

Brčko takes a decisive step towards building a better future, but much work remains



Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan welcomed today's adoption of the Law on Budget that institutes a transparent budget process, as well as the directive to "Putevi Brčko" to harness Brčko's abundant resources to repair the Brčko-Gunja Bridge.

As the Supervisor has repeatedly stressed, the Brčko authorities have both the instruments and resources to ensure that Brčko has a bright future. The only question is, are they ready to work for the interests of the Brčko community. This year, as today, we have seen actions that suggest the authorities wish to reverse the negative governance trend of the last seven years, which has eroded the citizens' and investors' confidence in the District authorities, and with that the perspective of a good life in the District.

There is little time left for the authorities to create this positive narrative, as residents of the District are increasingly leaving for the predictable life the European Union offers due to good governance, rule of law and a system of meritocracy, where cronyism and connections do not condition success. This fair environment can be created in Brčko, but the voters must demand it and hold their elected officials and public servants accountable, and not settle in time of elections for small, short-term benefits in exchange

for their votes.

What we have seen over the last few months is only the starting point; if the District authorities are truly committed to Brčko's future, then this spring we will see construction in the Port, work on the bridge, implementation of the Brčko Government-STUDEN Holding initiative to improve the public services for business activity, and the rapid adoption of a new transparent law on associations and foundations, and much, much more.

As the Supervisor underscored multiple times, if the reform dynamic is embraced by the authorities, the international community will provide support at every stage. But, if reform initiatives are not expanded quickly, then the support extended to Brčko by the international community will need to be rethought. 2020 is the decisive year for the Brčko District.