



Government
of the Republic
of Serbia

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) in Serbia is a medium-term development framework aimed at reducing the key forms of poverty by creating material and other prerequisites and by providing opportunities to each person to provide the basic subsistence for themselves and their families.

The PRS offers an analysis of causes, characteristics and profile of poverty in Serbia, as well as main strategic guidelines for eliminating them in the coming years. The Government of Serbia is committed to economic growth and development, for which reason the PRS activities are geared towards economic development and growth, prevention of emergence of new poverty and care for the traditionally poor groups.

The final PRS document was adopted on October 16, 2003, whereas on February 17, 2005 the Government authorized the Deputy Prime Minister to regularly inform the Government on the Strategy implementation process, in cooperation with the PRS Implementation Focal Point.

Program „Civil Society Focal Points“

The PRS Implementation Focal Point has begun the implementation of the program „Civil Society Focal Points“ that aims to improve the communication and cooperation between the governmental and non-governmental sectors and ensure stronger participation of civil society organizations in the key processes implemented by the Government, as well as in the activities related to Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) implementation.

Seven civil society focal points were recently selected within the framework of the program. These represent vulnerable population groups, particularly exposed to poverty in Serbia (youth, persons with disabilities, Roma, children, women, elderly, refugees and internally displaced persons).

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BOZIDAR DJELIC, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA

Transition and Solidarity for Poverty Reduction

A couple of years ago When the delegation of the Serbian Government met with Victor Orban, the then Prime Minister of Hungary and inquired as to the best feature of transition, the answer was clear and concise „The best thing about transition is its end“

Serbia made a huge methodological and action breakthrough in combating poverty thanks to the efforts of the former minister Gordana Matkovic and her team. Namely, in 2002 for the first time, it conducted a survey covering entire households (consumer units) and all the formal and informal types of incomes and expenditures in order to obtain a true picture on the financial status of our population. The Poverty Reduction Strategy was drawn on the basis of the outcomes of this survey. The same survey was undertaken in May and June this year. The comparative results thereof will be obtained at the end of 2007. This will show the effect of the measures implemented and help identify priorities for the forthcoming period.

The World Bank assessed the document entitled Poverty Reduction Strategy in Serbia adopted by the Serbian Government as one of the best documents of this sort in the world. A detailed strategy with recommendations was also defined and the present Government shall continue implementing it with the support of the Serbian budget, the European Union, the IPA program and international financial institutions and donors. For, the only legitimate beneficiaries of these efforts are our most destitute citizens. The cooperation with the World Bank in implementation of this Strategy is continued.

Several days ago we signed an agreement on donation of USD 500,000 earmarked both for ministries and all the partners at the level of local communities working with us on the Strategy implementation.

At the moment there is 8.8% of extremely poor population in Serbia. Our aim is to halve this figure by 2010. Poverty is higher in rural areas – up to 2.5 times higher than in the cities. Social stratification, consequences of wars, breakup of family units and the low level of education, above all, represent the source of poverty in Serbia.

Transition in itself can only cause additional stratification and strike the weakest, for the sound market logic makes a clear distinction between successful companies and those that are incurring losses, between capable local communities that attract investments and the passive areas. The frequently mentioned decrease of public expenditures mostly occurs through decrease of the so called „social transfers“ that are taken from everyone in order to support those economically less viable. The assumption is that the stronger economy would „provide a driver for everyone“ the poorest included.

The paradox lies in the fact that the poorest are the greatest winners of a successful and swift transition, but that due to the time difference in effects and unequal distribution of

problems, they often slow down the required changes.

Perspectives should be offered to all, including the poor who, frequently, cannot simply break the vicious circle of poverty without an active solidarity of the rest of the society. Therefore, accelerated implementation of the PRS recommendations is called for.

By implementing the PRS, the Government of Serbia implements reforms in all the areas by provision of funds from the budget and the international donors.

In the period behind us new incentives to employment of the youth, Roma and persons with disabilities have been introduced as well as new social welfare services including relocation of children from institutions and in-house care of the elderly. We have introduced more favourable conditions for crediting of enterprises located in the most underdeveloped municipalities through the Development Fund.

Pre-school education is now mandatory and new profiles of secondary vocational education are being introduced. In the area of minority protection we are initiating Roma health promotion programs. The objective is to create new jobs and ensure balanced development of all regions in Serbia, resulting, in turn, in a more balanced reduction of poverty.

REPUBLIC STATISTIC OFFICE: Living Standards Measurement Survey

The Living Standards Measurement Survey in the Republic of Serbia was conducted in the course of May and June 2007 on the territory of Central Serbia and Vojvodina, primarily with a view to ensure continuity and comparability of data thereof with the outcomes of the surveys conducted in 2002 and 2003.

Aims of the Survey: the main aim of the Survey is to provide reliable and updated information on the level of living standards in the country, and in this context, on the level of poverty among the population and particularly certain socially vulnerable categories such as the internally displaced persons and refugees, the elderly and persons with disabilities, children, etc.

The results of the Survey will provide the Government and all the relevant decision-makers with a realistic picture of current social and economic trends in Serbia in the period between the two living standards surveys and enable them to assess the efficiency and viability of programs and measures implemented in this period. The valid data on the living standards should, inter alia, pro-

vide basis for all international comparisons, as well as for successful planning of activities aimed at poverty reduction, especially from the aspect of the adopted Millennium Development Goals.

The Survey: the Living Standards Measurement Survey was conducted by the Republic Statistic Office with the financial and expert support of: the World Bank, UK Department for International Development, UN High Commissioner for Refugees and UN Development Program.

The Living Standards Measurement Survey, conducted on a representative sample at the national level, covered more than 7,000 households. The sample was selected on the basis of the statistical data from the 2002 Census with the updating of survey circles and addresses on households within their boundaries prior to the beginning of the survey.

In the first stage, the selected units were survey circles and in the second, the households within the selected enumeration district.

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REPUBLIC STATISTIC OFFICE:

Living Standards Measurement Survey

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Methodological instruments of the Survey: the key methodological instrument applied in the survey is the LSMS Questionnaire which consists of 10 blocks of questions (modules): 1) demography, 2) migrations (with additional questions for the internally displaced persons), 3) housing and real estate, 4) social programmes, 5) health and health care, 6) daily food, beverages and tobacco consumption, 7) non-food items consumption and services utilization, 8) education, 9) work status, 10) agriculture. Along with the Questionnaire LSMS-1, a separate questionnaire entitled „Water supply and waste disposal“ was filled in alternate households pertaining to the „national sample“. Also, special questionnaires were used to collect information on infrastructural and other buildings and institutions located in the selected enumeration districts.

Associates in the Survey: a large number of associates were commissioned for the field work on the Living Standards Measurement Survey on different jobs: 16 methodologists – instructors trained and controlled the work of 30 field instructors who, in their own stead, trained and controlled approximately 300 interviewers in the field. 12 Survey implementation controllers and 8 Survey managers were tasked with ensuring the successful implementation of the entire exercise.

Response of households, processing and publication of results: the work in the field was completed on 4 July. Interviews were successfully carried out in 99.85% of households from the sample of internally displaced persons and in 77.84% of households from the „national sample“. The Survey did not allow for additional lists of households or replacements which called for exceptionally hard work of the interviewers and other participants in the field. After the takeover and the visual inspection, data entry phase ensued and successive coding of data on activities, profession and educational level of the interviewed persons. The preliminary results of this Survey i.e. a tabular overview of its basic findings will be available at the website of the Republic Statistic Office in late 2007.

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Director of the Republic Statistic Office*

USD 500,000 Donation of the World Bank to Poverty Reduction

Bozidar Djelic the Deputy Prime Minister and Orsalia Kalantzopoulou, Director and Regional Coordinator of the World Bank for Europe, South East Europe and Central Asia signed an agreement on donation of the World Bank to the implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy totaling USD 500,000.

Following the signing of the agreement, Bozidar Djelic stated that approximately 9% of Serbian citizens were poor and stressed that the aim of the Government was to halve this figure by 2010.

The Deputy Prime Minister announced that the World Bank donation would be used for co-financing programmes implemented by the Government of Serbia through the PRS Implementation Focal Point since 2005 with the financial support of the United Kingdom Government amounting to GBP 2.3 million. The proceeds of the donation will, inter alia, be used for identification of new priorities for the next three years in the key sectors covered by the Strategy: employment, education, health and social welfare, Djelic explained.

Five Loans of the World Bank for Serbian Development Priorities

Mirko Cvetkovic, Minister of Finance in the Government of Serbia and Simon Gray, Director of the World Bank Office in Serbia signed, on 27 July 2007, five loan and credit agreements for implementation of projects related to regional development, agriculture competitiveness, flood protection, rehabilitation of road network and energy efficiency.

Following the signing of agreements, Cvetkovic told a press conference held in the Government of Serbia that the loans would be allocated to below activities and in following amounts:

- regional development of Bor – USD 43 million
- reform of agriculture in transition – USD 21.5 million
- irrigation and drainage – USD 50 million
- road network modernization – USD 50 million and
- energy efficiency – USD 28 million

He said that USD 4.5 million from the allocated funds represented a donation, so that the loan of Serbia totals USD 188 million.

PUBLICATION: Survey of Health of Citizens in Serbia

The publication "2006 Survey of Health of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia" was presented at a press conference in early July. The representatives of the press were addressed by Tomica Milosavljevic, Minister of Health and Jasmina Grozdanov from the Public Health Institute. The Survey was implemented by the Ministry of Health with the support and expert assistance of the World Bank, the regional office of the World Health Organization and the Public Health Institute.

The previous survey was conducted in 2000, before the October changes. Therefore, the results of the present survey represent an important basis for evaluation of effects of the work of the Ministry of Health in reforming and developing the health care system and maintaining and

preserving the health of our citizens.

The results of the Survey indicated important successes in decreasing the incidence of smoking – the rate of smoking was reduced from 40.5% in 2000 to 33.6% in 2006 among adult population, and a drop from 22.9% to 15.5% among the young people aged 15 – 19 in the same period. A drop was also registered in the percentage of population using private health services: – 19.4% in 2006 as compared to 23.9% in 2000. 54.2% of adults most often procured medications through prescriptions which is more than in 2000 when this percentage totaled 39.4%. Almost one half of the adult population and approximately 90% of children and youth assessed their health as good and very good.

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WHO AWARD: „One Smoker, Many Victims“

The Ministry of Health of the Government of the Republic of Serbia is the recipient of this year's World Health Organization (WHO) award for the region of Europe for the campaign "One smoker, many victims". The award is presented each year to individuals or institutions for the efforts invested and results obtained in tobacco control. The award is presented on 31 May at the World No Tobacco Day.

The ongoing campaign "One smoker, many victims" was launched by the National Committee for Prevention of Smoking of the Ministry of Health on 31 January 2007.

WHO has found that the campaign illustrates in a strong, shocking, picturesque and motivating manner that smoking affects the health of many, and not only of smokers and that the reactions it provoked were strong.

INVITATION OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH:

Fight against HIV/AIDS through Decentralization of Services

The Ministry of Health issued a Call for Project Proposals of organizations that would implement activities within the framework of the project "Improvement of the National Response to HIV/AIDS through Decentralization of Key Health Services." The Project is financed by the Global Fund to Fight Against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

The Project Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Health envisages a number of activities aimed at:

- prevention of AIDS transmission among the high risk population groups;
- ensurance of continuity of care and treatment services for the persons living with HIV;
- creation of environment supportive to HIV prevention and care of persons living with HIV and
- capacity building of the system of health care for development of effective, efficient and accessible services.

All the organizations interested in implementing the activities with the above mentioned objectives are eligible to apply by submitting their project proposals.

The deadline for submission of project proposals expired on 20 July 2007.

For detailed info, please contact: Ana Milosavljevic and Farida Bassioni Stamenic

Tel: 011 206 88 26, work days from 10a.m. to 2p.m.
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Strengthening of Cooperation between Republic and Local Government

The Parliament of the Republic of Serbia and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), being the national association of local self-governments in Serbia, signed a Protocol on Cooperation in the National Assembly 25 June 2007.

By signing the Protocol the new membership of the Parliament confirmed its commitment to full respect of democratic principles and strengthening of cooperation between the republic and local governments.

The Protocol was signed by Oliver Dulic, Parliament Speaker, on behalf of the Parliament and Zeljko Ozezovic, President of SCTM and the president of the municipality of New Belgrade.

Increased participation of local self-government units in all the stages of the decision-making process is considered to be one of the significant values contributing to attainment of the European standards. SCTM seeks to contribute to the swifter improvement of the living conditions in local communities and consequently, to the economic and overall progress of the society.

COMPETITIONS OF THE VOJVODINA GUARANTEE FUND:

For Women Entrepreneurs and Start-Up Programs

The Vojvodina Guarantee Fund with the guarantee potential totaling RSD 200 million, announced, mid-July, competitions aimed at funding procurement of equipment for women entrepreneurs and start-up programs of the labour inactive women from Vojvodina.

Presenting the competitions, Goran Vasic, the Director of the Guarantee Fund said that Banka Intesa and Panonska Banka provided RSD 150 million. The additional RSD 50 million were secured by the Province.

The repayment deadlines in both competitions are up to six years with the 6.95%/annum interest rate and a 12-month grace period. RSD 120 million have been earmarked for start-up programs. The labour inactive women will be able to apply for loans amounting up to RSD 1 million in the areas of processing and manufacture, tourism, crafts, old crafts and production services. RSD 80 million has been allocated for loans for financing procurement of equipment to women entrepreneurs and founders of small businesses that have been operational for less than three years. The total sum of these loans shall not exceed RSD 2 million.

Bojan Pajtic, President of the Executive Council of Vojvodina said Vojvodina "recorded a surge in combating unemployment over the past six months with the number of the unemployed in the Province reduced by approximately 25,000 since December and now standing at 250,000."

Recalling that the Executive Council secured employment for 12,500 persons over the past 12 months through programs and funds, Pajtic assessed that over 600 women would be employed should all the RSD 200 million of the guarantee potential be used. "Women represent over 52% of all the unemployed persons in Vojvodina. Only one in 40 enterprises in Vojvodina is owned by a woman. The objective of these competitions is to rectify these statistics" said Pajtic.

Further to business banks, the partners in the project are the Regional Centre for Social and Economic Development "Banat" the Academy of Women Entrepreneurship in Kikinda, Zrenjanin Educational Centre as well as the regional SME agencies from Sombor and Alma-Mons from Novi Sad.

"STRENGTHENING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS CAPACITIES" PROGRAM Best Practices Selected

The instances of best practice at the local level within the framework of the Program "Strengthening of Local Governments Capacities" were made public in late June.

The evaluation team, consisting of the representatives of CESID and PALGO centers and SCTM, selected the projects of the following municipalities:

For the 1st topic – Combating Social Exclusion – the municipalities of Obrenovac, Belgrade and the city of Novi Sad were awarded the first place, the municipality of Lazarevac, Belgrade was placed in the second place while the third place was awarded to the municipality of Belgrade;

For the 2nd topic – Management at the Local Level – the municipality of Indjija won, followed by the city of Novi Sad, the city of Belgrade and the municipality of Medijana, Nis sharing the third place;

For the 3rd topic – Improvement of Environmental Quality – the first place was taken by the municipality of Senta, the second by the municipality of Vranje and the third by the municipality of Zagubica. The spectators' prize went to the municipality of Vranje.

In October and November this year all the awarded municipalities will open their doors to enable other local self-governments to learn more about the winning practices.

One representative of each awarded municipality shall spend the last week of September 2007 in Great Britain to exchange experiences with foreign colleagues.

100 practices from 62 Serbian municipalities were submitted for the Program. The awarding Conference was attended by 140 representatives of towns, municipalities, government institutions and local and foreign partners.

SID: The First Biodiesel Production Plant

The ceremony of opening the first plant for production of biodiesel in Serbia and South East Europe "Victoria Oil" took place in Sid on 27 June.

The annual capacity of the plant is 100,000 tons. "Victoria Oil" invested EUR 20 million for construction and equipping thereof.

Biodiesel production shall spur the development of the Serbian energy sector. Further to 200 new job openings, the first biodiesel plant shall indirectly provide jobs for over 40,000 persons, primarily in the sector of agriculture, Bojan Pajtic said at the opening ceremony.

Slobodan Milosavljevic, Minister of Energy stressed that Serbia and its agriculture have thus become part of the European standard and added that the plant would contribute to reducing our dependence on energy imports, increase of exports and development of agriculture, and increase of industrial cultures production, in particular.

Sasa Dragin, Minister emphasized that production of biodiesel would affirm Serbia as a country taking care of environmental protection.

"Victoria Oil" was built in a year, in line with the most up-to-date German technology. It will produce 30-40 tons of biodiesel in the first year of production.

A year after the first testing of this fuel in Belgrade and Subotica city transport, the use in agriculture and vehicles of large transport companies, biodiesel can now be purchased at regular gas stations.

The entire biodiesel production output will be marketed locally. It will be used for agriculture, city transportation, and transport companies in the first place, but also for wider use.

As compared to oil, biodiesel is a renewable, ecological fuel, produced of sunflower, soy and oil rape. The price of biodiesel is approximately 20% cheaper than that of EuroDiesel.

COMPETITION: Free Legal Aid for the Most Vulnerable

The Project "Creating an Effective and Sustainable System of Free Legal Aid in Serbia" aims to establish a regulatory and institutional system of free legal aid to assist the most vulnerable social groups who lack adequate access to justice i.e. the judicial institutions. Further to the poor, this group includes refugees, Roma and women – victims of domestic violence.

The first stage of the Project envisages establishment of the Free Legal Aid Fund. The funds, totaling USD 320,000 have been ensured by UNDP Serbia in cooperation with their partners from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). Organizations – beneficiaries of proceeds of the Free Legal Aid Fund will be selected at a public tender to be launched in the next 30 days. By the end of this year at least one more competition for service providers will be launched.

The Project is jointly implemented by UNDP Serbia and the Ministry of Justice in cooperation with their partners from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, local self-governments, Supreme Court, bar associations and NGOs through a Counseling Board entrusted with the successful project management.

COMPETITION OF BCIF AND CNF CEE: "Social Transition in Serbia"

During the June round of decision making, the Balkan Community Initiatives Fund (BCIF) in cooperation with the Co-operating Netherlands Foundations for Central and Eastern Europe (CNF CEE) has launched a competition for the program of donations entitled Social Transition in Serbia.

The aim of the Program is to support the transition of the social welfare system providing the maximum donations of up to EUR 15,000 to local, non-governmental and non-profit organizations that take an active and creative approach to social issues.

All additional information on the Program, conditions of the competition, decisions on proposed projects and the application forms may be found at www.bcif.org, as well as in the BCIF office in Belgrade, tel: 011 26 22 511, 011 32 88 721



COMPETITION OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RSD 1.7 Billion for SMEs Development

The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development issued, on 13 July, a public call for utilization of RSD 1.7 billion of incentive funds for development of small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), for regional development and tourism. RSD 1.3 billion has been earmarked for SME development promotion programs in 58 underdeveloped municipalities in Serbia and RSD 200 million for support to projects of conversion of innovations into final products and development of SMEs in the sector of tourism. The funds will be placed through the Development Fund and utilized by end of the year.

The beneficiaries eligible for RSD 1.3 billion incentive funds are all the investors who invest into SMEs development in underdeveloped municipalities, irrespective of the location of their main offices. The maximum loan repayment period is 7 years, with one year grace period and an interest rate of 1-2%/annum depending on whether the investment is made into one of the 35 most vulnerable municipalities or the remaining 23 underdeveloped ones. The advantage will be given to investors willing to invest their own funds into the SME development. The aim of SMEs promotion in underdeveloped municipalities is opening of new small and medium – size enterprises, increase of employment, raising the living standards and improvement of the investment climate.

The beneficiaries of RSD 200 million for support to projects of conversion of innovations into final products may be innovators from Serbia offering new products to the market. The objective of this programme is promotion of creativity, use of local resources, substitution of imports and stimulation of exports, as well as opening SMEs with new programs. The maximum loan repayment period is 7 years, with one year grace period and an interest rate of 1-3%/annum depending on whether the investment is made into the most vulnerable municipalities, the underdeveloped ones or the rest of Serbia.

The beneficiaries eligible for RSD 200 million in loans for development of SMEs in tourism will be the SMEs registered for catering. The maximum loan repayment period is 5 years, with one year grace period and 1% /annum interest rate. The main criterion for allocation of these funds will be adjustment with the Strategy of Tourism Development in Serbia and impact on the regional development.

RESULTS OF THE FIRST PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT Cluster Development Incentives

20 submissions, 12 of which orderly, for the funds of the 2007 Cluster Development Incentives Project announced on 5 April 2007 were filed with the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development by 15 May. The above mentioned 12 submissions (5 for the first and 7 for the second stage) were reviewed by the Evaluation Committee which conducted the selection process in line with the criteria defined in the public announcement and the tendering documents.

In a meeting late June, the project team decided to co-finance the work of 6 clusters that applied for the second stage: Agency for Wood, wood processors' cluster; cluster "The Flower of Sumadija"; BIPOM, the cluster of manufacturers of small agricultural machinery; the Serbian software cluster; JATO, the first cluster of plastics and packaging and the Autocluster Serbia.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Employment Increase and Exports Growth

Mladjan Dinkic, Minister of Economy and Regional Development stated early June that the priorities of this Ministry in the forthcoming period would be increase of employment, higher exports, acceleration of structural reforms and improvement of competitiveness of the Serbian economy, as well as development of tourism and a more balanced regional development of Serbia.

According to the data of the Republic Statistic Office as of October 2006, there were 692,000 unemployed persons in Serbia. At the same time the number of the employed was 2.7 million. Approximately 1.84 million persons were inactive: pensioners, housewives, university students and pupils and other categories of population who do not work.

The rate of unemployment in Serbia late last year totaled 21.6%. The aim of the Ministry was to reduce this rate to 11-12% over the next five years.

The average unemployment rate in the EU is 7.6% with the highest unemployment recorded in Poland (12%) and Slovakia (11%). After the accession into the EU, these two countries managed to halve the unemployment rate in just three years, while Serbia is planning to halve it in five years. Currently, only Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro have a higher unemployment rate than Serbia.

One of the measures the Ministry intends to initiate is stimulation of direct Greenfield investments. All those who build a new factory or a catering facility employing more than 50 persons will receive certain funds from the program of subsidies for new employees.

A new programme of loans for start-ups will be launched in September. These loans will be approved with no mortgage required, with a five-year repayment period, one year grace period and only 1%/annum interest rate.

The third measure of the Ministry towards increasing employment will be micro credits for self-employment granted to the persons intending to start their own businesses and employ minimum 4-5 persons in a small enterprise. The fourth measure will be loans for shops and small and medium – size enterprises that would be disbursed from the Development Fund.

The fifth measure consists of active employment measures through the National Employment Service, including self-employment programmes, severance to job programmes, training and re-qualification programmes. Special focus will be

placed on training and re-qualification since the surveys conducted thus far indicated the structure of the unemployed at the employment bureau did not correspond to the needs of economy.

The proceeds for crediting and insurance of exports would be disbursed through the Agency for Insurance and Crediting of Exports while a separate sector at the Ministry will be dealing with improvement of competitiveness and quality of business performance. Our companies are not competitive because we have not adopted certain European technical regulations and standards. Therefore, the Ministry intends to help companies introduce these regulations as soon as possible.

One of the ways to promote exports is stimulation of uniformly located free customs zones. Currently, there are only three customs zones and the idea is to have a maximum of ten thereof.

As for the measures of balanced regional development, over RSD 100 million will be invested to this effect during 2007 only: improvement of local and communal infrastructure that would provide basis for private investments, and completion of 50 industrial zones in Serbian municipalities. All these measures implemented, Serbia is expected to record an economic growth rate of 7-8%.

An analysis has been undertaken of all the 1250 cases of socially-owned companies that are to be privatized by the end of next year through one of the three possible ways: auction, tendering or liquidation procedure.

A separate law on privatization of NIS is expected in September, whereupon a tender will be published. The Government is to endorse a strategy on privatization of this public company shortly. By end of summer a tender will be prepared for privatization of "JAT Tehnika" – a part of JAT tasked with overhaul of passenger airplanes.

The priorities in the sector of tourism are investments into infrastructure on tourist destinations, utilization of potential of the Danube and resolution of the issue of hotels.

One of the duties of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development is privatization of local utility companies, with the special initiative for the procedure being given by local self-governments and with the Agency conducting the process.

The social sector currently employs 234,000 employees, the public sector including government institutions 691,000 employees. The private sector employs 1.633 million persons, or 62% of all the employed.

NES: Registration for "Severance to a Job" Project

The National Employment Service (NES) completed the preliminary registration of the redundancies and employers interested in taking part in the "Severance to a Job" Project. The Project should ensure the redundancies to secure new jobs for themselves through investing the severance pay. In this way, the employers would benefit from an experienced employee with financial benefits.

The idea is for employees to invest all or a part of their severance pay into covering the contributions for mandatory social insurance or into equipping their posts with the new employer or into additional training and education.

14,000 employees and 7,000 employers throughout Serbia were interviewed in order to ascertain the degree of interest for the project

among the surplus (and potential surplus) employees and the employers. The survey covered 514 companies in the private sector and 1,745 employees in the companies undergoing the privatization process as well as surplus of employees who received severance pays after 1 September 2006.

NES and the Project Team shall liaise employers and the surplus employees, primarily through organizing a Job Fair.

The Project to last until end 2008, is implemented by the NES and UNDP with the financial support of the Austrian Development Agency.

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COMPETITION OF THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Loans for Beginners, no Mortgage

A competition for granting loans for start-ups (EUR 5,000 to EUR 15,000) without mortgage will be open until 25 July 2007.

The competition was published by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development with RSD 1 billion from the budget earmarked for these purposes.

This competition, the first of a kind, is open to all the young people who are no more than 25 years old and who have just graduated from high schools and faculties.

The timeframe for repayment is 3 to 5 years, with 1 year grace period, quarterly repayment of loan and 1%/annum interest rate. The advantage will be given to individuals who completed trainings in Government-supported programmes such as the training of the Republican Agency for SME Development and Entrepreneurship, National Employment Service, programme of Youth Entrepreneurship BIP, etc.

The loans will be secured by mortgage on equipment purchased and not by mortgage on property of loan applicants. This model was implemented in Norway (success rate almost 30%).

Competition for loans amounting EUR 5,000 – 15,000 (with the repayment timeframe of 3 to 5 years, 1 year grace period, quarterly repayment of loan and 1%/annum interest rate) will be opened to citizens over 25 years of age. The advantage shall be given to entrepreneurs ensuring their own participation and indi-

viduals not older than 40.

The competition provides start-up loans for legal persons targeting former employees of social and state-owned companies who decided to leave. These loans ranging EUR 5,000 – 30,000 aim at opening enterprises. Mortgage 1:1 will be required for the sums exceeding EUR 15,000.

In order to facilitate the application process, call centres were opened at the Development Fund (011 26 21 887) and the Agency for SME Development and Entrepreneurship (011 33 46 351). The applications may be sent by 15 September directly to the Development Fund or one of the regional development agencies in the network of the Agency for SME Development and Entrepreneurship in 17 cities.

In respect of self-employment micro-credits, RSD 1 billion has been earmarked by the end of the year. These will be granted to entrepreneurs who employ more people from the registry of NES.

Individual loans range EUR 5,000 – 30,000 and mortgage is required for sums exceeding EUR 15,000 (below that sum only lien on the equipment purchased).

All the persons registered as unemployed with the National Employment Service may apply for a loan to this Service by 15 September 2007. The aim of the competition is reduction of unemployment, of youth in particular, since approximately 300,000 young people are registered with the National Employment Service.

41 WINNERS IN BUSINESS PLANS COMPETITION ANNOUNCED: "Live Your Dream"

The competition of business plans "Live Your Dream" organized within the framework of the Serbia Contingency Planning and Economic Security Programme (SCOPEs) has ended.

The competition took place in seven municipalities: Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Prijepolje, Kursumlija, Medvedja, Bujanovac, and Presevo. 108 of the 550 submitted draft business plans were eligible. Based on degree of creative ideas, new jobs creation and new specific marketing possibilities, 41 business plan was selected.

The winners are entitled to financial support, training, technical assistance and/or mentoring towards successful implementation of the plan in the period from 6 to 18 months. The winners may use the designed plans in their contacts with the banks and other investors.

The business plans were evaluated by 13 independent, high-ranking experts in the field of banking, finance, marketing and management.

SCOPEs aims to enhance personal and economic security of the long time unemployed persons, the deprived rural population, refugees and internally displaced persons, youth and other marginalized groups. The programme is funded by USAID.

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www.dai.com, www.serbia-montenegro.usaid.gov

SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZE BUSINESS AND ADVISORY INSTITUTIONS

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a new concept is becoming ever more frequently an integral part of strategic documents both at the global level and at the level of national economies, companies and small and medium-size enterprises. SMART Kolektiv has organized an international conference "CSR in Small and Medium-Sized Businesses and Advisory Institutions in Serbia" in cooperation with the UN Organization for Industrial Development (UNIDO) and the Board for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development of the Chamber of Commerce of Serbia.

The aim of the conference was to establish and strengthen links with the institutions and companies working in the direction of ethical business conduct in the region, to strengthen linkages between them and introduce the CSR methodology implemented by UNIDO.

The conference assembled managers of small and medium-sized companies, large companies, business associations,

public institutions, NGOs, institutions for business support and other advisory institutions. CSR trends at the global, regional and national level, information on standard ISO 26000 were presented and the discussions were held on various CSR methodologies (new UNIDO methodology – REAP).

In the developed countries, the corporate social responsibility focuses on small and medium-sized companies that participate in the economic growth of EU with 75% and represent the backbone of development. If applied correctly – as support to SMEs, this concept may contribute to increase of profits as well as the progress of local communities.

A positive example in Serbia is the company "Lafarge" – leader in production of cement that became the owner of the Beocin cement factory in 2002. In order for SMEs to join their chain of procurement they must fulfill not only economic criteria but also those on corporate social responsibility.

Database of Best Practices of Socially Responsible Operation of Companies in Serbia

Seeking to involve businesses more actively in poverty reduction, the PRS Implementation Focal Point and the Serbia Investment and Exports Promotion Agency (SIEPA) have launched an initiative to establish a database of best practices of socially responsible operation of enterprises in Serbia. Thus, Serbia is giving its contribution to the development of socially responsible operation. This concept is quickly developing in the countries of the European Union and the International Standardization Organization will be introducing ISO 26000 for social responsibility as of 2008.

With reference to this, a large survey of socially responsible operation practices thus far is ongoing. It covers 100 most successful enterprises in Serbia seeking to give their contribution to the promotion and development of this concept in our country in this way. Identification and promotion

of best social responsibility practices opens up a possibility of defining the necessary conditions that the state should put in place i.e. how it can best promote development of the concept in Serbia.

The database will contain information related to the key topics of socially responsible operation: engagement in local community and the society, environmental protection, corporate management, best practices at the work place and conduct on the market. At the same time, the database will provide all relevant information about the activities of Serbian enterprises supporting the strategic directions of resolving the poverty-related problems (employment, education, health, social policy) or programmes related to improvement of the position of socially vulnerable groups (refugees and internally displaced persons, Roma, persons with disabilities, elderly, children, youth, women).

CHAMBER OF ECONOMY OF THE CITY OF BELGRADE

Employment Stimulation Projects

The Secretariat for Economy of the city of Belgrade announced the expiration of a deadline for submission of employment promotion projects on the territory of the city of Belgrade as per public invitation. A total of RSD 50,000,000 will be disbursed in the form of grants for the projects supporting increase of the number of SMEs in Belgrade, growth, improvement of efficiency and competitiveness of the existing SMEs, development of organizations, institutions and infrastructure to support the SME sector development and establishment of conditions for new job creation.

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www.beograd.org.yu (gradski oglasi, konkursi i tenderi)



PROKUPLJE BUSINESS INCUBATOR CENTRE Agreements Signed for Twelve Enterprises

A business incubator centre was launched in Prokuplje at the initiative of the Municipality of Prokuplje and Mercy Corps, the US non-governmental organization which is implementing the USAID programme in the south of Serbia.

The cooperation agreements were signed by owners of 12 enterprises who thus formally became beneficiaries of services of the Prokuplje Business Incubator Centre.

The founders of the Prokuplje Business Incubator Centre, Ltd. are the Municipality of Prokuplje, the non-governmental organization "Initiatives" and the company "Ekonomik 94". This is the only project of this kind in Serbia where all the three sectors – public, private and social – have joined their capacities. The aims of this project are promotion and development of small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship in general, provision of support to start-ups and reduction of the unemployment rate through establishment of conditions for creation of new jobs.

The Prokuplje Business Incubator Centre shall offer its beneficiaries assistance in ensuring business/production space, consulting services, education and monitoring as well as in identifying foreign associates and experts and attracting new investors and donors.

The activities of the Centre will be realized in the premises of the former factory "Kristal" where 2,100 m² have been identified and rehabilitated for the business and production activities of tenants. The tenants – signatories of agreements have moved into the new premises in mid-July.

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NIS: Results of Serbia in Implementing the Objectives of Roma Decade

The first conference on the results of the League for Roma Decade in Serbia was held in Nis in early June. The conference concluded that the results achieved over the past two years in implementing the objectives of the Decade were not satisfactory if compared to other countries taking part in this international project. The key reasons for this were the disparities in quality and scope, despite the hard work of certain ministries and municipalities in implementing the aims of the Roma Decade. The project lacks daily, comprehensive coordination and care for success of the Decade in our country.

The recommendations of the Conference were:

- * That the Government appoint a focal point and an agency for implementation of the Roma Decade such as, for instance, Agency for Decade Implementation, with supervision. Serbia is the only participant in the Decade that has not had a national coordinator since the dissolution of the State Union Serbia and Montenegro and the only country that has not paid EUR 10,000 to the International Committee as part of the participation fee for resolution of institutional problems;

- * That the 2007 budget submissions of certain ministries include budget lines for implementation of Action Plans (APs) of the Roma Decade. For the time being, only the Minister of Health identified a budget line for these purposes;

- * That a Law on Ethnic Councils be endorsed;

- * That inter-sectoral cooperation of NGOs and political parties in implementation of plans be ensured;

- * That liaisons be made of all the programs and participants at national and local levels: implementation of the PRS and APs of Decade at the national level is taking place through planning and work with the ministries and other Government agencies, but its sustainability at the local level is impossible in absence of development and implementation of local strategies for all four areas of the Decade – education, employment, health and housing;

- * That all state agencies take an active part in regulating three key topics of the Decade: fight against discrimination, fight against poverty and fight for gender equality;

- * That the Parliament put on the agenda of the next session a review of the report on the implementation of the Decade and identification of tasks;

- * That all the executive Government agencies prepare reports on realization of the programs envisaged by the Decade.

The Conference launched an initiative to convene a meeting of all relevant executives with the representatives of Roma from two Parliamentary parties, representatives of the former National Council and the League for Roma Decade to discuss the status of implementation of the Roma Decade in Serbia.

Drafting of the Strategy of Rural Development

A workshop to develop a new vision of rural development of Serbia was organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management on 3 July 2007. The workshop was attended by more than 200 representatives of the Government of Serbia and the ministries, EAR, University, scientific institutions, embassies, inter-governmental institutions, municipalities, NGOs, agricultural and rural organizations, agricultural cooperatives, advisory boards and the representatives of food processing industry and trade.

A draft proposal of the three most significant segments of the Vision for Rural Development was developed: sustainable and competitive agriculture and food industry, ecologically sustainable and comprehensive rural Serbia and dynamic, competitive and successful rural economy. The Strategy and

the development programme that would support the economic and social development of rural Serbia will be implemented in the period 2008 – 2013. The experts will define technical issues of the strategy, programs and policies that will help its realization with permanent participation of all stakeholders.

The implementation of the Strategy will be funded from the state budget. Once Serbia obtains the status of EU "candidate country", the Program for Rural Development will be supported by the EU IPA funds. A discussion group *srdpps* was launched on Google-Groups to further exchange ideas, opinions, and criticism.

The process of drafting the Strategy of Rural Development is funded by the European Union through the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR).

ITALIANS INVEST EUR 15 MILLION INTO THE SOMBOR FACTORY OF LINGERIE

Jobs for 400 Workers

The Italian company Calzedonia from Verona intends to invest EUR 15 million to construct a factory for manufacture of female lingerie in Sombor. The factory shall be built on 12,000 square meters; the construction shall take place from February to November 2008 and the new production plants will employ 400 persons.

Francesco Rufioli, Calzedonia Investment Projects Manager announced that the same location in Sombor would see the construction of a factory for manufacture of female stockings in 2009 and 2010. The investment will total EUR 20 million and additional 400 persons will be employed.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed that provides for the foreign investor to receive EUR 800,000 for investments promotion. Over the past five years the foreign investors have invested approximately EUR 3 billion in Vojvodina. 53 foreign direct investments have been realized.

"Civil Society Focal Points"

Continued from page 1

The role of each focal point is to ensure information flow between Government institutions on the one hand, and the civil society organizations, on the other.

To that effect, each of the selected focal points has rounded up other organizations dealing with issues of relevance to the above mentioned vulnerable groups. All the activities of the civil society focal points will be funded by the

PRS Implementation Focal Point.

The civil society organizations in Serbia will, through this mechanism, be able to contribute to the work of ministries by: taking part in the process of drafting yearly operational plans (GOPs), consultations in the course of donor aid planning, and participation in other processes requiring involvement of the representatives of vulnerable social groups.

The civil society organizations that will be representing the interests of

particular population groups are:

Youth – Civic Initiatives, Belgrade
Disabled persons – Serbian Centre for Self-Sufficiency of the Disabled
Roma – Roma Information Centre, Kragujevac
Children – Association for Protection and Improvement of Mental Health of Children and Youth, Nis
Women – Autonomous Women Centre against Sexual Violence, Belgrade

Elderly – Association of Citizens "Amity", Belgrade
Refugees and internally displaced persons – Group 484, Belgrade

The Programme Management Unit is Centre for Development of the Non-Profit Sector, Belgrade and the projected duration of the programme is one year.

For detailed information, please call Centre for Development of the Non-Profit Sector
Email: jup@crnps.org.yu



MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY:

Assistance to the Most Vulnerable Categories of Population

Rasim Ljajic, Minister of Labour and Social Policy said reform of the pension system and the assistance to the most vulnerable categories of population are the priorities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of the Government of Serbia. He pointed out that a solution must be found whereby the pensions for 1.5 million retired persons in Serbia would not be brought down to the level of a social welfare, while at the same time ensuring long term sustainability.

The current Law provides for 100% adjustment to the costs of living in 2009. According to the calculations this means pensions would then amount to EUR 138.5 which is unacceptable, says Ljajic.

Enumerating the key guiding principles of the Ministry in the forthcoming period, Ljajic emphasized that the aim was first and foremost to provide assistance to the most destitute population, the elderly, refugees, internally displaced persons and the disabled.

Equal opportunities for all, combating discrimi-

nation and an equal distribution of the transition burden are also some of the aims and principles of this Ministry in the forthcoming period.

Over the next two months the line ministry shall ratify the European Social Charter, as one of the obligations undertaken by Serbia through its membership in the Council of Europe. The International Convention of the Rights of the Disabled Persons is also to be signed shortly and the first session of the new membership of the Socio-Economic Council of the Government of Serbia will be held on 2 July.

The Ministry has drawn proposals for the changes of the Law on Labour and is expecting proposals from its social partners, trade unions and employers in order to change that which proved ineffective in practice.

The total budget of the Ministry for 2007 is RSD 15 billion, which is by 15% higher than last year. Approximately 60% of these funds will be allocated to payment of benefits for veterans and

disabled protection and family and child protection, as well as for social assistance to the vulnerable categories of citizens.

Currently 800,000 persons receive financial benefits which is a significant rise – up to 40% in some sectors – in comparison to 2006.

The Ministry shall continue to develop networks of social services and institutions such as networks of day care for persons with developmental problems, in-house care and assistance, improvement of the quality of services in the social welfare centres...

In the forthcoming period 52 inspectors will be looking into safety at work place and employment in the black market in the districts of Juzni Bac, Sremsko-Macvanska, Juzni Banat, Srednji Banat, Branicevo and Podunavlje, as well as in all the three departments of the city of Belgrade. The aim of this exercise is to enhance safety on construction sites and reduce the number of persons working in the black market.

UN-HABITAT: Program of Housing and Local Integration of Refugees

UN-HABITAT has been providing technical support to the process of drafting the Development Strategy of the City of Nis within the framework of the Housing and Local Integration of Refugees Programme. The aim of this strategic document is to define the vision of sustainable development of the city, identify potential advantages and development directions of Nis, sustain stable economic growth and employment, provide social progress and reduce poverty, promote innovations, ensure efficient environmental protection and improve the overall quality of life of citizens. The implementation will promote an integrated participatory approach to local development planning, inter-sectoral cooperation and information exchange, as well as inclusion and coordination among the public, private and civil sectors into the decision-making processes.

The Development Strategy drafting process began in January 2007 and is to last six months.

www.unhabitat.org.yu

Campaign to Promote the Rights of Persons With Disabilities

In early June 2007 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy initiated a campaign entitled "A World for All of Us". The aim of the campaign is to promote rights of the disabled persons, combat discrimination and marginalization of these persons as well as raise the awareness of citizens on the rights, situation and the needs of persons with disabilities.

Rasim Ljajic, Minister of Labour and Social Policy explained at the press conference that the European Union proclaimed 2007 as the "European Year of Equal Possibilities" and that this campaign is a part of its marking in Serbia.

One of the objectives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is to reduce the number of the disabled residing in institutions as well as to develop the concept of housing in a supportive environment. The Law on Preventing Discrimination of Persons with Disabilities and the Strategy for Improvement of the

Position of Persons with Disabilities were adopted earlier. The Council for Persons with Disabilities is to be established shortly. It will consist of the representatives of all the ministries as well as the representatives of the organizations of the disabled persons.

Further to the participation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, numerous organizations of the disabled as well as the People's Office of the President of the Republic of Serbia are taking part in the campaign "A World for All of Us".

One of the dire problems in the area is the absence of precise data on the number of the disabled in Serbia, which are needed to ensure successful implementation of the strategy.

According to the statistics there are between 10 and 12% of persons with disabilities in the world. Their number in Serbia is assumed to be between 500,000 and 800,000.

SERBIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL: World Refugee Day

On the occasion of 20 June, the World Refugee Day, the Serbian Refugee Council issued a press statement stating, inter alia, that the system of protection of refugees in Serbia must be rounded by encompassing the law on asylum and updating the 2002 National Strategy for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons.

NGOs, refugee and IDP associations as well as other agencies involved must take part in resolving the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia.

Endorsement of the asylum law is one of the preconditions for the accession of our country to the European Union. The responsibility of the state to provide adequate protection to all refugees, irrespective of the country of origin, is also proclaimed in the Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia. The Law on Asylum sets down the criteria and procedures for granting and revocation of refugee status and provides for full protection of human rights of persons who due to well-founded fear "of persecution on the grounds of their race, sex, language, religion, ethnic affiliation or membership in a particular group or due to their political opinion" have the right to asylum in the Republic of Serbia.

The existing 2002 National Strategy

for Resolving the Problems of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons should be updated in line with the results of analysis of its effects to date.

The Law on Social Housing represents an indispensable part of the system of protection and care of refugees from the territories of former Yugoslavia, and primarily those who opt for integration in Serbia. The implementation of regional protection instruments such as the Sarajevo Declaration would bring about resolution of the status of tens of thousands of refugees.

The Serbian Refugee Council is an association of six non-governmental organizations (Group 484, Hi Neighbour, International Association Network – IAN, Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre – NSHC, Serbian Democratic Forum – SDF Belgrade, Centre for Civic Society Development – PROTECTA) dealing with problems of refugees and IDPs and seeking to strengthen their role and influence in the process of finding sustainable and durable solutions in Serbia and in the region of Western Balkans through joint lobbying at the level of decision-makers and public policy.

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FOOD BANK: Assistance for 1800 Vulnerable Persons

The Association "Food Bank Belgrade" has collected 13 tons of food items for four large institutions and 10 odd households in the period March – June 2007. 1800 vulnerable persons were helped in this way. The first collection exercise was organized at Easter, and the Bank has since been assisted in different ways by: Coca Cola HBC, Soko Stark, Sinalco, Si&Si Group, Micronet, Doncafe Group, Agroziv, Centroproizvod, Soci t  G n rale, DPC, Grafika Galeb Nis, Medija Centar, Medija Cast, SRMA, GLM.

The decision as to which households would be assisted is passed by the Bank in cooperation with the City Social Welfare Centre. The City Assembly is expected to issue an approval for distribution of a certain quantity of food from the Commodity Reserve Directorate is expected by the end of August. The next big exercise when the citizens would be helping collect food through supermarkets will take place in October on the occasion of the World Food Day and the International Day of Fighting against Hunger.

Food Bank Belgrade, Tel/Fax: 011 2497 263, 063 25 19 25

www.bankahrane.org

PILOT PROGRAMME: TRAINING AND LEARNING FOR ADULT ROMA

School Assists in Choice of Training Programme: for Ceramists, House Painters, Assistant Hairdressers...

The implementation of the Pilot Programme: "Functional Primary Education of Adult Roma" is ending this month.

The aim of the Programme is raising the general level of education of adult Roma, acquisition of primary education and skills for certain jobs, creating conditions for continuation of education and their integration into the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community.

The Programme was organized by the National Employment Service and is conducted in Nis, Leskovac, Prokuplje, Vranje, Bujanovac, Belgrade, Sombor, Apatin, Ada, Becej and Valjevo involving approximately 200 unemployed Roma aged 15 to 35, and women in particular.

The implementation of the Programme began in the school year 2006/07 and its duration is one school year at the minimum. The primary and secondary schools in the above cities adjust their curricula and trainings with the needs, possibilities and living and working conditions of adult Roma.

At the end of the seventh form, the adult Roma may select one of the offered programmes of vocational training depending on their own needs, interests and capabilities as well as with the capacities of schools. Primary schools help them choose training programmes. Vocational training starts in the course of the eighth form and cannot be completed prior to completion of the form.

Trainings are ongoing or have been completed in some ten cities in Serbia within the framework of functional education of adult Roma for assistant hairdressers, ceramists and house-painters, for tailors, forklift operators, simple masonry jobs, assistants in trade, etc.

The pilot programme "Functional Primary Education of Adult Roma" is implemented on the basis of the Agreement on Cooperation signed by the National Employment Service, Ministry of Education, Institute for Paedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Belgrade University and the Office for Human and Minority Rights of the Government.

Ratification of the Agreement on Integrated Free Trade Zone in South-East Europe

Adoption of the Draft Law on Integrated Free Trade Zone in South-East Europe by the Serbian Parliament was made possible following removal of impediments in the trade relations between Serbia, Croatia, BiH and Macedonia.

Jasna Matic, State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, said that the countries – signatories agreed with the Action Plan of the Government of Serbia for tobacco industry providing for equalization of excises on local and foreign cigarettes as of 1 January 2008 and increase of customs fees from 15 to 57.6%.

Following ratification, Serbia will be liable to treat all the markets in the CEFTA region as local, meaning it will not be able to go on stimulating exports of agricultural produce into those countries.

All the safeguards envisaged by the CEFTA agreement shall terminate on accession of Serbia into the World Trade Organization (WTO) planned next year.

The greatest benefit of Serbia's accession to CEFTA will be from the so called principle of diagonal accumulation ensuring export into the EU market as per preferential regime of products in the manufacture of which several state members took part. The precondition is that over 51% of the value of the commodity be produced in the CEFTA region, instead of the preferential status held on the EU market thus far by individual states.

Serbia has a trade surplus with all the CEFTA countries, except Croatia and Moldova, and only one quarter of the total exports and 6% of imports occurs with the CEFTA region. Over the last year Serbia exported into CEFTA countries goods totaling USD 1.95 billion: USD 33 to Albania, USD 749 million to BiH, USD 616 to Montenegro, USD 251 to Croatia, USD 300 to Macedonia and USD 3.9 to Moldova. In the same period the imports from these six countries totaled USD 1 billion.

AUTONOMOUS WOMEN'S CENTRE

Austrian Law and Model of Protection from Domestic Violence

In late June, the Autonomous Women's Centre organized a seminar to present the Austrian Law on Domestic Violence and Intervention Model within the framework of the Program of Promotion of Good Practices in the Area of Protection from Domestic Violence.

The Council of Europe and the EU recommend this Law and the intervention model in instances of domestic violence as a model that should be followed by all the member states for its innovative solutions in establishing a comprehensive, coordinated system of protection of victims of domestic violence, involving state organizations and NGOs. The Austrian model rests on three pillars:

eviction and restriction orders issued by the police, long-term protection through measures decided upon by family courts and free counseling and support of specialized intervention centres.

A decade-long experience in the application of this intervention model was presented by Rosa Logar, one of the masterminds behind the Law and Silvia Thaller, judge and advisor in the Austrian Ministry of Justice.

Local experiences were shared by Zorana Delibasic, judge of the Belgrade District Court and Vanja Macanovic from the Autonomous Women's Centre who recalled that the Government of Serbia received the recommendations of the UN Committee for

Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women, drafted on the basis of the Government Report on the Position of Women in Serbia a month ago. The Committee welcomed the efforts of Serbia in combating violence against women, but also expressed concern over the changes of the Criminal Code introducing reduced penalty for domestic violence and proclaiming sexual harassment not to be a criminal act.

The Program of Promotion of Good Practices in the Area of Protection from Domestic Violence is implemented within the framework of the Council of Europe Campaign "Stop Domestic Violence against Women".

ASSISTANCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

Eight New Curricula as of September

Eight completely new curricula shall be implemented in the course of the new school year 2007/2008. These are tailored for students in the areas of tourism and catering, information technology and telecommunications and wood processing.

Two professions – technician of mechatronics and telecommunications electrician – are brand new, while the other six profiles retained the old titles but will be implemented according to the new curricula. Consequently, teaching in the departments for cooks, waiters, confectioners, tourist technicians, technicians for primary wood processing and upholsterers-decorators will be adjusted to the requirements of the market and economy.

The curricula were designed on the basis of DAKUM analysis – a technique for development of standards of professions and development of curricula in line with job descriptions. Standards of professions were made in cooperation with the representatives of employers and employees in the leading companies in all the three sectors. Upon graduation from school, a student will be able to cover more professions, thus broadening his chances of employment. All the modules stem directly from the profession analyses.

The ratio of practical and theoretical classes for four/three-year courses is 60/40 and 70/30 respectively. The Program of Secondary Vocational Education Reform provides for each pilot school where the pilot profile will be introduced to receive equipment in the value of EUR 50,000. This will ensure conduct of exercises and practical instruction in adequately equipped workshops and cabinets. Part of instructions will also be conducted in enterprises.

The Program targeting teachers in pilot schools also provides for activities – trainings and study visits to schools abroad in order to build capacities of teachers to implementing the curriculum in a modern way.

The Program will be implemented in Belgrade and in schools in Novi Sad, Pancevo, Subotica, Sremska Mitrovica, Kraljevo, Leskovac, Nis, Uzice and Zajecar, Vrnjaska Banja, Cajetina, Paracin and Tutin.

The new curricula were developed with the support of the European Union through the European Agency for Reconstruction that has invested EUR 19 million in Serbia thus far.

Roma Tradition and Culture in Schools

The Roma Information Centre (RIC) from Kragujevac launched, in May, the project "Introduction of Systemic Solutions on History, Tradition and Culture of Roma in Schools". The main activities of the project include: accreditation of the program "Roma through Time", drafting of teaching materials; training of Roma trainers and drafting of manuals on the Roma culture, tradition and customs.

The Project is supported by "Roma Education Fund" from Hungary, and the period of implementation is April 2008.

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