



Decision on December 18 will show if Brčko authorities are committed to a new path

This year the Brčko District authorities have taken steps towards reversing the negative trend of the past years and laying the foundations for meaningful changes for restoring the perspective of a bright future for Brčko and its residents, the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan stated today.

Supervisor Scanlan met in Brčko with representatives of the District Government and Assembly, as well as the head of the Brčko Port Project Implementation Unit, and management of “Putevi Brčko.” He underscored that concrete improvements such as the fiscalization, locking-in the 2020 electricity supply contract before the end of the year, the steps needed to allow the Port modernisation to start next spring, and the signing of the memorandum concerning the new public-private partnership initiative to strengthen the business environment in the District, are all signs of progress the citizens of Brčko have been calling for and encouraging signals to partners in the international community.

These positive steps now must be joined by the adoption of the new Law on Budget on 18 December, along with the directive to “Putevi Brčko” to proceed with reconstruction of the Brčko-Gunja Bridge. The Supervisor reiterated his previous message delivered to the District Assembly on September 25, that the failure to adopt the Law on Budget can only be interpreted as unwillingness to break with the non-transparent budget practice of the past. This would draw into question the rationale for donor-funded projects and private-sector initiatives, as no one will want to invest in Brčko if its own budget is not handled transparently.

If Brčko’s elected authorities put all the pieces into place this year, next spring Brčko will see a boom in infrastructure construction and a return of private-sector investment, with even more legislative initiatives and infrastructure projects to be launched next year. However, failure to act will mean that this tangible promise of a better future in the District will quickly disappear and trigger a review of whether the favourable fiscal arrangements that Brčko has been granted should be maintained, concluded the Supervisor.