

# Brčko: The key is a depoliticised, professional administration



Together with the Swiss Ambassador to BiH, Daniel Hunn, the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan met on Wednesday with the District Government and Assembly leadership. The meeting focused, among other issues, on the multi-donor and District-supported project to ensure Brčko is mine-free by 2024, the indispensable role of NGOs in a democracy, and a zero-tolerance for corruption to ensure effective good governance.

Scanlan commended the authorities for the progress on responsible budget preparation in accordance with the new Law on Budget and initiating a process to meet the deadlines established by the Statute for its adoption.

The next step is to ensure effective planning, especially of capital projects, so that implementation can proceed quickly once the projects are budgeted. For too many years, large amounts of public funds lingered in accounts due to administrative delays. Brčko authorities have the opportunity and indeed an obligation to leverage more rapid progress out of the highest per capita budget in the country.

This speaks to the urgency for public administration and civil service reform based on meritocracy, transparency, and a right-sizing of the workforce, and where politics will play no

role. This covers the application process, employment selection, performance evaluations, and continuing professional training all aimed to empower efficient and effective public servants. As a start, temporary service contracts should be an exception and not a standard practice, as has been case. At a minimum, this reflects bad management.

No less can be demanded by the citizens of the District given the cost to the budget of Brčko's large public administration, and the unique largesse extended to Brčko by the fixed coefficient that should not be wasted. This, in particular, puts a primacy on e-solutions and e-services that should become ubiquitous in the District, the Supervisor underscored.

These topics were also discussed in the Supervisor's meetings with the Director of the Brčko District Finance Directorate and the Director of "Brčko Roads" and his associates. Scanlan also visited the ongoing construction works in the Brčko Port and met with the Port management.