

Reform in Brčko is about actions not words



The authorities in Brčko have an opportunity to decisively break with practices of the past and move the District towards a prosperous future with good governance, good infrastructure, and good private-sector jobs. The first three months of 2021 will show if they are up to the task, the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko District Supervisor, Michael Scanlan, stated today.

On Monday and Tuesday, the Supervisor met with District Assembly Speaker Siniša Milić and Deputy Speaker Ivo Filipović, as well as heads of Brčko Government departments and representatives of the Public Property Office to discuss priorities for the Brčko District in the first quarter of 2021.

These priorities include the adoption of the 2021 budget, a new law on conflict of interest, guidelines for public administration reform, issuing the remaining two tenders for the modernisation of the port, and selecting the optimal solution for restoring truck freight transport between Croatia (EU market) and Brčko's port.

The priorities also include working with the International Monetary Fund to strengthen financial oversight of the District's public companies, with UNDP to rollout the energy efficiency retrofitting of the District's public buildings, and reaching agreement with the World Bank Sava River program

to fund the construction of the Waste Management Recycling Center.

The Supervisor also met with “STUDEN & CO Holding” Corporate Communications Director Nataša Pucar to be briefed on the status of the public-private initiative launched by the District Government and “STUDEN & CO Holding” regarding the 20 million KM investment that will create 220 jobs in the new Brod business zone.

Achieving all these outputs by the end of March will mean a new beginning for Brčko, but this also presupposes harnessing the District’s budget – the largest per-capita budget in the country – for the good of the entire community. On this basis Brčko should have the best education, healthcare, and public services in the country.

In this context, a moratorium on new employment in the public administration, institutions, and companies, including temporary services, would send the right message that patronage and nepotism are no longer tolerated. The moratorium should stay in place until a transparent hiring process is imposed.

Every KM in the District’s budget must go back to the community through sound initiatives and responsible budget spending. Instead of expending 5 million KM to provide hot lunches to well-paid civil servants, as an example, the same amount of funding can ensure a 100% mine-free District in two years.

“During my visit, I heard the right words from the authorities, but these words will only have meaning if the listed outputs are delivered in the first 90 days of their mandate. The good work done so far should not be wasted, and with each new positive step, the international community will be ready to provide additional expertise and assistance,” underscored the Supervisor.