



At the end of March, Brčko citizens will know if they have something to celebrate

Brčko Supervisor, Michael Scanlan, congratulates the women of the District on International Women's Day and all the citizens of Brčko on the 21st anniversary of the founding of Brčko District.

As Brčko enters its third decade, it stands at a crossroad. The previous decade was a sad period that saw the hope and opportunities of the District vanquished by poor governance, the misuse of public resources, and elected officials putting their interests ahead of the good of the community.

The authorities elected on 15 November have pledged to embark on a new era of good governance in the District that will ensure transparent and disciplined budget spending, a business-friendly environment for investors, and the development of infrastructure that will grow the economy. Collectively, this will ensure that Brčko District quickly becomes the community that everyone knows it can be and would never dream of leaving.

At the end of this month, we will see if Brčko is back on the right path. The list of reforms is clear, and your elected officials know exactly what needs to be done. Their actions will determine if this era of economic growth and quality of life will arise in the District. It will be their actions and not their words that will define if this indeed will happen.

Modernization of the port, a new functional bridge, and Brčko's special coefficient are possible because of the support of the international community, including the institution I represent. But the adoption of the needed complementary transparency measures embodied in a new Law on Conflict of Interest, the reform of hiring practices in the public sector, enhanced financial oversight of public companies, and the fixing of non-transparent laws adopted in urgent procedure in the previous mandate can only be done by the District's elected officials. For the international community to remain engaged, Brčko must do its part this month, this year, and throughout the mandate.

It is important that votes in the Assembly that validate that Brčko is doing its part be done through a roll call vote, as the procedures allow. I would expect this approach to be taken this month on the vote to adopt the European compliant text of the Law on Conflict of Interest passed by the Government on 3 March.

The time is now for Brčko's officials to send an unambiguous message that the decade of self-interest, employment dependent on connections or party affiliation, the decline of public services, the political blocking of infrastructure development, and the exodus of businesses – and Brčko's youth – is over. If Brčko's officials do the right thing, then the citizens of Brčko will have a genuine reason to gather every 8th of March along with upcoming generations to express their shared good fortune of living in Brčko District. But hereto every citizen must be a part

of the change as they have been in adhering to the requirements to overcome Covid, and success in both cases is possible if everyone does their part.