



New Year message by Supervisor Mennuti: Brčko to continue positive momentum in 2023

Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Jonathan Mennuti extended his best wishes for 2023 to all citizens of Brčko, using this opportunity to reflect on the progress Brčko has made over the past year and the work that must be done in 2023.

2022 has been a politically challenging year for BiH, but Brčko has maintained its positive momentum and remains a successful example to others in BiH on how to avoid crises and maintain a course of forward-looking reforms for the benefit of the local community.

Despite the global disruptions and rising costs caused by the war in Ukraine, the Brčko Port modernization project has stayed on track. The loading plateau is complete. Next spring citizens should be able to see the arrival and assembly of a new crane, followed by construction of new rail and road access.

Agreements have been initialized regarding key road infrastructure projects. It is up to state-level institutions now to finalize the agreement between BiH and Croatia regarding the reconstruction of the Brčko-Gunja bridge. Changes to the Brčko Spatial Plan are currently available for public comments, and the adoption of the future highway route is expected shortly after the holidays.

Energy-efficiency retrofitting of two public buildings is underway, with more to follow in 2023. Brčko has also formally launched the procedure for drafting a comprehensive plan to ensure sustainable, green planning parameters as part of the EBRD Green Cities Initiative.

Administrative preparations are in place for donor-funded infrastructure projects that will improve the water and power supply for households and business zones, and enhance environmental protection and flood prevention in the District. Negotiations with the World Bank on funding for five such projects – regulation of Brka and Blizna rivers, landfill remediation and a new waste management center, and a promenade along the Sava River – are set to begin in the first quarter of 2023.

Also next spring, citizens should be able to see the beginning of construction works on the new business zone as part of the public-private initiative of the District and the “STUDEN & CO Holding.”

The Supervisor encouraged institutions and officials to remain firmly focused on reforms promoting fiscal discipline

and transparency in public spending, including targeted budget spending to bolster capital projects and the quality of public services. Maximum effort must be put into strengthening the accountability of public companies and measures against corruption and conflict of interest.

2023 should see the beginning of concrete work on public administration reform, including legislative steps aimed at coordinated, accountable, and transparent resource management and decision-making as well as improved staff hiring, evaluation, and dismissal procedures in the public sector that will help right-size the administration and leave more money for capital investments.

The monument to civilian victims of war will underscore Brčko's commitment to peaceful coexistence and reconciliation. This monument, part of a new urban park, will not only offer a space to reflect on the past, but also to come together and talk about a shared and prosperous future for all in Brčko.

With key laws on renewable sources and energy efficiency in place, the District authorities now need to invest greater efforts into concrete steps towards energy sustainability and independence.

"Success across all these sectors will ensure a functional, sustainable, and resilient Brčko District capable of facing new challenges and making sure that Brčko's residents, especially young people, have the conditions and environment to remain here and prosper. That must be the goal for all of us in 2023. I wish you all a happy, successful, and joyful New Year," said Supervisor Mennuti.