

Information on Brčko District

Brčko sits at the crossroads of Bosnia and Herzegovina where the narrowest portion of Republika Srpska meets the Federation. The Posavina Corridor in Republika Srpska, only five kilometers wide at Brčko, connects the eastern and western parts of Republika Srpska and provides the easiest north-south access for the Federation across the Sava river to the rest of Europe. Traditionally the trade, industry and transport hub of the region, Brčko borders Croatia on the Sava and is within three hours of Zagreb and ninety minutes from Belgrade via Croatia.

<u>1991 Census</u>
Brčko Municipality
Bosniac 44%
Croat 25%
Serb 21%
Other 10%
Brčko Grad (town)
Bosniac 56%
Croat 7%
Serb 20%
Other 17.5%

As a result of the war, the municipality has been split between the Federation and the RS and the town itself, situated north of the Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), is 97,5% Serb, approximately 75% of whom are displaced persons from the Federation and refugees from Croatia.

At the Dayton Peace Talks in November 1995, the parties were unable to agree on control of Brčko. The dispute was put to international arbitration in Annex II of the Dayton Peace Accords. On 14 February 1997, the Presiding Arbitrator of the Brčko Tribunal, Mr. Roberts Owen (U.S.) issued a decision placing the RS portion of the Brčko municipality under international supervision. The Arbitral Tribunal further extended the supervision period, on 15 March 1998, for a year. The Final Award was issued on 5 March 1999.

The Final Award creates a Special District for the entire pre-war Opština whose territory belongs to both Entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation. An Annex to the Final Award, issued by the Arbitral Tribunal on 18 August 1999, deals with issues such as the structure of the District Government, the judicial and penal system, the police, education, taxation and others.

There is still much to be done. The Supervisor has asked a great deal from all sides and has received significant compliance on a number of issues. The main challenge in front of us is the implementation of the arbitration Final Award. But implementation remains costly. The Supervisor still needs the support of the international community to demonstrate to the parties that there are significant material benefits to compliance with the Arbitral decision and with the Dayton Peace Accords.