Positive Change in Brčko is Underway, but Reforms Need to be Accelerated

Positive changes are underway in Brčko, be it on infrastructure, business investment, and improved public services. Indeed, over the last 18 months, important laws have been adopted and steps taken to enhance transparency and good governance. However, the speed of implementation must be accelerated, especially in ensuring the requisite rulebooks are in place for the laws being adopted, Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor Michael Scanlan stated today.

Adoption of the rulebooks is the responsibility of the entire public administration, from the leadership to civil servants. Despite having one of the largest and well-paid public administrations in the country, the preparation of the requisite rulebooks is dreadfully slow. The Law on Budget was adopted in December 2019, but the rulebooks were only in place as of March 2021. The Law on Associations and Foundation was adopted in October 2020, but the rulebooks will only be finalized this month. This lethargic pace of operationalizing laws must be rectified. A test will be the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest adopted on 24 March 2021. The rulebook and the commission created by this law need to be in place before the summer August break.

“I have met many hardworking officials and civil servants, but

all too often their productivity is undermined by those who are more focused on their own benefits than serving the community. With good-paying jobs also comes the obligation to do the job well. Public administration is about serving the public, and those who choose not to do their job must be held accountable," added the Supervisor.

International partners are willing to help, but Brčko District officials and civil servants must actively lead the implementation. There will be no better example of this than with the work of the Anti-Corruption Office. The U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement is interested in partnering with Brčko District to combat corruption, including in helping build the capacity of the Anti-Corruption Office. The positive impact of this Office must be seen this year.

In a series of meetings on 26 April, the Supervisor discussed accelerating reforms with the Brčko City and Assembly leadership, the leaders of opposition parties in the District Assembly SP, NiP, and SBB, representatives of parties not in public office DF and DNS, and the President of the Union of National Minorities.

The Supervisor underscored that they all play important roles in advancing good governance in the District, including by manifesting the highest standard of public service through their own actions and work ethic.

"Success in Brčko depends on the full commitment by all who choose to serve the public – in the Government, in the Assembly, and in the civil service," underscored the Supervisor.

The recent planting of trees in Brčko on Earth Day as a part of a country wide Italian Embassy coordinated initiative (Zelena mreža BiH) marks the importance of addressing life issues of environmental protection, sustainable development

and tourism, improvement of waste management and development of renewable energy sources all central to the District’ and BiH’s future.