

VALENTIN INZKO IN BANJA LUKA

## Constitution Reform Is Not Condition of OHR Closure

**"Reform of the Constitution is not a condition for closure of OHR, but I think that would be the best proof that the second condition set before BiH is fulfilled - for the country to have a stabile political situation", Inzko said**

President of Republika Srpska Rajko Kuzmanovic and RS vice presidents Adil Osmanovic and



Valentin Inzko at the meeting with the RS President

Davor Cordas talked yesterday with High Representative and Special Representative of the European Union to

BiH Valentin Inzko on actual political and economic situation in RS and BiH. They mutually stated it is necessary, in the spirit of compromise and consensus, to step up efforts and meeting the requirements and standards necessary for Bosnia's progress towards European integration.

The RS President, vice presidents and High Representative emphasized the importance of the Prud agreement implementation and BH politicians' agreement on setting functional institutions.

They also touched upon the need for intensified refugees return, state property issue solving and the rest of requirements BiH authorities have to meet in

terms of visa regime liberalization.

HR Inzko said that the reform of the BiH Constitution is not condition for closing of OHR. The reform would show that Bosnia is stabile, and the result would be better and more efficient state.

"Reform of the Constitution is not a condition for closure of OHR, but I think that would be the best proof that the second condition set before BiH is fulfilled - for the country to have a stabile political situation", Inzko said in his press statement adding that only stabile countries make reforms in their constitutions. He pointed out that the goal of reforms of Constitution should be more efficient work of institutions on all levels.

FRENCH SENATE DELEGATION VISITED BANJA LUKA

## Dayton Constitution Has to Be Changed

President of Republika Srpska Rajko Kuzmanovic emphasized during the talks with a delegation of French Senate that for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a multiethnic community, agreement and compromise of domestic politicians, as well as transition of the Office of the High Representative into the Office of Special Representative of the European Union are extremely important. Signing of Stabilization and Association Agreement set numerous tasks and assignments for entities and BiH as a whole to work accountably, meticulously and compromise-based, pointing out that RS has shown through contributions its unambiguous support to BiH European road.

"Apart from active work on resolving all issues in terms of BiH Euro-Atlantic

integration, RS prepared some measures aiming at alleviating global economic crisis effects as well," Kuzmanovic emphasized.



Jack Ralite

The French Senate delegation expressed their pleasure with RS progress and economic development and supported BiH efforts to become a fully-fledged EU member.

Member of French Senate Jack Ralite said in Banja Luka that his country wants BiH to become a member of EU and he said that BiH has to move forward which means that the Dayton Constitution has to be changed.

"We do not agree with the countries, members of EU, who are against enlargement of the Union", Ralite pointed out. Assessing that many BiH politicians refer on Dayton Peace Agreement, Ralite said that he agrees that this Agreement contributed to establishment of peace in BiH but it can not represent the eternal constitutional form.

"Things have to be changed and have to move forward", Ralite said at the press-conference.

# Joint Contribution to Transition of OHR to EUSR

High Representative and Special Representative of European Union Valentin Inzko stated that some European countries are tired when it comes to EU enlargement and that including of other countries in EU will be difficult until Lisbon Agreement is signed.

## Police Has No Evidence Jelavic Crossed the Border

If we find out that Ante Jelavic illegally entered BiH with help of people from BiH Border Police we will undertake the adequate measures, Director of BiH Border Police Vinko Dumancic said for Fena. He confirmed that for now the BiH Border Police has no document from the competent bodies on entrance and exit of Ante Jelavic into and from BiH. Former BiH Presidency member was allegedly kidnapped in the centre of Zagreb last week where from he was, as he claims, taken to the territory of BiH and where from he escaped to kidnapers and returned to Zagreb. Police intensively searches after Sasa Savinovic suspected to be involved in kidnapping of Jelavic.

"Some European communities are tired when it comes to enlargement, including my country as well, I sincerely say that. The second reason is purely technical, due to the fact that European Constitution have not passed and Lisbon Agreement has not been signed and until that happens, further EU enlargement will be difficult," Inzko said at the press conference after the meeting with Prime Minister of entity of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik. He said that he has similar stances with RS PM related to further path of BiH and that they agreed that they should work jointly on transition of Office of the High Representative into the Office of Special EU Representative.

## Spiric Presented Report on Govt's Work

BiH Council of Ministers chairman Nikola Spiric presented the report on the work of state executive authority last year to the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives, adding that the focus was on the realization of obligations from European partnership. Spiric said that the work of Council of Ministers was concentrated on further BiH integrations into Euro-Atlantic structures and on fulfilling the obligations from Road Map for visa regime liberalization for citizens. Stressing that out of ten new state institutions, whose establishing was planned in European partnership, six were formed, Spiric pointed out the responsibility of BiH Parliament to finish this task. Through the action plan for realization of priorities from European partnership, 14 out of 15 planned laws were adopted by Council of Ministers. Spiric emphasized that earlier convocations of Council of Ministers submitted BiH Parliament only two reports on work and he called on representatives to engage in discussions and contribute to the work of executive authority for the sake of better cooperation. Answering the remarks of parliamentarians that the actual report on work is unacceptable in form and content, because, as was indicated lately, it is a collection of departments' reports, Spiric stressed there is no unique and standardized form of reporting and that General Secretariat is in charge to work on it in the following period.



Djoko Ninkovic - Dnevni avaz Sarajevo

## Karadzic Filed Motion for Mistrial

Radovan Karadzic has filed a motion with the Hague Tribunal, calling for his trial to be cancelled and claiming that the Hague Prosecution is "obstructing due process". The motion filed by Karadzic with the Tribunal argues that the search of his wife Ljiljana's house in Pale on December 2, 2007 represented a breach of due process and intimidation of potential witnesses.

Karadzic notes that "international forces" searched his wife's house at three o'clock in the morning, looking for certain documents. Karadzic is asking whether this type of search is necessary after so many years, if the Prosecution already has strong evidence against him. Karadzic also submitted to the Hague Tribunal a number of motions requesting access to certain public and confidential documents which are being used at other trials, including the trial of Rasim Delic, Sreten and Milan Lukic, Momcilo Perisic and others. Karadzic has been held in The Hague Detention Unit since July 2007. Until now, several status conferences have been held, at which pre-trial actions have been discussed. As announced by the Tribunal, the trial may begin this summer.

## HIGHLIGHTS

❖ The Canadian government has decided to close its embassy in Sarajevo for economic reasons. The Bosnian Foreign Ministry received official confirmation of the news from the Canadian authorities a few days ago, though Ottawa has sought permission from Sarajevo to open an honorary consulate. From now on, Canada will cover its diplomatic affairs in Bosnia-Herzegovina from Budapest. The Bosnian Presidency has still to consider the Canadian authorities' request.

❖ BiH AF Joint Command Chief General Major Miladin Milojicic said in Sarajevo that the procedures for sending another eight BiH officers into NATO Mission in Afghanistan who will be placed within German contingent are ongoing. "After they finish training in Germany those officers will be sent to Afghanistan"; General Milojicic said. Two BiH officers were sent to Afghanistan on March 23 who finished training in Denmark and they are placed as a part of the headquarters' staff in Danish contingent in Afghanistan.

❖ BiH Presidency member Zeljko Komsic said in Sarajevo that the negotiations with NATO Trust Fund on the issue of compensation for 2.700 soldiers of BiH AF whose contracts will expire at the beginning of the next year. This is the legal provision since these are soldiers who are more than 40 years old. "BiH AF will not lose 2.700 men. Younger people will come to their places. That is simply that kind of process," BiH Presidency member Zeljko Komsic said to reporters.

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## OPINION

# Saint Anthony

Faithful just celebrated the biggest miracle in history, and miracles continue to happen, in the region where miracles aren't rare. Pre-Easter beatification of former Yugoslav Army captain reached a high spot - Ante Jelavic is becoming Saint Anthony. Yet, a disturbing factor in this process is that this newly beatified ex-president - right before he smashed the prison door (not miraculously walking through) - blessed one of his kidnapers, also known as a murderer, when he expressed his willingness to kill other kidnapers. "God sent you and bless you for that," said (potential) fourth saint of Croats, God forgive me.

It is understandable why Herzegovina's media report on Jelavic with sympathies. Media in Croatia, where people had enough of chiefs with white socks, are partly indolent and partly totally ironic when reporting on Jelavic. One Zagreb's radio station claimed St Anthony never really left Croatia's capital - he beamed up directly to Bosnia, without ever really leaving his backup position in Zagreb's suburb.

I'd add here modestly, just like the money Franjo Tudjman and Gojko Susak took from the Croatia's budget and sent to Herceg-Bosna. That money crossed Bosnian border in such a miraculous way no one ever managed to trace it. Not even after numerous audits in the time of "de-Tudjmanization" of Croatia, initiated by Stjepan Mesic and Ivica Racan. Although, a quick look at Jelavic's real-estate in both his home-

lands reveals he was a much better supplier for his family, than for Herceg-Bosna. And so was his military-political establishment, which said Jelavic's conviction in Sarajevo's court was a blow for all Croats.

Jelavic's testimony, which was the subject of crazy media grab, clearly indicates he is supposed to be held responsible by the Cr-

oatian judiciary, whether he is suffering from PTSD or not. It is hard to debate

with him, when he says it is illogical Croatia puts on trial Fikret Abdic, leader of self-proclaimed West Bosnia province, and leaves him to the mercy of Bosnian judiciary, although Croatian budget money is the subject of the case. It is not quite right when this Balkan champion in jumping over border says Croatia has nothing to do with Abdic. Fikret Abdic had murky deals with almost everybody, and Franjo Tudjman himself said he would make a pact with the devil if it was in Croatia's interest. But, leave that to Croatia.

When it comes to Bosnia, our problem is the Security Minister, who also admitted he is not quite sure if one member of so-called Algerian group even has Bosnian citizenship. The Minister concluded he has to "talk" to the director of Border Police, couple of days after the border fell twice in 24 hours.

Even if the talk ever happens, the Border Police chief could easily say to the uncompromising Security Minister he is not quite sure if border policemen do open every single trunk, looking for runaway ex-presidents.



By Josip Vricko  
Oslobodjenje

## European Commissions

Is there anything that can surprise us when it comes to Bosnian politicians? Bosnia hasn't appointed members to the most important commissions of the European Council. Not only the country is unable to implement reforms - it is also unable to appoint people who are supposed to sit in commissions and represent their country. By the way, those commis-

sions are of utmost importance for Bosnia's integration into Europe and for building Bosnia's image in the international public. And the current image is depicted with

empty chairs in the European commissions. Even when appointed, Bosnian representatives often don't speak English or French, so they just sit there.

I don't want to be the one defending Bosnian politicians, but the public is also to be blamed for this. No one is pointing at that direction and no one takes his part of responsibility.

Bosnians have to stop thinking everybody will just cut them some slack. When everybody does what has to be done, then we can point fingers to others.

NEZAVISNE  
novine

By Dejan Sajinovic

ANNIVERSARY OF BOSNIAN ARMY MARKED

# Remembering Hard, but Glorious Times in Recent History

**BiH Presidency member Zeljko Komsic stressed that marking of RBiH Army Day represents an "opportunity to remember all our comrades who lost their lives defending BiH and all of those who were members of RBiH Army"**

**R**ajlovac barracks in Sarajevo hosted yesterday a ceremony held in remembrance marking of the 4th anniversary of the 2nd Infantry Regiment within BiH Armed Forces and the 17th anniversary since the founding of Republic of BiH Army. The ceremony was attended by BiH Presidency members Haris Silajdzic and Zeljko Komsic, representatives of the executive and legislative power in BiH, representatives of the international diplomatic and military core, veteran associations and BiH religious communities.

Commander of BiH AF Second Infantry Regiment, brigadier Mirsad Begic stressed in his address to the present that on this day "we remember our recent, but very difficult and turbulent past, which we mustn't forget".

"Marking this date we express our respect of RBiH Army as an institution, in addition to all its honorable, courageous and bold veterans and fallen soldiers, war disabled veterans and their families and all of them deserve our attention and respect," Begic stated. BiH Defense Minister Selmo Cikotic pointed out that "this is an appropriate moment

to remember of a hard, but challenging and glorious period in the history of a modern BiH, which to a great extent determines our present and our path in the future".



He said that "we need a new sort of unity", adding that there is a need for further continuation of defense system's reform within BiH borders, which is increasingly integrating other state structures outside the framework of BiH Defense Ministry and BiH AF on its path toward NATO membership.

"We have to continue with a number of activities on the international level in order to acquire the conditions for an

invitation to fully-fledged membership in NATO. We formed an operative team of BiH AF which is compatible with NATO's military structures and we also formed three infantry regiments whose

task is to cherish the traditions of RBiH Army, Republika Srpska Army and Croat Defense Council," Cikotic added.

BiH Presidency member Zeljko Komsic stressed that marking of RBiH Army Day represents an "opportunity to remember all our comrades who lost their lives defending BiH and all of those who were members of RBiH Army".

BiH Presidency member Haris Silajdzic stated that "today we have a free BiH which is faced with numerous problems, primarily political and economic".

Silajdzic stressed that BiH population which is currently being educated needs employment, but that it won't have it if the resources of BiH citizens fail to be fully put to use. RBiH Army was established on April 15 1992.

**BiH MINISTER OF FINANCES AND TREASURY DRAGAN VRANKIC**

## Cutting Salaries Is a Symbolic Move

BiH Minister of Finances and Treasury Dragan Vrankic considers that Proposal of law on amendments on Law on salaries and recompenses in BiH institutions is a "symbolic message" of proposers, and that significant saving in public expenditure will not be realized with it.

"All things which are being done hastily are not good. I think that measures of saving have to be passed, that public expenditure has to be reduced, but that this has to be done on professional way, by respecting the institutions which are doing that and which would provide quality approach and result," Vrankic said.

The House of Representatives discussed the demand of delegates Sadik Bahtic, Lazar Prodanovic and Velimir Jukic for deliberating by urgent proce-

dure of the Proposal of law on amendments on Law on salaries and recompenses in BiH institutions.

Proposed amendments foresee for the basis of 498 KM to be applied during accounting of salaries of budget users, who have the coefficient which is larger than four, instead of the basis of 535 KM. This is not related to employees who have the coefficient which is less than four, and basis of 535 KM will be used for accounting of their salaries. Vrankic said that he was introduced this morning with the proposal of mentioned three delegates, and he said that this is a "symbolic message at the time of crisis".

"I would like if colleagues consulted me as the competent minister, and that we deliberated if we are able to propose

something with more quality and more complete. In any case, that is their right and they wanted to send certain message with this, that they want to reduce salaries at this time of crisis, which is good, I think," BiH Minister of Finances and Treasury emphasized.

By stressing that analysis of possible and expected results is yet to be done by the Ministry, Vrankic stated that savings in amount of some 200,000 KM per month could be realized by application of the Proposal of law on amendments on Law on salaries and recompenses.

If mentioned proposal is adopted, it would be related to some 500 persons, employees in state institutions with the coefficient for accounting of salaries which is larger than four.

# Reis Ceric Called Imams to Resist Attacks against Islamic Community

A hundred years since the adoption of the Statute by which the Islamic Community in BiH was legalized was marked at the session of the Association of Ilmiyyah Assembly held in Sarajevo. "By this Statute Muslims got protection of vaqfs and democratic election of reisu-l-ulema in 1909. Muslims could accept Austro-Hungary to choose their Reis. This should teach us that the politics are temporary and Islamic Community is permanent"; PhD Enes Durmisevic said. Reisu-l-ulema Mustafa Ceric was also present at this ceremony. Reis referred to the past and fight of Muslims for survival but he also warned imams not to be deceived on more frequent attacks on Islamic Community. "It is normal that those people who do not carry Islamic Community in their hearts mind the fact that we have six madrasas, three faculties for teachers of religion, religion in schools and that we

are planning the construction of Riyasat in Kovaci"; Ceric said.

In his speech, Reis said Muslims are standing firm and he expressed his pride on collectiveness of Association of Ilmiyyah and Islamic Community in BiH. "In their attempts to disjoin us they first



found Wahhabis and after the leader of BiH wahhabis, Jusuf Baracic, tragically passed away then they found Salafis. They don't even know who Salafis are but they say that they are something dangerous. Even that did not help them to disjoin us and then they started the campaign against pedophiles in mosques claiming that imams are not good for our children. The attacks shall continue"; Ceric said. He warned that Gluha Bukovica should be an example for imams not to get involved into any situations that can lead them to bad position and he promised he will, as Reis, fight against the attacks on Islamic Community in BiH.

"Be brave to say what you think but do not use a mosque to state your own opinions. Be informed since those who are informed control a situation. Do not support anyone and try to reconcile politicians since their separation harms us too"; Reis said.

## CRA Submits List of Candidates for New Members

The Regulatory Communication Agency has forwarded to BiH Council of Ministers a list of 14 candidates for new members of the Agency's council, in accordance with BiH Law on Communication. Total of 49 candidates applied when the public competition was issued for the election of CRA Council members on February 24. At 30th session this Council held on March 24, it considered all received applications and decided that six applications were deficient in documentation the public competition required.

Considering the application of other candidates and having in mind the criteria in

terms of professional qualification and experience, potential structures of new convocations of the Council and existence of potential conflict of interests, CRA Council adopted a list of 20 candidates who entered the short list. Five members of the Council from the old convocation used legal possibility to apply for second mandate in the Council, CRA informs.

After talks with the candidates from short list and secret voting, on 31st session CRA Council determined a list of 14 candidates with greatest number of votes, which was unanimously accepted by the Council.

BiH Council of Ministers will make a proposal of seven candidates for members of a new CRA council convocation, based on the determined list of 14 candidates and it will send the proposal to BiH Parliamentary Assembly.

When determining the list, CRA's council took into consideration nationality, age, ethnicity and gender.

## Banja Luka under Ecological Threat

CCI sent an open letter to the RS Ministry for Spatial Planning, Construction and Ecology due to, as they say, current critical situation of the accumulation lake of the hydro power plant "Bocac".

Tons of floating waste threatens to cause breakdown and ecological catastrophe and to endanger the security of Banja Luka and surrounding citizens; it is said in the letter.

"If, as it is regulated by law, the Ministry made provisions waste, tons of plastic waste would not been floating in Vrbas today, but the same would have been recycled by which dozens of working places would have been ensured as well as additional sources of income and costs and risks that this and similar situations can bring in the future would have been avoided"; CCI thinks.



**Bosnian Catholic Franciscan nuns smile as they welcome guests during the opening ceremony of a new orphanage in Vares. As the war-torn country fights with poverty, Franciscan nuns from all over the region gathered for a religious ceremony to bless an orphanage they built with donations from all over the world**

# Total Index of Consumer Prices in March

**Total index of consumer prices of the first three months this year was two percent higher than the one for the same period last year**

Based on the data provided by the Statistics Bureau of Federation BiH, total index of consumer prices in March 2009 was 0.1% lower from the previous month. Regarding the items of Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (COICOP), a 0.4% price rise was recorded in recreation and culture, 0.2% price rise of alcoholic beverages and tobacco, furniture,

house appliances and regular household maintenance and hotels and restaurants, while the prices of clothes and footwear and other goods and services rose for 0.1%. The prices of transportation decreased for one percent, while the prices of housing, electric power and other energy generating products decreased for 0.5%. The prices of other items remained the same in March. The

total price index of consumer prices in March, 2009 was 16.5% higher than in relation to the average index in 2005, and in comparison with December 2008, it was 0.1% lower. In relation to the same month last year, the consumer prices index was 1.2% higher. Total index of consumer prices of the first three months this year was two percent higher than the one for the same period last year.

## Bosnia Banks Rapped for 'Rudely High' Rates

Representatives from the business community and government have criticized foreign-owned banks in Bosnia for maintaining "rudely high" interest rates, asking them to revise their policies.

The demand comes as the Bosnian economy increasingly struggles under the effects of the global recession. By maintaining stubbornly and immorally high interest rates, local commercial banks are becoming a destabilizing element as they deprive businesses and citizens of fresh capital thus slowly starving the local economy, experts told Balkan Insight on Wednesday. "Banks in Bosnia and Herzegovina must understand that they, just like the governments, live thanks to the businesses. I think that right now interest rates are rudely high," local media on Wednesday quoted Bosnia's deputy Minister of Finance and Treasury Fuad Kasumovic. Kasumovic added that the government has already launched an investigation into the legality of the decision of some of the commercial banks which have increased interest rates for old loans which are already in the process of repayment. Problems related to the interest rates were discussed at a meeting between representatives of Bosnian banks and local businesses, which was held in Sarajevo on Tuesday.

During the meeting, representatives of the local government and business sector appealed to bankers to reduce their interest rates which have become unaffordable to business as well as citizens. Nihad Imamovic, from the Federal Employer's Association, said that such high interest rates are even less understandable in light of the fact that the price of inter-bank lending (Libor) has been steadily falling on European markets. The fall of Libor allows commercial banks to reduce their interest rates, which has already been done by banks in Serbia and several other countries in the region. "I cannot understand this," Imamovic told media. "If interest rates are linked with the Euro Libor then interest rates must be reduced." But the director of Bosnia's Raiffeisen Bank, Michael Muller, explained that local banks get resources from their mother banks under increased profit margins due to increased risk, which nullifies the effects of reduced Libor and maintains the need for high interest rates. "It is not to be expected that interest rates will fall in the foreseeable future," Muller said. However, economic experts and bankers told Balkan Insight that excessive interest rates are used to maintain extra profits which are being exported to reinforce the liquidity

of their European "mother" banks, such as Raiffeisen Bank, Volksbank AG, Unicredit SpA, ABS Bank and Intesa Sanpaolo SpA. "Much of our profits are being exported abroad," one banker working for an Austrian-owned local bank admitted to Balkan Insight, speaking on condition of anonymity. One of the leading Bosnian economists, Fikret Causevic, told Balkan Insight that over the past few months, Bosnia - although being an underdeveloped country - has become a net exporter of capital to more developed European countries. In this period, local commercial banks have transferred over €250 million to their mother banks in the West. "This is a typical paradox of financial deregulation," he said. Some government officials and representatives of local businesses stress that commercial banks can behave like this because the banking sector reform, which has been carried out in Bosnia between 2003 and 2005 has fully commercialized local banks and abolished any government regulating mechanism. Yet the banks sidelining of demands for reduction of interest rates, has already triggered rising requests from some businessmen and experts who suggest that banking legislation should be changed and tighter government regulation measures should be introduced.

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MILORAD DODIK

# No to Unified Bosnia

**Serbs replied with threats to block the functioning of the country entirely by withdrawing their representatives from the central institutions to any international or domestic efforts to transfer authority from the Serb entity to the central institutions. "Only then the foreigners realized we were serious, and gave up"**

The leader of the Bosnian Serbs said he believes Bosnia can enter the European Union only as a loose federation of two or three ethnic-based min-states but under no circumstances as a unified country. Milorad Dodik told The Associated Press in an interview Wednesday that the Bosnian Serbs will rather give up EU membership than their separate entity within Bosnia.

"We want to enter Europe only if we can keep our specificity, our autonomy," said the Prime Minister of the Bosnian Serb entity, Republika Srpska.

For years the country's Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks have argued over how Bosnia's political setup could be changed to make the country more functional and fit EU membership requirements.

## Difficult to Find Compromise

This has delayed reforms and Bosnia has made very little progress since it signed a pre-membership agreement with the EU last year.

"It's difficult to find a compromise," Dodik said, comparing the situation to the one in former Yugoslavia where various nations could not find a way to live together and ultimately the country fell apart into six separate countries. The seventh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, was an ethnically mixed republic where Christian Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats and Muslim Bosnians lived together. A war that took 100,000 lives was fought between 1992-95 over the

AP

country's future.

The United States brokered a peace agreement in 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, that preserved the country's international borders but divided it in two entities - one for the Serbs the other shared by Bosnians and Croats.



The two are linked into a state by common institutions. The agreement proved to be good enough to stop the war but not to ensure a functioning country.

"Only Bosnia was given the destiny of former Yugoslavia. Nations that could not find a way to live together in Yugoslavia were supposed to live together in a hybrid country in which everybody is pursuing his own agenda," he said.

All three sides continued to pursue their

wartime goals though political means - the Bosnians to eliminate the ethnic division, the Croats to get their own entity and the Serbs to keep as much autonomy as they could, Dodik said.

"The entire political debate and all relations in Bosnia are moving in this circle," he added.

## Keeping the Police - Victory

"I have no objections to the creation of a third (Croat) entity but it cannot cross over into Republika Srpska," Dodik said.

In general, the Bosnian Serbs "believe that Bosnia can be a federal state, comprised of federal units," where most of the power lies with the federal units, not the central government.

His biggest opponent, Bosniak leader Haris Silajdzic has repeatedly said the Serb entity was created through ethnic cleansing and genocide. To the outrage of the Bosnian Serbs, he last year asked the U.N. to erase the results of genocide by erasing Bosnia's ethnic division.

But to any international or domestic efforts to transfer authority from the Serb entity to the central institutions, the Serbs replied with threats to block the functioning of the country entirely by withdrawing their representatives from the central institutions.

"Only then the foreigners realized we were serious and gave up", Dodik said. This is how the Serbs prevented the melting of Bosnia's two police forces into one.

"We see that as our big victory," Dodik said.

## British Embassy Voices Support to Sarajevo City Projects

Sarajevo Mayor Alija Behmen, with his deputies Nenad Markovic and Slobodan Neskovic, hosted British Ambassador to BiH Michael Tatham in the premises of City administration, informing the guest on the priorities of the new city authorities in the forthcoming period. Ambassador Tatham was particularly interested in the security of the City, tourism development and cooperation with authorities from Eastern Sarajevo. Mayor Behmen said the City has allocated 350,000 KM for video surveillance aimed at improvement of security situation.

Furthermore, he stressed the impor-

tance of activities to be taken in order to promote tourism and open a city tourist community.

In regard to cooperation with Eastern Sarajevo, the mayor stressed that future relation will be especially based on the projects of utility and transport infrastructure.

"We need to cooperate on issues of essential importance and the mental barriers will disappear. The international community needs to insist on that cooperation," the mayor added. The British Ambassador voiced his support to the future activities of the City.

"I will meet soon with representatives of Eastern Sarajevo and talk with them on your future cooperation," he added. Mayor Behmen reminded the Ambassador about the difficult situation Sarajevo is facing over competences and budget revenues.

"Sarajevo Canton is one of rare cantons in BiH Federation which still hasn't implemented consistently the Law on Principles of Local Self-Administration. Therefore, we will soon launch a discussion on this issue before FBiH Constitutional Court," the Mayor said, City Information Service informed.

# The Rights of Families of Missing Persons in Continuous Systematic Neglect

Analyzing the relevant legal framework, the author notes the numerous obstacles and obstructions facing families of missing persons in BiH in exercising their rights and questions the ability of international mechanisms for the protection of human rights to affect government inertia regarding this question

Although in the past years, work has been done on reforming the relevant institutions and bringing to trial those indicted for war crimes, and although there are quite a few memorial centers in BiH, the victims are unsatisfied with the way that these processes have been addressed. The first and foremost reason for this lack of satisfaction is that the goal of the whole process, that is justice in the context of the mass violations of human rights that occurred during the war in BiH, has been relegated to the backburner. The priorities are the political interests of the ruling structures who are using the entire process, just as they are using the victims, as a means for manipulation in order to realize their political interests and to stay in power. In this context, it is clear why the existing laws that deal with the victims of the war in BiH can not completely answer the problems that this population faces.

The categorization of the victims of the war is a particular problem. Namely, the relevant entity laws treat all civilian victims of the war as a single category. However, in practice, such an approach has proven to be inadequate and unsatisfactory for some of them. This is the case with families of missing persons and this is also the reason why this text gives them special attention.

Namely, the families of missing persons have the right to find out the truth about the fate of their nearest and dearest, but they also have the right to reparation in the form of material or other types of support that the state is obliged to provide. Of course, we should not forget the moral satisfaction necessary to enable victims to live a life befitting a human being, and such satisfaction is only possible with the criminal persecution of those who have perpetuated crimes against the missing persons and with a public ascertaining of their guilt.

Even a decade after the end of the war, there is no adequate systematic solution that would make possible in practice for these individuals to enjoy their rights. The problems were first apparent in the lack of an adequate legal framework and later, after the state Law on Missing Persons was adopted, in its inefficient implemen-

By Lejla Hadzimesic  
Puls Demokratije

tation. Also, the legal system in BiH can not solve the problem of each family of a missing person individually in an adequate and prompt manner, first and foremost because of the overloading of the courts and also because of the fact that a court decision on its own does not solve the problem if the decisions are not imple-



mented in practice. In such an atmosphere, the question of the possibility for this category of BiH citizens to enjoy their rights through international legal and quasi-legal instances is raised.

## Transitional Justice and Reparations in International Law

Transitional justice includes all activities initiated in answer to mass violations of human rights in a country with the aim of ensuring official ascertaining of the truth regarding these events and the promotion of various mechanisms for the complete implementation of peace, reconciliation and democratization. Since it includes the term "justice", this concept is often misinterpreted as a special form of justice. Still, we are dealing with justice in its essential form, a form that, because of the recently past period of systematic violations of human rights (in our case the many years of conflict), must be adapted to the circumstances under which this has occurred, all with the aim of creating conditions for the normalization of the situation in such a state so that its citizens can continue with a life befitting a human being.

In a broader sense, the basic obligations of a state stemming from international law in the process of achieving transitional justice can be seen as the follow-

ing: undertaking rational steps for averting violations of human rights; initiating serious investigations into violations of human rights when they occur; ensuring that violators are adequately punished; and ensuring that victims receive reparations. The basis for transitional justice in international law was laid by the Order of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the case of Velasquez-Rodriguez vs. Honduras. Following this extremely important decision by the court, these principles were affirmed in other instances such as the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights and the decisions of the United Nations Human Rights Committee.

In any case, experience has shown that there is no single fixed model for transitional justice and that its mechanisms are defined in accordance with the specific circumstances of the concrete context. However, there are common elements that are necessary for achieving the aforementioned goals: criminal persecution of those who systematically violate human rights; establishing a truth commission (or another adequate way for ascertaining the truth); compensation programs for victims; reforming the armed forces, the police and the judiciary, as well as other relevant institutions; constructing memorial centers that aim to raise consciousness about the tragic events in order to ensure that they are not repeated, and other efforts. According to past experience, the only efficient approach to transitional justice is multidisciplinary or holistic. In other words, none of the aforementioned elements can be efficient unless it is implemented together with other mechanisms.

Previous issues of the Pulse of Democracy have already addressed some aspects of transitional justice in our country, as well as its status in international law. Therefore, this article will focus exclusively on the topic of reparation as a key element of transitional justice with a special accent on reparation for families of missing persons.

Therefore, reparation for war victims is a very important part of the complete system of normalization of the situation in a country. First and foremost, international

law regulations guarantee to families of missing persons the right to find out the truth about the fate of their members who disappeared during conflict (Article 32 of the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts). No matter what the circumstances under which the systematic violation of human rights has occurred, victims have the right to prompt, adequate and efficient reparation which includes restitution, i.e. returning the status of the victim to what it was before the violation of human rights occurred. This includes, again depending on the circumstances, freedom, the respect of human rights, the right to identity, family life, citizenship, a return to their pre-war homes, a return to their workplace and a return of property. Also, victims have a right to compensation for any form of harm that has been done to them that can be economically evaluated, as well as a complete rehabilitation of their status and psycho-physical state, including medical and psychological care, as well as access to judicial and social services.

Therefore, on the international plan it has been established with authority (although, of course, the aforementioned documents on their own are not of a binding character) that families waiting for information about their missing members at the same time have specific material, financial, psychological and legal needs that the relevant government bodies are obliged to provide for. Apart from the urgent steps that have to be taken in order to satisfy the material needs of families of missing persons, the legal status of persons who have been declared missing must be defined by the law, so that, in accordance with that definition, the legal status of their families can be ascertained.

### **Reparations for Families of Missing Persons in BiH**

As we already know, in the context of reparations for victims of conflicts according to international standards, a series of activities have been undertaken in our country. Some of them have been successful (such as the reparation of property through the implementation of property laws), while others have been less successful. In the latter case, it is impossible not to mention so-called "sustainable return", that is the fact that with the return of property, sustainable return of citizens to their pre-war places of residence has not been achieved. The return

of property in itself, does not guarantee a dignified and economically sustainable life for the returnees, and government representatives have again, for their own political reasons, done everything in their power to cripple this process. Other issues, however, have not even been addressed. For example, despite the fact that any conflict has numerous psychological consequences for survivors, very little has been done on providing professional help to Bosnian-Herzegovinian citizens in this regard. This is illustrated by the fact that Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder has not been recognized as an injury or the cause of an injury by the laws regulating the rights of war victims. This is a subject that certainly warrants special and detailed analysis. Our state



has initially regulated the status and rights of war victims through entity laws on civilian war victims, which were motivated by the idea to treat all civilian war victims as a single category. With these laws, families of missing persons are also recognized as civilian war victims and as such, at least in a de jure sense, are assured financial support.

Some members of families of missing persons have managed to exercise their right to family invalid pensions through the aforementioned legal framework as both entities have included into the definition of civilian war victims the category of families whose members went missing at a time when they were civilians, that is they were not members of the armed forces. The International Commission on Missing Persons has published a Guide for Civilian War Victims that provides more information about rights in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. These guides refer the victims to relevant legal provisions that regulate ways of exercising their rights. Namely, in the Guide on exercising rights in the Federation it is stated that citizens of BiH who have citizenship of Republika Srpska, but have permanent or temporary residence on the territory of the Federation, exercise their rights according to the laws of the Federation, under the condition that these rights have not been exercised in Republika Srpska. Furthermore, civilian war victims and

members of families of civilian war victims with temporary residence on the territory of the Federation can exercise the rights that they held in their places of residence in the Federation after returning to their previous places of residence in Republika Srpska or the Brcko District. Their rights are decided on by the responsible municipal services according to their last place of temporary residence prior to their return to Republika Srpska or the Brcko District. As far as exercising rights in Republika Srpska, the aforementioned Guide warns that with Article 36 of the aforementioned Law of Republika Srpska, the right to submit a request has been limited for persons who have realized certain rights as civilian war victims according to the regulations of the Federation or the regulations of one of the countries in the region. Namely, such a person does not have the right to request recognition of their rights according to this Law.

In practice, most of these families have not to this day exercised their rights to a pension in Republika Srpska since, according to some sources of information, municipal departments for invalid and veteran welfare in Republika Srpska still, in many cases, carry out long lasting background checks to see if applicants are already receiving support on this basis in the other entity. According to Ms. Fatima Fazlic, the president of the "Izvor" Association of Prijedor Women, this process is "a set up" and the powers in Republika Srpska want the complete procedure to be dragged out for as long as possible, since everyday there are fewer and fewer persons who could gain benefits on this basis (we are dealing here with older persons who pass away and children who, having grown up in the meantime, do not have the right to these benefits).

Others, however, have exercised these rights through provisions of entity laws regarding the rights of veterans. Families of members of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia, the Croatian Defense Council and the police of the responsible internal affairs bodies who disappeared during the war are recognized as "members of families of killed, deceased, missing or deceased, or war military disabled". Families of missing members of the Army of Republika Srpska are recognized as "members of families of killed, deceased or missing soldiers from the defensive-homeland war".

Tomorrow: Weaknesses in the Implementation of the Legal Framework

# Snap Elections in Serbia Pointless: Analysts

**The calls from the opposition for early elections are growing ever louder, starting with the Democratic Party of Serbia with New Serbia's support, followed by the Radicals, the Progressives, and most recently, the Liberal Democrats**

Snap elections in Serbia would not alter the domestic political scene and would only bring instability, experts believe, B92 reports. The calls from the opposition for early elections are growing ever louder, starting with the Democratic Party of Serbia with New Serbia's support, followed by the Radicals, the Progressives, and most recently, the Liberal Democrats. However, while it is entirely natural for the opposition to seek new elections, analysts believe that they would do little to alter the balance of power. The only ones to benefit would be Tomislav Nikolić's Serb Progressive Party, while the Democratic Party would remain the mainstay of any government. Analysts claim that it would be unwise to create new instability that elections bring at a time of economic crisis. Marko Blagojevic from the Center of Free Elections and Democracy (CeSID) is one adherent to this view. He believes the SPS would be the only party to make any gains.

"I'm not sure what parliamentary elections would bring other than political instability. All the opinion polls conduct-

ed lately, all the opinion polls that have been conducted since the last elections simply show that even if early elections were held, they would bring no major changes to the Serbian political scene," says Blagojevic.

"The only serious change is the split within the Serb Radical Party, which has gone in favor of the SNS, and that's precisely why I think that they'd be the only ones to have any serious political benefit if snap elections were called and held," he believes.

Economic analysts agree that holding elections in the midst of a crisis would be counterproductive. According to Miroslav Prokopijevic from the Free Market Center, the problem in Serbia is that there is no viable political alternative that would be any better than the current powers-that-be.

"Were there in Serbia, by some chance, an alternative bunch that was a bit better, then you could say that there was maybe some point in having elections at a time of crisis," says Prokopijevic.

"However, the alternative here is that maybe only one of the smaller partners

could trade places, while another alternative is for two Radical parties to come power-I think their policies would be even more fraught. I think the reserve team is even worse than the current one," he notes. "A future government in Serbia... would simply look no different to the one we have today," says Blagojevic.

"Maybe the DS would have different coalition partners, but it's certain that the DS, as things currently stand according to the opinion polls, would be the party to once again reach a position to constitute power after any imaginary early parliamentary ballot".

## EU Proposes Panel to Resolve Slovenia Croatia Row

EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn has proposed setting up a body to arbitrate in a long-running border row between Slovenia and Croatia, Slovenian daily Delo reported Wednesday. Rehn has suggested the creation of a council of five legal experts to suggest a solution to the dispute by the end of the year, Delo reported, quoting unnamed sources. The panel's chairman would be appointed by Brussels, while the other four members would be chosen by Slovenia and Croatia, said the report. Rehn has also suggested Slovenia withdraw its veto on Croatia's EU accession talks once the two sides had agreed on arbitration, the newspaper added. The proposal was presented to a closed session of a parliamentary committee in Ljubljana on Tuesday, the newspaper said. It comes after Ljubljana and Zagreb failed in March to agree terms for an EU mediation headed by Nobel Peace Prize winner Martti Ahtisaari. Slovenia has been blocking Croatia's EU accession talks since last December, demanding that the 18-year-long border dispute between the two former Yugoslav states be solved before negotiations with Zagreb resume. Zagreb hopes to complete the talks this year, which would set it on track to become its 28th member in 2010 or 2011. While Slovenia views EU mediation as a way to resolve the dispute, Croatia considers it simply a stepping stone to a resolution before the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

## Serbia Alone Can Decide on NATO Membership: Scheffer

NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer says that it is up to Serbia to decide whether to join NATO in addition to the EU. He pointed out, however, that experience over recent years had shown that accession to both organizations usually went hand in hand.

"NATO and the EU are two different organizations. They make their decisions independently, including those about important issues like enlargement," de Hoop Scheffer said in an interview for a Belgrade-based daily.

"Also, each of these two organizations has its own instruments for helping countries that wish to join, prepare for membership," he added.

"It has been demonstrated in practice over recent years that EU and NATO memberships tend to go together," he said. Asked whether he supported Belgrade's idea of revising the Kumanovo Agreement, Scheffer said that Serbian President Boris Tadic had highlighted Serbia's interest in adapting the mili-

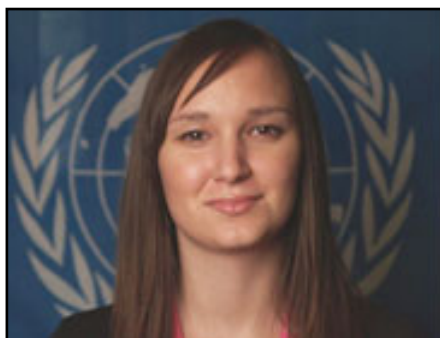
tary-technical accord signed between KFOR and the Serbian military in 1999. "Any NATO decision on this matter is a political issue that needs to be sent to the NATO Council to decide on. Accordingly, in order to resolve that matter successfully, we've asked Serbia to supply us with the details of changes that it wants and to outline the reasons why it should be done. I understand that your authorities plan to do this at an appropriate juncture," said the NATO chief. He added that KFOR had been performing its duties of effectively ensuring a secure and safe environment in Kosovo for almost a decade, in line with its mandate based on UN Security Council resolution 1244.

"That will continue to be KFOR and the whole alliance's commitment. I'm glad that all communities, including the Serb community in Kosovo, systematically highly rate KFOR's capabilities and have confidence in it," said Scheffer, who will make way in August for his successor Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

# We Wanted to Show People We Live Quite Normal Lives

By Robin Ujfalusi

Around 70 enthusiastic young people of 20 nationalities, working and debating tirelessly during the day and enjoying evenings together. That was the Mostar International Model United Nations (MOSTIMUN) in a nutshell, one of the first ever university events of this kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, in the beginning, it did not look that optimistic. As a consequence of the 1990s conflict, Mostar is still a divided city, though there is cooperation between the Croatian and Bosniak communities. In October, when Victoire Rio came to Mostar and announced her intention to organize MOSTIMUN with students and universities from both parts of the city, the feedback was rather negative. "They thought it is simply impossible here," recalls Ms. Rio. Fortunately, they were not right. Victoire Rio did not give up and managed to get together a team of local students who organized the event. Marija Prskalo, one of the most committed organizers, describes their motivation.



*Young people here face similar problems, just like everywhere else: Marija Prskalo*

"A lot of people still think the town is at war. We wanted to show people from all around the world that we live quite normal lives and young people here face similar problems, just like everywhere else."

Their effort bore fruit. There followed four days of negotiations where participants - approximately half of them from Mostar - represented the national delegations of other countries. In three councils, they discussed the problems facing Balkan countries in particular as well as the global community as a whole: the status of internally displaced people, the humanitarian situation in Gaza, the unemployment rate in the Western Balkans and so on.

"The most valuable experience is to represent a country which is not yours and advocate a position you do not agree with. It is challenging and I love it," concluded

Dzanan Gvozden from Mostar, who represented Russia in the model UN Security Council. Participants from abroad were similarly excited. Tanya Podobinska from Ukraine, representing the USA at the conference, stressed the element of mutual understanding.

"Many foreign people still do not know what happened here, and this event puts Mostar on the map. It brings awareness and better understanding of the international community, and at the same time, it brings people from different sides of the town together."

The UN country team in Bosnia and Herzegovina was more than happy to fully support such an event. UNV Bosnia Program Officer Stephanie Roels delivered a speech during the opening ceremony, stressing that volunteerism is a much broader concept than we usually think. She pointed out that even this event was a great result of volun-

teer contribution. Aside from this, the UNV team organized a roundtable and thus opened another lively discussion about volunteer opportunities at different levels.

As Ms. Roels put it in her speech: "Volunteering is about helping another as much as it is about developing your own skills. It is about meeting new people and acquiring new ideas. It is about those things you will not get when you do not explore, when you do not go beyond your daily tasks and when you only drink coffee. Volunteering is often about going off the beaten track. It is adventure!"

After the experience of MOSTIMUN 2009, Victoire Rio and her team would certainly confirm these words. A few months ago they heard that their mission was impossible. They have managed to disprove it and now have a team of extremely motivated young people who kept thinking - even during the busiest days of the last week - how to make MOSTIMUN 2010 better and more memorable event.

## A Glimmer of Hope for Catholics

By Eva Maria Kolmann

Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka is hoping that the situation of Catholic Croats in Bosnia may now begin to improve, after having succeeded last month in bringing together a number of important politicians of Republika Srpska together with representatives of other ethnic groups at a round table discussion intended to draw attention to the problem of returning refugees in Bosnia. Speaking to the international Catholic pastoral charity Aid to the Church in Need Bishop, Komarica reported that Bosnia and Herzegovina had since recently assured him that it was taking seriously the proposals of the Catholic Church and was willing to address the issues accordingly. For several years now Bishop Komarica has been calling urgently for help and support for the Croatian war refugees who are seeking to return to their home towns and villages. Instead, the country has become "an old people's home", he told ACN, adding that in all three dioceses of the country there were today only 11,600 Catholics remaining, whereas before the war there had been 220,000. A full 13 years after the end of the war only a tiny proportion of the Catholic Croats have returned, and most of these, the bish-

op complains, are elderly. Indeed many have since died, so that in fact today there are fewer Catholics in Bosnia than there were immediately after the war ended. Now, however, Bishop Komarica is hoping that "at last the Catholics will also get their fair share". Hitherto, he complains, there has been no discernible political will, either in the country itself or in the international community, to help the Catholic war refugees return to their homes. Only 2% of the total aid granted has come to the Croats, he maintains.

"The refugees have no houses left, and if they do return, they often have to live without running water or electricity. They cannot find work and in society generally it is often made clear to them that they are unwelcome", he told ACN. Now he is hoping that the politicians responsible for their welfare will at last keep their promises. The Catholic Church in Bosnia is working hard "to promote the welfare of all people in Bosnia" the bishop added, citing the "European Schools" run by the Church, which welcome children of all faiths and ethnic backgrounds and thereby seek to promote reconciliation in the country.

# Japan Offers Scholarship Programs to Bosnian Students

The Government of Japan offers 4 different scholarship programs to students from BiH who wish to study at Japanese universities under the Monbukagakusho (Ministry of Education and Science) Scholarship Program, Embassy of Japan in BiH informed. 4 scholarship programs for 2010 include: Research Students,

Undergraduate Students, Professional Training College Students and College of Technology Students. Since 1998, 22 students have studied in Japan under the program. For all scholarships, the applicants must be eager to learn the Japanese language and also be able to communicate in English. Maiko Hamakawa, second secretary of the Embassy of Japan in BiH will hold presentations about these scholarships,

as well as some general information about Japan, in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka.

## CLASSIFIEDS

Cleaning with Karcher machines: rugs, carpets, furniture, cars and bus seats. Prices: 1m<sup>2</sup> - 1 KM, couch - 10 KM, living room sofa - 20 KM. Tel. 062 738 728

## WEATHER OUTLOOK



### Sarajevo

**Today:** Sunny along with a few clouds. High 23C. Winds light and variable.

**Tonight:** Mainly cloudy. Low 8C. Winds light and variable.

### Banja Luka

**Today:** Mostly sunny skies. High around 24C. Winds light and variable.

**Tonight:** Clear. Low 9C. Winds light and variable.

### Mostar

**Today:** Partly cloudy. High 26C.

**Tonight:** Mostly cloudy skies. Low 12C. Winds light and variable.

## BIO METEO



Air pollution in Sarajevo

MODERATE

## CINEMAS

### APOLO

Mis Irbina 2 445-201



### THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON

Directed by David Fincher  
Cast: Brad Pitt, Cate Blanchett  
At 18.00 and 20.00

### OBALA MEETING POINT

H. Kresevljakovica 13 668-186

### CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

Directed by P.J. Hogan  
Cast: Isla Fisher, Hugh Dancy, Joan Cusack  
At 18:00



### LOVE AND OTHER CRIMES

Directed by Stefan Arsenijevic  
Cast: Anica Dobra, Vuk Kostic, Milena Dravic  
At 20:00 and 22:00

## Museum of Sarajevo Marks 60 Years

Museum of Sarajevo will host many events in 2009, marking 60 years of its work. Publishing work will be presented in Svrzina house and in Brusa bezistan from May 2 to 9, said director Amra Medzarevic. She said the Museum will mark May 18, the World Day of Museums, with a promotion of modernization of work, namely digitalization of exhibits. May 16, marked as the Museum Night in Europe, will also be marked in Sarajevo. Museums will be opened until midnight.

The Museum of Sarajevo will also mark July 11, the European Day of Srebrenica, with an exhibition in Brusa bezistan.

In the second half of 2009, the events will be dedicated exclusively to the Museum and its birthday.

## 3rd Sarajevo Talent Campus Call for Entries

Sarajevo Film Festival invited young talented filmmakers from the region to apply for participation in the 3rd Sarajevo Talent Campus. Intensive program of lectures, workshops, discussions, and screenings, taking place within the Sarajevo Film Festival, is dedicated to young talented directors, actors, producers, and scriptwriters from the Southeast Europe. Building on its regional and international platform, during the previous years the Sarajevo Film Festival has assured that the numerous distinguished regional and world film professionals and artists take part in the 1st and 2nd Sarajevo Talent Campus as lecturers, including Alexander Payne, Jeremy Irons, Juliette Binoche, Michael Moore, Charlie Kaufman, Kevin Spacey and Danis Tanovic.