

Statement of Brcko Supervisor Susan Johnson

Governance Issues

The end of the summer vacation, and the beginning of the fall is an opportunity to reflect on progress made toward achieving goals and objectives set at the beginning of the year, and to assess what is achievable by the end of this year, which will mark the halfway point in the mandate of this first elected government.

As you may remember, my office was conscious of the discouragingly low level of results and the non-functioning of many important offices in the administration, combined with serious failures in fulfilling basic responsibilities.

Therefore, the Government and my office started in the spring to jointly establish priorities and objectives, to agree on deadlines and to seek ways to accomplish, together, what we thought is in the best interest of the citizens.

The aim of these joint meetings, held in Gunja and Brka, was:

First, to help the Government signal the beginning of a new approach to setting and implementing policy objectives; and

Second, to change their attitude toward citizens and important stakeholders, especially the business community, the unemployed, the socially vulnerable.

A marked departure from past practices is necessary if Brcko is to have a more prosperous future.

As a special unit of local self-government, the District has been given a unique opportunity to build a prosperous future for itself and to contribute to a functional and united

country. If it is to succeed, it needs the best leadership possible, and this leadership needs to be provided by the Government and key managers in the administration.

The Assembly must be more vigorous in overseeing the work of government.

Political leaders and public employees need to be held accountable for their work.

Public employees cannot and should not expect to keep their jobs because of political patronage.

Political leadership should not expect the support of voters if they fail to deliver basic services, to develop the economy and create a good climate for business, and to implement policies that protect and support the socially vulnerable.

In the two joint meetings we held previously this year we reviewed objectives and priorities together and we had agreed, in both sessions, on 10 priorities, to be accomplished within 90 days from the time the meetings were held.

In preparing for a third meeting, which is being held today, we found that:

- 60 % of the priorities agreed upon in April in Gunja have not yet been completed
- 90 % of the priorities agreed upon in June in Brka have not been completed

This raises questions about will and about capacity.

Is Government really serious and committed to achieving these objectives, as we thought?

After considerable reflection, I concluded that it is now time for Government to meet on its own, without OHR, to review its own performance, identify agreed upon objectives which have

not been met, who the responsible officials and departments are, to develop its own priorities and action plans for reaching those objectives, and then to present those to us and to the public. This is government's responsibility.

I urge the Government, and the elected representatives of the District, and in particular those councilors who represent the Government majority in the Assembly, to heed the widespread public concern and frustration over long and unexplained delays in approving or disapproving requests, issuing permits and responding to citizens businesses, over discrimination in employment, and the too frequent non-performance of certain Departments and Subdivisions, most evident within the Departments for Administrative Support, Urbanism, Strategic Planning and Real Estate, Department for Health Care Services, and Department for Public Records.

Let me give just some examples to illustrate what we are talking about:

Spatial and urban development plans are years behind schedule

Legalization of illegal structures stalled

Requests for permits or licenses not answered within required time frames or at all

No effective, transparent administration of public property

No badly needed day care center although funds are available

No kidney dialysis center after three years

No family medicine program even though it has been talked about for 4 years

Numerous cases of alleged corruption, nepotism and other failures that have not been dealt with seriously through the disciplinary process

No modern, user-friendly public library,

No theater, no cinema

No swimming pool this summer,

No all year indoors pool

No real steps to develop the Ficibajer as a public recreation area

It seems that too many political leaders, heads of department and heads of sub-divisions calmly tolerate the overall lack of effectiveness and efficiency.

Regrettably, the absence of visible dedication to a citizen friendly and cost effective administration continues.

Common perception is that far more energy is spent on struggles for positions on the budget for party members than on dealing with the real work of governance and resolving the problems that block economic development and delivery of better city services.

We have provided more than enough recommendations on what needs to be done to achieve more cost effective public administration and what the priorities should be. Our primary interest is to help the people of the District of all nationalities to build a better future for themselves and their children and to strengthen the District's sustainability as a unique unit of multiethnic self-governance in BiH.

Regrettably, we do not see a serious commitment to these goals from public administration and the governing majority. Commitment is measured by results, not by promises. Now is the time to deliver results.

The responsibility for good governance and effective public administration rests with the Mayor, his Government and with the Assembly councilors. The citizens have to draw their

conclusions and hold them accountable.

The BFAO will continue to offer assistance, whether this is accepted is up to them. The BFAO will, however, continue to implement key requirements from the Final Award, that are yet to be completed.

My departure

My mandate as Supervisor was for two years; it was extended for 9 months; it is now coming to an end. This is a normal process.

The High Representative has announced Raffi Gregorian's appointment as the new Supervisor of Brcko as of 1 October and Mr. Gregorian will continue the work needed to bring about the conditions required for bringing the supervisory regime to an end no later than the end of the OHR mandate in BiH.

The United States is committed to full implementation of the Final Award, to a successful Brcko that is fairly represented in key decision making bodies in BiH and to resolving the outstanding issues associated with Brcko which is one of the milestones along BiH's path towards Euro Atlantic institutions.