander van der Bellen readily accepted the invitation of the BiH Presidency Chairman Željko Komsic for an official visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the BiH Presidency stated.

## RS President Cvijanovic in Brussels

Republika Srpska President Zeljka Cvijanovic spoke in Brussels with the Director for Western Europe, Western Balkans and Turkey at the European External Action Service, Angelina Eichhorst, about the political situation in BiH, that is, a paralysis of joint institutions due to obstructions to the formation of authorities.

It was pointed out at a meeting that an urgent formation of a new Council of Ministers was a necessary prerequisite for the institutional stability of BiH and the continuation of its advancement in the European integration process. Cvijanovic has said that Republika Srpska is the only one which formed the authorities after last year's elections and pointed out its firm commitment to quicker progress towards the EU.

"In the same way as it is of crucial importance for the EU and its member states to implement reform processes and enable efficient and stable functioning of this organization, for us, who are in the

process of joining or accessing the EU, it is of crucial importance to know how the EU, whose members we would like to be, will look like," said Cvijanovic.

During her visit to Brussels, Cvijanovic also met with Christian Danielson, the Director-General for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, the office of the Republika Srpska president told SRNA.

They talked, among other things, about the implementation of the EU financial assistance to BiH, particularly in the fields of environmental protection, agriculture, rural development, and transport.

Cvijanovic said on the occasion that the process of EU financial assistance programming must be carried out in keeping with defined procedures, with full respect for constitutional competences of all levels of authorities and the coordination mechanism in BiH.

Exclusively that way, Cvijanovic said, it is possible that the EU financial assis-

tance programming will be efficient and that the financial assistance will be provided to projects which fully meet concrete needs of citizens.

Cijanovic also spoke with the Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament, David McAlister. She has said at a meeting that membership in the EU and regional cooperation remain a priority for Republika Srpska institutions, stressing the necessity of activities that will accelerate the European integration process, which include the formation of authorities at all levels in BiH.

Previously, Cvijanovic met with Marco Zanni, the Head of the Identity and Democracy Group in the European Parliament, and Rastislav Trnka, the president of the Slovak region of Kosice, which is this year's partner of Republika Srpska in the European Week of Regions and Cities event which is being held in Brussels this week.

# "The European Union, Future of the Western Balkans and Human Rights - Tell the Truth to the Powerful"

The Foundation of the Society of Shared Values Sarajevo hosted a high-level meeting on "The European Union, future of the Western Balkans and Human Rights - Tell the truth to the powerful", in collaboration with the President of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Foundation, Kerry Kennedy and the Nizami Ganjavi International Center

**T**he event was dedicated to the integration of the Western Balkans, from the EU and NATO perspective, as well as from the perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On behalf of the organizers, the Foundation of the Society of Shared Values, Zlatko Lagumdžija opened the event. He indicated that neither the European Union nor the Western Balkans have a chance to continue to strengthen and integrate if human rights, from which all other collective rights derive, and not vice versa, are not valuable, declarative and institutional life foundation of the largest peace project in history - the EU creation.

"I am convinced that the whole Euro-Atlantic area has an interest in making the Western Balkans an integral part of it, and no less than the interest of the Balkans itself to be an integral part of

the EU and NATO," said Lagumdžija.

The President of the Jewish Community in BiH, Jacob Finci, said that BiH is one country that has two entities, three constituent peoples, four traditional religions and one hundred problems.

According to him, there is no magic wand that can solve all 100 problems, but it is obvious that one of these problems is the inequality of BiH citizens, "which we can hardly accept because it is important for us that the constituent peoples are equal in everything even though they aren't".

"We have citizens' inequality, we have citizens of three categories. The first category is an eligible candidate, who can be elected everywhere, because they are members of constituent peoples. The second category are citizens who are members of constituent peoples but do

not live in the right territory and thus do not have all the rights. The third category is those called by the Dayton Constitution "Others", who have no right no matter where they live and how they live and how they behave, not to be candidates, let alone to be elected," said Finci. He thinks the big problem for BiH is that when we talk about human rights, we are replacing theses and "we mean national rights under human rights, and human rights refer to people, to individuals, to man." He noted that on December 22 it will be 10 years after the verdict of Sejdic and Finci was passed.

"When I wrote this application, I was sure that the solution would be positive in my favor, but I could not think that it would not be implemented 10 years after the verdict was rendered," Finci stated.

## Innovation Summit - Promote Business Sector Inventiveness

The School of Economics and Business in Sarajevo at the University of Sarajevo (EFSA) gathered, for the second time, the world's leading experts in the field of innovation at the Sarajevo Innovation Summit. It is the largest regional innovation event, as the Dean of the School of Economics and Business Sarajevo Jasmina Selimović said before the start of the Summit, adding that this year they hosted a number of eminent experts from Sweden, which is, by all indicators, the fifth country in the world in terms of innovation.

According to her, there are technology parks and business incubators in BiH, but there is lack of systematic support for their development.

Swedish Ambassador to BiH Johanna Stromquist recalled that Sweden is a country that has contributed a lot to changes in people's lives, including Celsius thermometer, dynamite, ball bearings, and furthermore millions of lives are saved thanks to the Swedish invention of pacemakers.

"We have succeeded in transforming from a small, poor agricultural nation into an industrial society that is now known for digitalization in many sec-

tors. This did not happen by accident, but thanks to strong will, capacity building and willingness to change," Stromquist emphasized, adding that Sweden is still the world leader in innovation today.

In addition to the tradition of inventiveness, she added, in Sweden they firmly believe in individuals who are making progress in the modern world. Close cooperation between research institutes, private and public sectors, is a key factor in creating a solid foundation for developing large companies in Sweden.

"Moving from idea to innovation requires learning, collaboration, but also society must be built on openness, transparency and courage to constantly ask questions. That is why Sweden has accepted the invitation to support the Innovation Summit in order to contribute to development of creative and talented people," Stromquist said.

The Sarajevo Innovation Summit is supported by the Swedish Embassy to BiH, the Swedish Institute, FMON, the City of Sarajevo, KULT Youth Development Institute and others.

## Mayors Skaka and Vukovic Receive UN Special Recognition

The United Nations Under Secretary-General and Special Advisor to the UN Secretary-General for Genocide Prevention Adama Dieng presented special honors today to the mayors of Sarajevo and East Sarajevo - Abdulah Skaka and Nenad Vukovic.

At a reception at the UN building in Sarajevo, Dieng stressed that the two mayors have been awarded a recognition for their contribution to cooperation, peace and dialogue through the successful organization of the European Olympic Youth Festival (EYOF).

"Your engagement was a strong message and a prime example of peace building and cohesion. You have brought together European youth and created an event that people in this country will remember forever," Dieng said. He also invited the two mayors to visit New York and said he would report to the UN Secretary-General about this positive example.



# Federation to Open Tender for Oil, Gas Exploration by End-October

The Federation entity said it will open by the end of October the anticipated tender for awarding a concession contract for oil and gas exploration and exploitation in the Pannonian basin and the Dinarides

The announcement was made in a statement on the Federation government's website, following an event promoting the planned tender to interested investors in London. A total of 22 representatives of interested companies have attended the London event, the Federation government said. The Federation's government has organized the event and is preparing all activities related to the tender together with London-based IHS Global, which it hired in February to provide consultancy services.

The Federation has already held a similar promotion event in Sarajevo on October 1 and will next meet interested parties on the project at the 7th Balkans Petroleum meeting in Montenegro's Budva on October 24-25.

Earlier this month, the Federation's energy minister Nermin Dzidic said that the tender should be completed by February 20 and the name of the winning company will be officially



Nermin Dzidic

announced at the end of February or in early March. Federation is offering to interested investors to search for hydrocarbon deposits in three blocks in the

Pannonian basin (BiHPo1, BiHPo2 and BiHTz) and one block in the area of the Dinaric Alps (BiHD1).

In September 2015, Shell Exploration Company exited an earlier initiative to conduct geological and geophysical research to determine the oil and gas prospects of the Federation. After Shell's withdrawal, several international companies, including France's Total, Australia's Key Petroleum and UK's Spectrum showed interest in the project, according to earlier media reports.

## Stranjani Miners' Protest Ends, 165 to Be Transferred to Other Pits

Acting manager of the subsidiary of the Zenica coal mining company, Edin Pasic, told FENA that a protest of miners at the Stranjani pit has ended and that the process of closing down the pit started according to a decision made two days ago.

"All the miners have definitely left the pit and only the inspectors are still down there. Today, we will transfer 165 workers from that facility to the remaining two facilities - Stara jama and Raspotocje, as we agreed with the union representa-

tives two days ago," Pasic said.

He added that the remaining 55 miners of the Stranjani pit will remain there working on the extraction of the equipment, but that coal will no longer be dug because the pit is no longer profitable.

The Zenica coal mine company, which has about 1,500 employees, will produce coal only in the Stara jama and Raspotocje pits from now on. Earlier, also due to unprofitable exploitation, the surface exploitation sites Moscanica and Raca were shut down.

## Town Inaugurates €700,000 Industrial Zone

The municipality of Zepce, some 100 kilometers north of Sarajevo, has inaugurated its Polja industrial zone, following an investment of 1.3 million KM (664,679), it said. Of the total amount, 900,000 KM came from the municipality, the ministry of development of the Federation entity provided 300,000 KM, while the remainder was contributed by the Zenica-Doboj Canton's ministry of economy, the Zepce municipal govern-

ment said in a press release.

Polja is one of five industrial zone in Zepce and spreads on 11.2 hectares. Three factories - from the textile, leather and wood industry - operate in the zone. The Polja industrial zone is situated at the entrance of the town of Zepce, close to the M17 road, part of the Vc Corridor, as well as to the railway connecting the northern town of Samac to Sarajevo.

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# Kerry Kennedy in Sarajevo: This City is an Example of a Common Life that the EU and the US Should Learn From

**"In a country where human rights are violated, one should always talk about it again and again and fight for equality of all peoples, the conference should encourage everyone in BiH and the region to devote themselves to the fight for human rights", Dzaferovic said**

**E**very country has problems when it comes to respecting human rights, there is no country that does not face these issues, and the fact that one in three women in the world have experienced sexual violence speaks plenty of this problem, said President of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Foundation Kerry Kennedy in Sarajevo, attending a high-level meeting on "The European Union, the future of the Western Balkans and Human Rights - Tell the truth to the powerful." She pointed out that there are problems and concerns regarding the treatment of people in prison, which is why she believes that everyone should work together to establish a more peaceful and better environment. But for her, the bigger question is what Europe can learn from the experiences of the region, noting that Sarajevo, in particular, can teach Europe and the United States, but also other countries, knowing that hatred is spreading rapidly.

## "Ways to Working Together"

"We see this in the actions of Boko Haram in Nigeria, the actions being carried out by ISIS members, the spread of Islamophobia across Europe, but also in the rise of anti-feminist groups and in statements by US President Donald Trump. Sarajevo is a city that knows what happens when hatred reaches its peak," she added.

"Bosnia and Herzegovina has felt it through history," Kennedy says, and it is a lesson that others need to learn and that everyone should listen to every day



around the world, and therefore she called for stopping hatred and finding ways to work together.

Also, during her stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an educational program will be launched in Sarajevo and other cities across BiH, and it will involve working with school administrations, teachers and students, and will address topics such as peace and justice, as well as ways to achieve change in society. The BiH Presidency Member Sefik Dzaferovic opened yesterday's conference, who said that in a country where human rights are violated, one should always talk about it again and again and fight for equality of all peoples, adding that the conference should encourage everyone in BiH and the region to devote themselves to the fight for human rights.

Recalling that a massive violation of human rights occurred in BiH in the 1990s, Dzaferovic noted that even 24 years after the war, human rights are being violated given the inequality of the constituent peoples and other nations and minorities in BiH.

"Bosnian citizens who are not members

of one of the three constituent peoples are prevented from holding office as members of the BiH Presidency or to be delegated to the House of Peoples of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly; on the other hand, Bosniaks and Croats are disenfranchised in the entity of Republika Srpska, and Serbs in the Federation of BiH," he underlined. He also stressed that there is a present discrimination when it comes to the use of Bosnian language in Republika Srpska and the employment of returnees, which is a particular problem, but there is also segregation in the education system, which is why he called for constant addressing of human rights issues.

Former Croatian President Jadranka Kosor was one of the participants of event who said that she was still optimistic about the EU and NATO perspective, since this is the only lasting guarantee of peace and prosperity in this region.

"We who live here, in this region know the best the meaning of war, suffering, but also what peace means, even though we sometimes do not appreciate it enough. I support an individual approach to the Euro-Atlantic integration path, because each of the states has to make reforms for the sake of their own citizens," she said.

She believes that in recent years, we have entered a stall and have even gone backwards; nationalism and intolerance have increased, but it is all the responsibility of the political elites in each country," Kosor said.

## Destroying is Easier

"I have always advocated for brave politicians who look 30 or 40 years ahead, not just the next elections. Bridges need to be built and this is not just empty words. It is much easier to tear down bridges between peoples and states because it is easier to be a destroyer than a builder," Kosor concluded.

The conference was organized by the Foundation of the Society of Shared Values in collaboration with the Robert F. Kennedy Foundation for Human Rights and the Nizami Ganjavi International Center, and has brought together numerous incumbent and former officials from BiH, the region and the world.





# Ratko Mladic's Diary 'Links Serbian Security Service to Arkan'

A prosecutor at the Hague court quoted former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic's diary to prove that paramilitary units operating in eastern Bosnia in autumn 1995 were sent by the Serbian State Security Service

The prosecution at the trial of Jovica Stanisic and Franko Simatovic at the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals in The Hague on Thursday used excerpts from Ratko Mladic's war diary in an attempt to prove that the Serbian State Security Service, where the defendants were senior officials, sent paramilitary units from Serbia to Bosnia and Herzegovina in autumn 1995 and had control over them.

Defence witness Srdjan Grekulovic, a former member of a Serbian special police unit, did not deny that official units were sent from Serbia by the Interior Ministry, but denied they were sent there by the Serbian State Security Service, the SDB.

Stanisic, the former chief of the SDB, and Simatovic, former commander of the SDB-run Special Operations Unit are accused of establishing, funding and arming special military units that committed crimes in Croatia or were deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where they were subordinated to or operated in coordination with other Serb forces, in particular the local Serb Territorial Defence force, which later became the Bosnian Serb Army, Bosnian Serb police forces and police special forces.

According to the indictment, one of these units was the Serbian Volunteer Guard, also known as Arkan's Tigers, led by Zeljko Raznatovic, alias Arkan.

The prosecution said that at a meeting between Mladic, Stanisic and Momcilo



*Srdjan Grekulovic giving testimony at the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals in The Hague*

Perisic, then commander of the Yugoslav Army, which was held on September 30, 1995, Arkan was one of topics discussed.

As quoted in Mladic's diary, Perisic said to Stanisic: "Let's see what to do with the people who went there [eastern Bosnia], because of whom there were some misunderstandings."

Stanisic replied: "There is no command there, political conflicts, towns are falling, Arkan has embedded himself there, we sent 400 people. As far as I have been informed, this helped in Sanski Most and Novi Grad."

The prosecutor said that misunderstandings Perisic was talking about were between Mladic and Bosnian Serb political leader Radovan Karadzic over the presence of Arkan's paramilitaries in the area.

Grekulovic said that Mladic wanted Arkan's units sent back to Serbia. But the witness could not explain why Stanisic, an official of the Serbian SDB, was dis-

cussing this.

The Serbian Interior Ministry had two main parts at that time, the Public Security Service and the SDB, and Grekulovic claimed that units sent to Bosnia were under the control of the Public Security Service.

The day before meeting Stanisic and Perisic, Mladic met Radovan Karadzic, with whom he also discussed Arkan's fighters.

According to Mladic's diary, Karadzic said that Stanisic was angry because the SDB chief sent 300 men and the United States had become annoyed because Arkan's presence in Bosnia was being "advertised".

## Perisic and Stanisic Leading the Attacks in BiH

Perisic said to Stanisic: "Let's see what to do with the people who went there [eastern Bosnia], because of whom there were some misunderstandings." Stanisic replied: "There is no command there, political conflicts, towns are falling, Arkan has embedded himself there, we sent 400 people. As far as I have been informed, this helped in Sanski Most and Novi Grad"

Arkan was killed in January 2000 in Belgrade, the year after he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for war crimes. Stanisic and Simatovic are charged with having been protagonists in a joint criminal enterprise led by then Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, aimed at permanently and forcibly removing Croats and Bosniaks from large parts of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve Serb domination.

They pleaded not guilty in December 2015 after the appeals chamber of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia overturned their acquittal in their first trial.

The appeals chamber ruled that there were serious legal and factual errors when they were initially acquitted of war crimes in 2013, and ordered the case to be retried and all the evidence and witnesses reheard in full by new judges.

## Serbian Arkan's Killings in BiH, and Shavings

Testifying at Ratko Mladic's trial, in November 2014, defence witness Dusko Corokalo blamed Serbian soldiers who 'lost control' and Zeljko Raznatovic 'Arkan's men for the crimes against Muslims and Croats in Sanski Most. Corokalo, a former security officer with a local brigade of the Republika Srpska Army, VRS, said that local Muslims caused conflicts in Sanski Most in May 1992, by refusing to hand over their weapons to the Serbs. He also blamed an event in Hrustovo village in which a number of non-Serbs was killed, though he did not know how many, on "a number of people who got out of control".

The witness said that paramilitary forces led by Zeljko Raznatovic "Arkan" were responsible for "all the evil" that befell about 1,000 Muslims and Croats from the village of Aganovici in the autumn of 1995, admitting that these people had "caused no troubles" to the Serbian authorities during the war. Corokalo said Arkan's men abused Serbs as well, and shaved their heads if they left the battlefield running away from Muslim-Croat offensives. They also shaved the head of the director of the hotel in Sanski Most in which they stayed, because their "pie was cold", the witness said.

# Prosecution Criticised over War Crimes Indictments

A third of the war crimes indictments filed by the Bosnian state prosecution this year have been transferred to lower-level courts, sparking criticism of prosecutors for not focusing on more complex and important cases

The Bosnian state prosecution filed nine war crimes indictments from the start of 2019 to the beginning of this month, but the state court decided not to confirm three of them. Instead it decided that the cases were not complex enough for the state-level judiciary and sent them to lower-level courts in the country's two entities, the Federation and Republika Srpska. The fact that a third of the indictments raised this year in war crimes cases were deemed insufficiently complex to try at the state level shows that the Bosnian prosecution is still refusing to follow a national strategy adopted in 2008 to deal with the country's huge backlog of war crimes cases.

## "Does Not Dedicate Time and Resources"

The national strategy says that only the most complex cases should be dealt with at the state level, while all the others should be sent to lower-level courts, in an attempt to speed up the processing of the hundreds of remaining cases of crimes dating from the 1992-95 war. The strategy also says that the state prosecution "should file a proposal to transfer a case at the earliest possible stage of the criminal proceedings". Tarik Crnkic is the prosecutor in the case against Milenko Gojgolic, which was transferred from the state level this year to the District Court in Eastern Sarajevo, where Gojgolic is now on trial for the rape and inhumane treatment of a civilian. Crnkic said that all cases should be transferred in the investigation phase,

By **Nermina Kulogljja**  
BIRN

"as it is much simpler to handle cases in which you have been involved since the beginning of the investigation". "By collecting evidence from the beginning and performing supervision of the evidence collection, you get a full picture of the criminal case in



*Ruzica Jukic, deputy chairperson of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council*

question, which certainly results in a better evaluation of evidence and facts when making a prosecutorial decision," he explained. However, transferring cases which have already been investigated by the state prosecution means that prosecutors have wasted valuable time that could have been devoted to other cases. Federal prosecutor Munib Halilovic, who used to work with the state prosecution and is now a member of the supervisory board for the implementation of the national war crimes strategy, said that the negative consequences of the state prosecution's practice of filing indictments in cases that should be referred to the entity level have been reduced by "the positive steps taken by the Court

of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which now refers [some] unconfirmed indictments to entity courts".

Bosnia's revised war crimes strategy, which was drafted because previous targets for clearing the huge backlog of cases were not met, but which has been awaiting approval by the country's Council of Ministers for more than a year, also stresses the need to send simpler cases to lower-level courts in the entities so the state-level court can get on with hearing the more important and complex cases.

"The uneven distribution of cases, as well as the prosecution of less complex cases by the Prosecution and Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, are some of the reasons for the non-efficient processing of the most complex war-crime cases," the revised strategy says.

A recent report by the OSCE mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina also concluded that the state prosecution "does not dedicate its time and resources exclusively to investigating and prosecuting the most complex war-crime cases".

"The Mission notes that, although the Prosecution of Bosnia and Herzegovina has filed indictments in several very complex cases in the past two years, many of the cases on which it has worked are not complex enough to justify the state-level prosecution, showing the failure of that institution to focus on most complex cases only, as required under the national strategy," the report said.

The report proposed that the state prosecution should make a review of all its cases and submit proposals to transfer the simpler ones to entity-level courts.

## "Transferring to the Entity Level"

Commenting on the OSCE report, Ruzica Jukic, the deputy chairperson of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council, Bosnia's judicial overseer, said that she thought that the less complex cases should have been transferred to the entity level "a long time ago".

"I think they would all have been completed by now," Jukic said.

Instead, because of the backlog, many war crimes suspects "will not live to see their cases be processed", she warned.



# Albin Kurti's Kosovo

After years of opposition and activism, Vetëvendosje leader Albin Kurti, winner of the October 6th elections, is about to become the new prime minister of Kosovo.

For the country, a political turnaround not without unknowns

"This evening we are celebrating in Skanderbeg Square, from tomorrow morning we will be at work to create a new government. From today, Kosovo is no longer the country of unemployment, inequality, and arbitrariness, but that of development, progress, and justice". Dark coat, crimson scarf, composed face, but unable to hide intense satisfaction: this is how Albin Kurti presented himself in front of the press last Sunday night after the ballot crowned him Kosovo's new premier.

## The First Real Transition

For Kurti, born in 1975, long-time leader and soul of the Vetëvendosje (Self-determination) movement, a long journey ends, faced with extreme determination and marked by both successes and falls. Over the years, Kurti has been leader of the student protest for independence and against the Milošević regime, a political prisoner sentenced to 15 years by a Serbian court for "an attack on the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and terrorism", a supporter of self-determination as a tool to build the new Kosovar state, an inconvenient protester against the post-war international administration and international interference in Kosovo, a proponent of the union with Albania, and a tireless critic of the political regime symbolised by President Hashim Thaçi.

Today, after a long history as an activist and protester, Kurti wants to show that he is ready for the big leap, that is to become a statesman, able to turn the keywords that have heated the squares of Kosovo in recent years into facts.

To succeed, Kurti starts from Sunday's results, which represent the first real transition in Kosovo's politics since the proclamation of independence. In 2017 Vetëvendosje had also come out of the polls as the single most voted party. However, the "KLA" parties (PDK, AAK, NISMA) had run as a coalition, and a disputed decision by the constitutional court ruled that only the relative majority party (or coalition) could name the premier. This time, however, the time seems ripe. In a traditionally complicated context like the Kosovar one, which has accustomed us over the years to electoral fraud and violent disputes over the electoral results, this time the defeated parties have not complained about irregularities and have hastened to recognise the final results – an ele-

By Francesco Martino  
Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso

ment of democratic maturity that this time bodes well. And that very controversial rule this time actually crowns Kurti as Prime Minister, as Vjosa Osmani's LDK – likely ally in the next government majority – placed second, a handful of votes from Vetëvendosje.



Drafting a shared programme, however, may not be so easy and in all probability, the new government will not be formed before November. The two parties collaborated very well as opposition forces, united by common hostility to Thaçi and the past majority, but from an ideological point of view, the future coalition is far from homogeneous. And if Vetëvendosje is an element of clear rupture, we must not forget that the LDK, although renewed under Osmani's leadership, has been an integral part of the power structure that governed Kosovo in the past decade, with the brief interval of the last two years. And Vetëvendosje draws its consent above all from the very promise to overthrow that system, which over the years has sunk deeper and deeper into corruption, nepotism, and incompetence. Not by chance, the party has reached 37% of preferences among the urban population of Prishtina, where the demand for a more modern and efficient administration is stronger.

Another possible turning point is the concrete possibility that the Kurti government could do without the support of Srpska Lista. With the right numbers in parliament (the official count has not yet been concluded), the triumph of Srpska among the Serbian minority – ten

out of ten deputies – could turn into a Pyrrhic victory, excluding the "Belgrade" party from the rooms of power and granting Kurti a freedom of maneuver unknown to the previous governments. Although the priorities of the Kosovar citizens, as well as of Vetëvendosje's political programme, concern above all questions of economic and social development, Kurti is aware that the fate of his government will be decided in large part on the reopening of the dialogue – currently interrupted – with Serbia.

In the interviews given after the vote, Kurti has softened some of his most controversial positions. He has reiterated his support of a union with Albania, repeatedly advocated in the past, but arguing for a popular referendum on the matter, today impossible. "I will insist, through democratic means, for [the referendum] to happen one day, but the prospects are not short-term".

## Reopening the Dialogue

On the duties imposed by the Haradinaj government on Serbian goods – the tombstone of bilateral dialogue – Kurti assured that they will be eliminated. "Instead of duties, we want a policy of reciprocity. Belgrade, for example, will have to accept the plates and documents with the words 'Republic of Kosovo'". Despite the openings, therefore, the attitude shown by Kurti – who has claimed the management of the dialogue process, up to now largely Thaçi's prerogative – will not necessarily ease relations and negotiations with Belgrade. After a long stalemate, many pawns are now moving. The United States returned to the scene with the first appointment of a special representative for the Balkans (Matthew Palmer) and a special envoy to the Serbia-Kosovo negotiations (ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell). Also, the new representative for the EU foreign policy, Josep Borrell, has put dialogue back among the priorities.

To understand whether a new window of opportunity is really opening, however, there will be time at least until the next elections in Serbia, scheduled for next April. Before that, Kurti will have to face the challenge of building and guiding a government capable of withstanding the shocks and pressures that have always accompanied the difficult road of compromise.



# Peter Handke Won the Nobel for his 'Great Artistry.' Critics Say He's an Apologist for Genocide

Peter Handke won the Nobel but many remembered something else:  
Handke's embrace of the Serbian nationalist leader Slobodan Milosevic

**A**s they announced Austrian author Peter Handke as one of the two winners of the Nobel Prize in literature for 2019, the judges at the Swedish Academy highlighted the "great artistry" in his exploration of the "periphery and the specificity of human experience."

But as word that 76-year-old Handke had won the prize spread on Thursday, many others remembered something else: Handke's embrace of the Serbian nationalist leader Slobodan Milosevic. That relationship prompted a visceral reaction from those who remembered the violence of Milosevic's Serbia. "This is the single most offensive possible decision," Petrit Selimi, the former foreign minister of Kosovo, wrote on Twitter. "What's next? Assad for Peace Prize? [Peter Handke and Olga Tokarczuk win Nobel Prizes in literature]"

## A "Notorious Apologist" or the "Moron of the Year"

Vlora Citaku, Kosovo's ambassador to Washington, called Handke "a propagator of ethnic hatred & violence" and shared a photograph on Twitter of him at Milosevic's funeral in 2006. Albania's acting foreign minister, Gent Cakaj, wrote on Twitter that the Nobel had been awarded to "a genocide denier." Writers and academics also expressed their own unease on social media. Historian Orlando Figes wrote that he was deeply shocked that Handke had won the Nobel, describing him as a "notorious apologist for the murderous

By Adam Taylor  
Washington Post

regime of Slobodan Milosevic." For the Nobel judges, it may be an unwelcome return to controversy. The unprecedented decision to confer two prizes this year had occurred in the wake of a sex scandal that erupted in late 2017, leading to a decision to delay last year's prize.

Polish author Olga Tokarczuk also won the prize on Thursday, making her one of only 15 women to have been awarded the Nobel Prize in literature since it was first awarded in 1901.

Both Handke and Tokarczuk are widely considered masterful writers, with the Austrian's long and productive career dating to 1966 and his debut novel "The Hornets." But Handke has long been dogged by his links to Serbian nationalism since the 1990s.

In 1996, Handke wrote an essay about a trip to Serbia for the German newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that questioned the media's portrayal of Serbs as the aggressor in the conflicts that were sparked after the collapse of the Yugoslavian state.

"In an effort to bring the war to their customers, international magazines from *Time* to the *Nouvel Observateur* relentlessly portray the Serbs as evil and the Muslims as the usual good guy," Handke wrote. The article was published a year after a massacre in the town of Bosnian Srebrenica after Serbian forces overran a Muslim-held enclave and killed thousands of men and boys.

When NATO allies later bombed Serbia, Handke again rose to the country's defense. In 1999, when appearing on Serbian television, he suggested that he might like to be a "Serbian Orthodox monk fighting for Kosovo" and compared the plight of the Serbs to the persecution of Jews (he later apologized for invoking the Holocaust).

After Milosevic died in his prison cell in The Hague in 2006 while on trial for war crimes, Handke spoke at his funeral in Serbia, telling a crowd of thousands that he was "close to Yugoslavia, close to Serbia, close to Slobodan Milosevic."

Handke, who was born to a German father and a Slovenian mother and raised near Austria's border in what was then Yugoslavia, has said his family history is why he is so interested in the Balkans.

"I am a writer and not a judge," he told the *New York Times* in 2006 after attending Milosevic's funeral. "I'm a lover of Yugoslavia - not so much Serbia, but Yugoslavia - and I wanted to accompany the fall of my favorite country in Europe, and this is one of the reasons to be at the funeral."

The links to Serbia had long earned Handke derision among his peers. Author Salman Rushdie nominated him as "moron of the year" in 1999, while David Rieff, a writer and analyst, savaged Handke's book on Serbia in a 1997 review.

## The Farce

"The truth is that he doesn't know what he's talking about, except presumably, as he does throughout much of the book, when he's talking about himself," Rieff wrote. "He came to Serbia knowing nothing about its complicated politics and, to judge by the book, left knowing no more."

The links had long been a problem in receiving other prizes, too. In 2006, he was nominated for Dusseldorf's Heinrich Heine Prize, but the award was withdrawn after members of the city council objected. When he won the International Ibsen Award in 2014, one academic compared it to awarding Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels the "Immanuel Kant Prize."

Handke did go on to accept the Ibsen in Oslo and in a defensive acceptance speech told his critics to "go to hell." However, he renounced the \$400,000 prize money that came with the award.



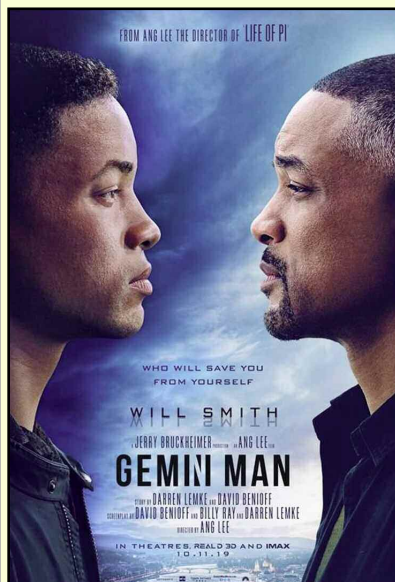
Austrian author Peter Handke at his house in Chaville near Paris after learning Thursday that he had won the 2019 Nobel Prize in literature

## PHOTO OF THE DAY



The magical colours of autumn in Sarajevo

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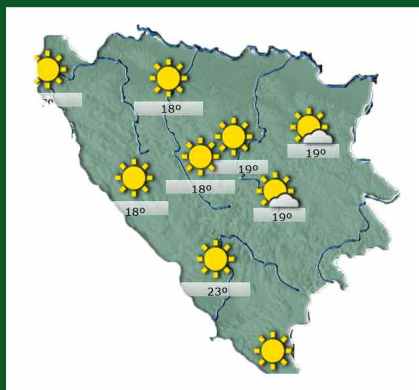
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Gemini Man

47 Meters Down Uncaged

## WEATHER OUTLOOK



Air pollution in Sarajevo

**MODERATE**

### Sarajevo

Today: Mostly sunny. High 19C.

Tonight: Low 10C.

Saturday: Mostly sunny. Close to 23C.

### Banja Luka

Today: Sunny. High 18C.

Tonight: Low 9C.

Saturday: Partly cloudy. Close to 23C.

### Tuzla

Today: Mostly sunny. High 19C.

Tonight: Low 10C.

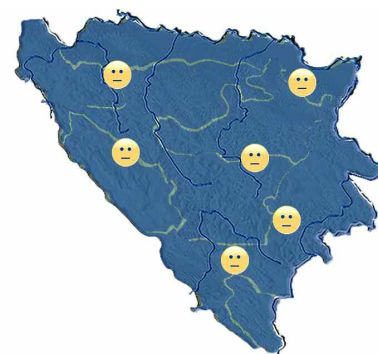
Saturday: Mostly sunny. Close to 24C.

### Mostar

Today: Sunny. High 23C.

Tonight: Low 17C.

Saturday: Partly cloudy. Close to 23C.



## UV Index

**Moderate**