Reforms in Brčko will succeed if politics and patronage are kept out of public administration

Brčko is on the right track, but success will depend on the timely completion of the EBRD and World Bank infrastructure projects and the focused expenditure of budget funds to the benefit of the community as a whole, said the Principal Deputy High Representative and Brčko Supervisor, Michael Scanlan.

On Tuesday, the Supervisor paid a visit to “Komunalno Brčko” to be briefed on the purchase of two portable electricity substations as part of a 1.5 million KM grant approved by the District Assembly in October 2020. The mobile substations will improve the reliability of the supply of electricity in Brčko in the event of a natural disaster or other technical disruption. The grant is also funding the laying this year of 35 kW and 10 kW cables to expand the Port’s capacity and facilitate new business investments.

Along with the retrofitting of three public healthcare buildings for energy efficiency in cooperation with UNDP, these are positive examples of the use of Brčko’s resources for the benefit of the community, the Supervisor added.

Scanlan also had meetings at the Brčko Port and Brčko Roads to discuss the timeline for completing the modernisation of the

port and restoring access of heavy vehicle transports from Croatia and beyond to Brčko's port via a new Gunja-Brčko bridge.

In his meeting with "STUDEN & CO Holding," the Supervisor was briefed on the implementation plan for the special agreement between the District authorities and "STUDEN" that will facilitate the creation of 220 new jobs in the Brod Business Zone, unanimously approved last week by the District Assembly.

The Supervisor met with District Government and Assembly leaders and applauded the adoption of the Development Strategy, which will help ensure a transparent, apolitical, and balanced development of the District over the next seven years.

However, the rapid implementation of the donor-funded infrastructure projects will remain a challenge as Brčko's public administration has a shortage of the requisite technical and coordination skills, and interim measures to address these gaps are being blocked for political reasons. "This has to stop. Brčko has a partner in the international community, but our ability to assist with expertise and funds requires Brčko to consistently demonstrate the political willingness to put an end to patronage so the work on reforms can quickly be completed."

Thus, Brčko's international partners have prioritised supporting an efficient, transparent, and impartial process for selecting the staff of the Commission for Assessing Conflict of Interest and the Anti-Corruption Office through expert assistance from the OHR and the U.S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, the Supervisor underscored.