



Brcko has the highest per-capita budget in BiH, but the youth are leaving

Brcko District Supervisor Michael Scanlan met on Thursday and Friday with Brčko District officials and representatives of political parties as part of his monthly consultations with political stakeholders. In his meetings with SBiH's Zijad Nisic and SP's Zoran Kokanovic, as well as with Brcko District Assembly Speaker Esed Kadric, the Supervisor underlined the importance of adopting legislation on fiscal transparency this fall, including the new Law on the Budget for use in preparing the 2020 budget

"In all my meetings, I reminded the politicians that progress is only possible when the public interest is kept at the top of the agenda, above other narrow interests, and that starts with how the budget is spent," Scanlan said.

Scanlan also met with the Director of the District's Chamber of Commerce, Sanela Hadzajlic, to discuss the working groups to be established with the authorities this fall to craft investment-friendly legislation and public service standards needed to attract investors, grow the private sector, and create good paying jobs.

Economic growth will also require a stable supply of electricity. The Supervisor was impressed by the working model of locally generated clean power in Boderiste that was funded by the Embassy of the Czech Republic and implemented by the NGO "Posavina bez mina." The District Assembly has the opportunity to move quickly on the legislative steps USAID outlined to the Deputies in July on how to promote a sustainable clean-energy investment climate in Brcko.

Concerning the outflow of the young population, where Brcko regrettably is one of the leaders in BiH, the Supervisor sought the insights of the representatives of the three largest religious communities, Chief Imam of the Islamic Community in Brčko Mustafa Gobeljic, Orthodox priest Predrag Cirkovic, and Dean of the Deanery of Brčko Damir Ivanovic. He also met with Damir Radenkovic, President of the NGO "Vermont," to hear about strategies to stop this accelerating trend that jeopardizes Brcko's future.

"This trend should be an alarm bell for everyone in Brcko. How can this happen in the community with the highest per capita budget in BiH? This is a question every resident in Brcko should be asking their elected officials. Where are the budget allocations to improve the delivery of public services, attract local and foreign investors to create jobs, or build infrastructure in the District? Each segment of society has a role in making the District a vibrant community where young people will want to stay, work, and raise their families. But most of all this is the responsibility of Brcko's elected officials. This is the criteria on which the voters should judge them in the next local elections."