

VI. ELECTION SYSTEM

Elections do not need to be held immediately. The three elected authorities now existing within Brcko municipality could be merged, as an experiment in seeing whether they can co-operate. Anyway there is no reason to expect, if elections were held now, a result much different from the balance of forces now in place. Meanwhile the entire structure of Brcko will change around the incumbents.

However, sooner or later the Supervisor will need to call an election. Brcko should not simply follow the system used in all Bosnian elections to date, a system which plays on the voter's fear and dislike of perceived extremists in other ethnic groups and leads him to vote for a strong party of his own ethnic group as a defence. The result is familiar deadlock.

Instead, once again Brcko can lead the way for the rest of the country. By the standards of post-war Bosnia Brcko will be a mixed multiethnic community, and an ideal place to try out new ideas to produce a more generally-acceptable result than separation into polarised hostile camps⁴. A reasoned, creative approach to constructive democracy in Brcko could give valuable pointers to a way forward for Bosnia as a whole.

Recommendations:

- Existing elected office-holders should be given a chance to work together, and their progress carefully observed.
- If co-operation is not satisfactory, the Supervisor should work with OSCE and OHR to draw up an election system for Brcko whose explicit purpose would be to produce a local government within which parties would collaborate, rather than simply insult each other and block initiatives.

⁴ A process often described, sadly but all too accurately, as Balkanisation.