

Brcko Supervisor Bans Excessive Non-Salary Payments to Public Employees

Brcko Supervisor Susan Johnson today issued a Supervisory Order prohibiting the Government of Brcko District from making any further non-salary payments to public employees for their service upon government commissions, steering boards of public enterprises and institutions, and for certain other activities or upon temporary transfers to new positions.

The Law on Civil Servants of Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina as amended in July 2005 makes provision for certain kinds of payments to public employees at the discretion of the Mayor, in excess of their regular salaries. These provisions have been abused by the District government, to provide significant increase to the salaries of selected public employees.

The Order stipulates that a new draft law regulating the conduct of public employees and replacing the Law on Civil Servants of Brcko District in its entirety, and draft rulebooks anticipated by the new draft law, be presented to the District Assembly no later than May 31, 2006 .

The Supervisor issued this Order as an Interim measure necessary to prevent further misuse of the Law and budget assets pending adoption of the new legislation.

Public employees in Brcko District are amongst the best paid in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their salaries are on average significantly higher than the average salaries paid for jobs in the private sector. Public sector wage inflation is damaging to the economic welfare of the District. There are pressing social and economic concerns on which the District ought to be spending its revenues rather than paying a select

group of public employees top-ups to their already generous salaries. These excessive payments to public employees during a period of prolonged economic depression and unemployment is damaging to the District government's public image, and is fundamentally unfair and unwise.

Brcko Supervisor reiterated that the reform of public administration to create a politically neutral, cost-conscious, professional and independent civil service is one of the most important challenges facing Brcko District and Bosnia and Herzegovina today.