

Brčko: A Transformational Quality of Life Opportunity is at Hand



Brčko has been given a second chance to reap transformative, long-term benefits from the World Bank's Sava and Drina Rivers Corridors Integrated Development Program, but only if the authorities swiftly carry out the preparatory work for the five projects to be funded and launched by this spring, said the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan.

These projects include the environmentally compliant sealing of the city landfill to prevent pollution from seeping into the Sava river and for the land to be repurposed to better serve the community. The construction of a new, state-of-the-art solid waste management centre will end Brčko's requirement to expend valuable public funds to transport solid waste to a landfill in Zvornik. Both of these projects are aligned with guidelines of the EBRD "Green Cities" initiative that Brcko joined last week.

Other projects include the regulation of the Blizna and Brka rivers to safeguard against flooding, and the construction of an eight-kilometre promenade along the Sava river from Ciglanà to the mouth of the Blizna river. The promenade will allow Brčko's residents to enjoy the beauty of their wonderful riverside location as well as attract tourists to come to Brčko for rest and recreation.

All these projects in the next couple of years will deliver tangible quality of life benefits to the community, but only if construction starts this spring. To accomplish this, the preparatory work and permits have to be completed as a matter of priority. A few years ago, Brčko missed its chance to become a part of this initiative by its inaction. Thanks to the new commitment from the District authorities, and support from the Supervisor, the authorities can still deliver to the community these quality of life improvements.

The Supervisor on Thursday visited the project sites with the District Government Chief Coordinator, and they discussed the steps to be taken over the next six months to achieve a spring start date. The Supervisor had a similar discussion with the Brčko District Coordinator to the BiH Council of Ministers on coordination with state bodies, as the World Bank loan will require approval from the Council of Ministers. The latter is also true for the spring start dates to be realised for the €6.5 EBRD-funded water infrastructure project in Brčko and the signing of the inter-state agreement between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia to reconstruct the Brčko-Gunja bridge.

In his meeting with the District Government and Assembly leadership, the Supervisor heard the unequivocal commitment that the public administration will do its part to ensure things will be ready for the projects to begin this spring.