

Article: Brcko Supervisor Gary Matthews ends his tour

This week Ambassador Gary Matthews has officially left the position of the Supervisor of the Brcko District BIH, which he performed over the last year. Ambassador Matthews is now going to assume responsibilities of the Senior Deputy Special Representative of the UN in Kosovo. The HR Wolfgang Petritsch appointed Gerhard Sontheim a new Supervisor, who had held the position of Deputy Supervisor Representative in Brcko. What are the effects of the "ruling" of Matthews in Brcko?

In the Decision on appointment of Sontheim, The HR Wolfgang Petritsch thanked Ambassador Matthews "for his effective efforts in, amongst other things, enabling the setting up of a working multi-ethnic District Administration, accelerating returns to the District and initiating reforms of the Arizona Market. Ambassador Matthews has made an invaluable contribution to the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Brcko Final Award."

After the period he spent in Brcko, and all the processes that he initiated and directed one could justifiably say that Matthews is a man who feels the Balkans. He had the ability to feel delicate, seemingly inarticulate political reactions which are characteristic for the population of the Balkans. These "messages" have already become a classic in the Balkans, where certain petty politicians and "politicians say one thing and do something else, even when they put their signature on a certain decision, agreement, etc.

Even for such people Gary Matthews had enough tact and patience, and enough wisdom to practically "force" them to take and implement decisions themselves. He knew how to speak his mind to them and warn them about their obligations and responsibilities towards the citizens and political-legal documents. The best evidence for this was seen during the demonstrations of pupils in Brcko that were initiated by politically overcome forces. Then, from the podium of the Assembly, he informed "uninformed delegates".

"Everyone who has a gram of brain can see that these requests have not been addressed by pupils and students. You are all aware as well as I am that this is not the question about pupils and schooling premises. We are all aware that dirty games are played by political elements. I will not tolerate this" (demonstrations and hooliganism) said Gary Matthews.

While some delegates were expecting the order from the Supervisor in order to "excuse" themselves before their political patrons for the failure of demonstrations and destruction of the multi-ethnic concept of education in the Brcko District BIH, Matthews was persistently requesting from the Assembly to take "reasonable measures" itself. In this way he forced the highest legislative body of authority and all delegates in it to assume the responsibility for the future of the District, because of Š.

"This is not only a question about Brcko. We are at the crossroad we will either go towards chaos and riots or rule of law and progress. Appeals for separation of pupils and schools are in collision with the organization of the Brcko District," stated Matthews.

On the contrary to the "instruments of the street", Matthews was patiently working on the establishment of legal order, which is the task of the Interim bodies of authority. He was working on establishment of a community, not of disintegration. He had enough tact and patience to force the legal institutions to work and adhere to the rule of law. Also, he had enough tact and patience to resist taking arbitrary orders in every single excess situation, which is basically, the right move to do in all extraordinary situations.

Thanks to him, the project of multi-ethnic education in the Brcko District BIH remained. He applied the same methods in the process of two-way return. Over the last year, about 5,000 people returned to Brcko while numerous decisions that should provide continuation of this process were taken. There were obstructions in this process as well, but Matthews has always clearly and loudly conveyed a message "that nobody will remain in someone else's property." The "mood" of refugees and DPs in Brcko started changing over the last year. Most of them are now talking about return to their own property, while before they were strongly against such proposals.

Gary Matthews has significantly contributed to the organization of the Brcko District BIH, establishment of the multi-ethnic Government, Administration, police and the Assembly. He "brought" leadership of the entities to the table for negotiations in Brcko, practically "extorted" their signatures and thus made them accept obligations for

financing of the District, as anticipated by the Brcko Final Award, and thus set the foundations for a systematic organization of the relations in the District. A huge contribution Matthews made in regards to resolution of the Arizona market problem too. The Arizona market what used to be the breeding-place of illegal trade is slowly becoming a significant source of budget incomes, while the degree of illegal trade and prostitution was decreased in several actions and raids.

The Administration headed by Matthews had significantly participated in the process of adoption of twenty and preparation of ten more laws, that are slowly "encircling" the system of the authority in Brcko District BIH. It is important to emphasise that the law regulation of the Brcko District is gradually "drowning" into the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and becoming the connective tissue of the Entities. All political analysts have already announced that the Brcko District is going to become a paragon for the organization of de-centralized BIH, with a clear division of the authority on legislative, judicial and executive.

With the last act order – Gary Matthews appointed the judicial authority in the Brcko District and practically "encircled" the system of the authority.

Reviewing the Matthews' era in the Brcko District BIH, it must be admitted that visible results and progress were achieved throughout this period of time. Presumptions for faster resolution of many problems were created, and conditions for faster economic development were prepared. The bridge over Sava was reconstructed, the first investments of the international capital started, and the OHR Management Team headed by Matthews has identified numerous problems and already prepared forms for the privatisation process and economic reforms in the Brcko District BIH.

The significant role in the achievement of visible progress in the process of implementation of the Brcko Final Award was played by Gary Matthews, a man who knew how to pull the strings in a complicated labyrinth of the Balkans' astray, where the politicians are "instruments of the street" and where the authority is instead of being a service acting as absolute monarch of the residents, their will and property.