Disinformation by Press RS about Electricity for Brcko

Press RS today published an article about the price of electricity in Brcko that was deliberately misleading and which deliberately excluded correct information provided to the paper yesterday at its own request. The editors apparently place greater value on needlessly frightening Brcko residents than in informing the public of the facts.

The truth is that the price paid for electricity by the Brcko PUK will go up for the next six months as of 1 July 2010 but it is not yet possible to determine by the exact amount. This is because Mr. Vladimir Dokic, Chairman of the SERC, continues to prevent the SERC from fulfilling its legal obligations to issue a license to Brcko District and to set tariffs for Brcko customers. The EP RS already increased the price for electricity provided to Brcko for the first six months of the year by some 7% compared to last year, but the PUK was able to absorb that price increase by decreasing funds needed for other purposes.

The PUK will be able to absorb some—but not all—of the increased costs as of 1 July. This means that some other source of revenue will be needed to meet the new increase, either from government sources and/or customers. Supervisor of Brcko District Dr. Raffi Gregorian and his staff have been in frequent contact with the relevant District authorities on this matter since last November and appropriate cost mitigation measures will be taken. The Supervisor will also use his authorities to make sure that persons or bodies responsible for any unnecessary rise in price for Brcko customers will be held accountable and the District made financially whole.

The problem with electricity had emerged during mandates of previous Supervisors and RS Government, but it is the shared responsibility of the current RS government and the Supervisor to see that the problem is finally fixed. The RS and Brcko District signed an agreement on the issue in September 2001. All that is needed now are several amendments to the existing RS Law on Electricity to make sure that District residents and customers are treated the same as everyone else in BiH, and that entity-based elektroprivredas have an obligation as a public service to supply electricity to Brcko in line with BiH law and EU directives.

If the law is followed, then Brcko can obtain electricity from either or both EP RS and EP BiH. It is an outright falsehood that the Supervisor “imposed a decision” to have the District supplied with electricity from the Federation.

The Supervisor informed the RS Prime Minister on 15 June that the adoption and gazetting of acceptable amendments, along with unblocking of the SERC, is all that stands in the way of completing the Final Award and initiation of the process that would allow the PIC Steering Board to take a decision on terminating Supervision in due course. Otherwise, Supervision will continue until this requirement is fulfilled.