



Transparent public spending must be accompanied by effective prosecution of corruption

A meeting was held today between the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko District Supervisor Michael Scanlan, representatives of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, the US Department of Justice, the Brčko District Chief Prosecutor, and the Chief of Police.

The main topic of the meeting was how to re-engage on the initiative started before the COVID-19 pandemic to help the District strengthen the rule of law, especially in the area of combating corruption. Supervisor Scanlan and the US representatives praised the steps initiated so far towards greater transparency of public spending. These include the adoption of the Law on Budget, as well as the authorities' commitment to establish a public register of the income of public sector employees and adopt a new Law on Associations and Foundations before the November elections.

The Supervisor emphasized that progress on transparency needs to be complemented by concrete steps to ensure the accountability of public institutions and officials, including criminal prosecution of those engaged in corruption. He added that the US representatives are committed to assisting the Brčko police and prosecutors deliver on their responsibility of fighting corruption in the District.

In advance of the fall elections, a core focus will be on the misuse of public funds for election campaigning or directing votes. Every citizen of Brčko has a responsibility to report corruption when they see it.

"Good laws are not enough. Public officials need to be held accountable if they break the law and steal taxpayers' hard-earned money. This is what the voters in Brčko expect, and this is something the OHR, the US and the international community will be watching closely," added the Supervisor. "When it comes to public corruption, authorities that respect the rule of law should demand a transparent investigation, followed by a competent prosecution, ending in a meaningful sentence. The entire process should be devoid of politics, preferential treatment, and taking sides."