

Brcko Supervisor Suspends Esad Atic as Head of Brcko District Education Department

Brcko Supervisor Susan R. Johnson today suspended Esad Atic pending an independent review of the circumstances surrounding the procurement and distribution of Primary School textbooks in Brcko. Mr. Atic is suspended from his position as head of the Education Department in the Interim Government of the Brcko District and Mr. Izet Banda has been appointed as Acting Head of the Department. The Brcko Supervisor took this decision following broad consultations, including political parties and the Mayor of Brcko, who had already taken the decision to suspend the Head of the Subdivision for Primary Education.

The investigation will assess Mr. Atic's level of responsibility for the distribution of textbooks for Primary Schools in Brcko District in languages other than those guaranteed under the law, a development that has undermined confidence in the District's truly multi-ethnic and non-discriminatory education system.

Supervisor Johnson has asked the Brcko Mayor to establish an independent, impartial and professional Commission to investigate the facts, circumstances and political and professional responsibilities under which textbooks were procured and distributed, and to submit the Commission's report to the Supervisor and the Interim Assembly within 15 days.

"When I issued the Supervisory Order of 15 April 2004 delegating authority on Education to the Brcko District Government and Assembly, I retained the right to intervene in the area of education were the District Authorities to violate

the general principles of multi-ethnicity and democratic governance upon which the Brcko District is based,” Supervisor Johnson said. “The Statute of the Brcko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the District Law on Education guarantee equal right to education without discrimination to all groups in the District, and we are determined to protect these principles. Real achievements have been made over the last four years in the provision of multi-ethnic education in Brcko District. I urge political parties, members of the Government, and parents to refrain from any action that might increase tensions or mistrust.

“This Supervisory Order does not predetermine my final judgment in this matter,” the Supervisor added. “Political responsibility and accountability of executive office holders must be upheld as an essential element in the District’s democratic multi-ethnic governance.”