

Remarks by PDHR and Brcko Supervisor Michael Scanlan



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor and a pleasure to be here today to join you in celebrating Brcko District Day. I would like to especially thank Mayor Milic and Deputy Mayor Domic, as well as Speaker Kadric and Deputy Speaker Filipovic and the many residents of Brcko who I have had the pleasure of meeting in recent days and who have given me such a warm welcome.

I also wish to assure you that I take my responsibilities as the Brcko Supervisor very seriously and in preparation for my arrival I met with all the supervisors back to Raffi Gregorian.

The common message I heard in my meetings was that Brcko has all the ingredients to be a long-term success story, but they also underscored that there is still much work to be done by the authorities in Brcko. My expectations, therefore, of the District's leadership is very much informed by this.

I also had a chance in Washington to meet with the Brcko Presiding Arbiter, Ambassador Clint Williamson, who will visit Brcko later this year, and who asked me to pass on his congratulations to all of you on this special Brcko day. But today of course is also International Women's Day, and thus I congratulate the women of Brcko and wish them all the best.

This anniversary is also a chance to reaffirm our commitment

to build a better future for Brcko, one which provides for a supportive environment to bring up a family, to earn a decent wage, and to live in dignity and security, something that women have always been in the forefront of advocating for in our societies.

The key to achieving this is perfecting the financial stability, efficiency and accountability of Brcko's governing institutions as this will ensure reliable public services and a predictable business environment. Businesses, local or foreign, have a choice on where they locate themselves and thus which communities will benefit from the jobs they create or the taxes they pay. Therefore, the adoption of the 2019 budget this month is a must if public services are to be provided in the District and more businesses are to open or expand in Brcko. Hereto, the introduction of fiscal cash registers by the end of June will reinforce the fight against the grey economy, strengthen the rule of law, and generate more revenues for public services and minimize the arguments of those who would challenge Brcko's indirect tax revenue coefficient. Finally, the adoption this fall of an improved law on the budget will promote greater fiscal discipline, transparency and responsibility in spending.

Infrastructure development, be it to provide better public services or new economic opportunities, is also central to promoting economic gains that go beyond the construction work itself. All together, these projects are critical to the economic development of Brcko and as such are a catalyst for the prosperity of its citizens.

If Brcko does its part, and this is the most important part of this speech, the international community will be its partner. You have a right, indeed a duty to yourselves and to your community, to call on your elected leaders and public officials to work towards compromises that allow for agreements on policies and projects that benefit the community, and importantly to reward them with your support

when they do. I have been impressed in my meetings with your leaders and their readiness to tackle the pressing issues I mentioned to further develop the District. I look forward to working with them and to supporting their efforts in making Brcko a better place for its citizens.

Thank you and once again, it is an honor and pleasure to be here in Brcko.