



Remarks by PDHR and Brcko Supervisor Dennis Hearne at a Ceremony to Mark the 18th Anniversary of the Founding of Brcko District

Check against delivery.

Brcko, 8 March 2018

Dame i gospodo, [1]

Sretan dan Distrikta Brcko.

Poštovane dame, sretan vam dan žena.

It is an honor and a great pleasure to join you today to celebrate Brcko Day.

Today's event is an opportunity to reflect on past achievements but also to see clearly the challenges ahead.

It is also an opportunity for me, as Brcko District Supervisor, to assure once again all Brcko citizens, as well as their elected leaders, of my strong commitment to supporting the stability and sustainability of the District. We all want to see Brcko continue its admirable growth as a community where genuine inter-ethnic cooperation is a daily practice, and government functionality is a priority. We all want Brcko to remain a success story, both for the future of the district's people, and as a positive example for the entire country. That is especially important now, because the present situation – in Bosnia and Herzegovina itself – is not ideal.

The political scene is turbulent; unemployment is high; and investment is a shadow of what it could be.

And Brcko is not immune to such problems. Partisan interests sometimes prevail over broad public interests,

leading to delays or the risk of missed opportunities for development. The adoption of the 2018 budget and approval for major infrastructure projects are immediate priorities for Brcko, and should move ahead in timely fashion. For this to happen, working together is a must, and the district's citizens have the right to expect progress.

I thank Mayor Milic, Deputy Mayor Domic, Assembly Speaker Kadric and Deputy Speaker Filipovic for their demonstrated willingness to tackle these pressing needs and we had a helpful discussion on these issues yesterday. I look forward to continuing to work with them to the benefit of Brcko.

Brcko and Bosnia and Herzegovina in general have monumental opportunities arising from progress towards EU integration, but also face challenges. The best response to both – at the national and local level – is a sustained focus on the reform agenda.

Bolstering and respecting the rule of law are also essential to this reform process, and that includes eradicating corruption.

Progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been slowed down not only by irresponsible politics but also by the prevalence of corruption. I know from experience that corruption can be tackled effectively – I have seen this success in other countries and it can be done here.

I was very pleased to hear yesterday in my meeting with the Mayor and Assembly Speaker about the forthcoming adoption of anti-corruption laws which will provide a framework for fighting corruption.

I believe this is an area where Brcko has the potential to be a pioneer for success, to lead the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to serve once again as an inspiration and a model.

Vjerujem u uspjeh Distrikta. Uvijek ću vam biti prijatelj i podrška na tom putu. Cestitam vam vas dan. Hvala^[2]

^[1] Ladies and Gentlemen,

Happy Brcko District Day,

To all the women, I wish a happy International Women's Day)

^[2] I believe in the success of the District. On this path, you shall have my friendship and my support.