



## **Opening up means continued responsible behaviour regarding COVID-19, but also a chance to accelerate reforms**

“There have been no new cases of COVID-19 in Brčko in over a month, an accomplishment the entire community should be proud of, and the authorities’ diligent work praised for,” the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko District Supervisor Michael Scanlan underscored today.

He noted that the District Government has announced it will continue to lift restrictions, but also highlighted that the danger is still very real. Vigilance will, therefore, be required by all – citizens, companies, and institutions – if this positive trend is to be maintained. This will mean strict adherence to the remaining measures as well as an increased awareness about public health and social distancing, added the Supervisor.

The Supervisor held a video-conference today with the Deputy Mayor Anto Domić, the District Assembly Speaker Esed Kadrić, and Deputy Speaker Ivo Filipović. He applauded their continued focus on keeping the economy on track and advancing reforms. Scanlan welcomed the ongoing preparatory work on the reconstruction of the Brčko-Gunja Bridge and urged the authorities to remain focused on steps to ensure that the port modernisation project can begin in late summer or early fall.

Scanlan also underscored the need for rapid progress on the adoption of the new Law on Associations and Foundations. Transparent public spending and the fight against corruption are crucial to restoring the public’s trust in the District institutions. In that context, he praised the Assembly’s endorsement of the initiative to establish a public register of the income of public employees in the District. These initiatives, including the adoption of a Law on National Minorities, need to be in place before the election campaign season begins. This will help create an environment in which the election campaign will be about maintaining progress on how to improve governance, public services, and private sector growth in Brčko District – added the Supervisor.

The Supervisor also held a video-conference with Ilija Studen, President of the “STUDEN & CO Holding” Board. They discussed the status of the public-private initiative between the District Government and “STUDEN & CO Holding”

to foster improvements in the business environment needed to attract local and foreign investments, including the "Free Economic Zone" project as the first of many by "STUDEN & CO Holding." The Supervisor applauded the public-private initiative as a critical partnership in bringing well-paying private-sector jobs to the District that will drive its economy forward and bring prosperity to the community.