



The vote on the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest to determine the future of Brčko

On 24 March, Brčko authorities have an opportunity to show that they place the District's future above their individual interests by adopting an effective and EU-compliant Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest, Supervisor Michael Scanlan stated today.

"With the abundant resources extended to Brčko, its residents should have the best public services, the best schools and hospitals, and the most vibrant economy in BiH, but regrettably the District's special budget coefficient and public positions too often have been used by deputies to advance personal or patronage interests – often under the false claims of protecting ethnic interests. As a result, the entire community has suffered.

Adopting the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest is an opportunity to change this practice, but only if it is adopted in a form that is effective, operational, and consistent with EU standards – which includes, among other issues, voting by simple majority in the future commission tasked with assessing potential conflict of interest, not restricting the definition of close family members solely to household members, and retaining reasonable deadlines for alleviating potential conflicting circumstances. This is the signal the Assembly deputies must send to demonstrate their commitment to improving the transparency of budget expenditures, the integrity of public service, and the openness of the District to business investment.

If they fail to do so, it will be impossible to justify the continued exceptional resource assistance provided to Brčko. As it stands now, the patronage-driven expansion of the civil service and the exponential growth of subsidies eats up most of Brčko's budget. As a result, very limited funds remain for capital expenditures projects like a new bridge, the public swimming pool, or the stadium. Thus, the message of trust extended by adopting this Law in its correct form is critical for Brčko to maintain access to this exceptional assistance.

In this context, a roll-call vote in the Assembly provides the opportunity for delegates to demonstrate their commitment to the people of Brčko they were elected to serve," added the Supervisor.

Thanks to transparency-oriented legislation adopted in recent months, Brčko is moving towards a more community-focused expenditure of public funds. Pending examples of this are the energy efficiency retrofitting of schools and hospitals, the transparent and justified funding for civil society organisations, and the building of a new bridge across the Sava River. This is only the starting point of the benefits that Brčko residents could enjoy, and the adoption of the Law on Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the District will make this a reality, underscored the Supervisor.

On Wednesday, the Supervisor met with the District Mayor and Deputy Mayor, and the Assembly Speaker and Deputy Speaker, as well as the heads of HDZ BiH, SDA, and SNSD caucuses in the District Assembly.

On Thursday, the Supervisor also met with the Head of the Public Safety Department, as well as the representatives of the "Vermont" Youth Centre.