

Opening Remarks of Brcko Supervisor at the regular OHR Brcko press conference

A very important process is now underway in Brcko District, and I want to be sure that every business in the District is aware of it. Every company must re-register with the Brcko Court, and every company must obtain a new tax number from the District Revenue Agency, by December 31. The time to do this is now. Do not wait until December, when these offices become overloaded with requests for re-registration. The two main purposes of this effort, from my point of view, are important to everyone: to eliminate fictitious companies, and to make the tax system more fair and more effective. People who cheat on taxes violate the law. Equally important, they are cheating the residents who need government services and they are cheating the people who pay their taxes correctly. I would like to see lower taxes for everyone, but it is only possible if everyone pays his fair share.

The deadline for temporary occupants to apply for the return of their pre-war property will be even sooner – October 31. Under the new amendments to the Law on Return of Abandoned Properties, anyone who is living in contested space and who has not applied for the return of their pre-war property by that date may be evicted, without alternative accommodation. I am sure many people have complied with this law, but obviously anyone who has not done so faces a very serious situation. Suzana Pejicic will issue a press release on this.

Tomorrow and the next day we will have a very important meeting here in this room. The four countries of the Sava River Basin – Croatia, Slovenia, Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina – are coming to conclude the final text of the International Framework Agreement on the Sava Basin. This is a critical step. We need the final text now, so we can move on with signatures and ratification.

This is a very good treaty. It establishes the goals and framework for a Sava River Commission, which will establish navigation and sustainable water management, and prevent or limit floods and hazardous pollution damage. Brcko is a candidate to be the seat of this Commission, and Brcko is ready to support it in many ways. This Framework Treaty is, of course, only the start of the rehabilitation and development of this huge natural resource, the Sava River. We will need practical measures to carry out the objectives of this treaty. For those, we will need funds. We will even need additional international agreements. But the four countries have worked together extremely well over the past year. I am confident they can give us a big push forward this week.