

Supervisor's New Year Message: Brčko remains on track, but increased focus needed in 2024



Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Jonathan Mennuti extends his heartfelt wishes for a prosperous 2024 to all citizens of Brčko.

The Supervisor would like to commend the Government for its accomplishments in the past year, despite political turbulence, the need to settle general strikes, the scourge of swine flu, and other obstacles.

He takes this opportunity to reflect on the strides Brčko made in the past year and the important tasks that lie ahead in 2024.

Throughout the preceding 12 months, despite intermittent political reshuffling and occasional delays, the Brčko District has continued its pursuit of reforms aimed at fostering good governance, promoting infrastructural development, and bolstering fiscal discipline and energy security. The District stands as a model of peaceful coexistence and collaboration.

In February, the completion of the monument honoring civilian war victims marked the fulfillment of an agreement dating back to 2009. Beyond commemorating those lost during the war, this

monument stands as an enduring symbol of Brčko's unwavering dedication to a shared, peaceful, and prosperous future.

July saw the adoption of legislative changes facilitating improved allocation of budgetary funds for capital projects, infrastructure, and the betterment of public services. With the necessary plans in place, the imminent commencement of construction of the new central transport pipeline promises to enhance water supply delivery across the District.

Progress on demining efforts is keeping Brčko on track to declare its entire territory free of mines by the close of 2024. The Supervisor urges authorities to sustain their support for demining teams and partners to realize this crucial goal.

The modernization of BiH's sole inland port continues, exemplified by a brand-new crane in Brčko's skyline. This project signals an era of expanded trade, commerce, and prosperity for Brčko and the whole of BiH. The timely completion of the Port's power supply enhancement project underscores this momentum.

Accelerated efforts to finalize the crane's installation; construction of new road and rail access points; and prompt issuance of remaining permits are imperative to preventing any further delays to this vital infrastructure project.

Brčko also needs to ensure seamless cooperation with BiH and Croatian authorities towards the restoration of full-capacity freight traffic over the Brčko-Gunja Bridge.

Swift engagement from all relevant bodies is critical to completing the adoption of the new spatial plan, an essential precursor for finalizing the new highway network route and preparing for the construction of the new waste management facility. Authorities also need to accelerate preparation for the commencement of five vital infrastructure projects in cooperation with the World Bank to improve environmental and

flood protection capacity.

The implementation of requisite bylaws is paramount for Brčko to fully leverage newly enacted energy legislation. Additionally, the commitment to public administration reform and the fight against corruption, including bolstering the capacity and transparency of law enforcement and anti-corruption bodies, remains a priority.

The Supervisor reiterates that, while political debates are intrinsic to the democratic process, they must not overshadow tangible progress or impede crucial reforms and projects. Brčko's leaders, regardless of their political affiliation, should prioritize governing over politicking.

The international community stands ready to aid Brčko in every possible way, without favoritism towards any political faction. The Supervisor emphasizes to all Brčko politicians that a stable and functional District is indispensable to meeting obligations outlined in the Final Award, an obligation incumbent upon all parties in Brčko, whether in the ruling majority or in the opposition.

2024 will be a challenging year. Swift action before the summer break is imperative, as the latter half of the year will pivot towards elections and subsequent government formation. This effort demands dedication and focus from all Brčko politicians. The overarching goal of every political entity in Brčko is to drive forward-looking reforms and raise the standard of living for its residents.