



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.

DRAGAN ĐILAS, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

National Investment Plan, the Plan for a Faster Development of Serbia

The Government of the Republic of Serbia is soon to adopt the plan of financing projects within the National Investment Plan 2008. This is the second year in a row that priority shall be given to projects dealing with investment into strategic infrastructure construction which is vital for furthering economic growth of Serbia, generating new jobs and improving the wellbeing of all Serbian citizens.

The National Investment Plan (NIP) is our ticket to Europe in the real sense of the word, for it implies the introduction of European standards in Serbia: attraction of national and foreign investors who are to establish new criteria for doing business, the construction of state-of-the-art roads, railroads and telecommunications which shall increase the quality of doing business, as well as the quality of life for all Serbian citizens.

National development plans have been adopted by a number of European countries as an expression of their aim to: increase competitiveness of their economies, ensure balanced development of all parts of the country and reduce the number of the poor.

National development plans have most commonly been adopted by "younger" EU member countries such as Ireland, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary and Malta in order to reach standards of the most developed EU countries and other developed countries.

National development plans of individual countries have two main ideas, a European idea - since the objectives of their implementation are harmonized with the Lisbon plan and the Lisbon objectives of productivity growth, creating information society, computer literacy, technological innovation, generation of jobs and social reforms, which means that each plan is harmonized with individual needs of the country to achieve the set objectives.

Although there was fear that large development budgets shall exert influence on the growth of inflation and macroeconomic stability, such problems have most often not arisen in countries which implemented or are still implementing national development plans.

In addition to the national sources, all countries rely more or less to the European funds which aim to stimulate balanced regional development, involvement of poor and marginalized social groups in the functioning of society, job generation and fight against poverty and strengthening technical literacy and education. National development plans are most commonly developed for a period of six to ten years. For example, Slovenia adopted the respective plan in 2006 for the period 2007-2023, with the Parliament adopting an operational plan covering 2007-2013. Ireland has so far implemented two rounds of the national development plan.

The NIP of the Republic of Serbia has been developed based on the experiences of the countries mentioned. The initial implementation faced certain problems which caused a part of the national and foreign expert public to assess NIP as a populist project, of dubious economic aims and continued strengthening of the state and gradual exclusion of the private sector from the sphere of economy.

The establishment of the NIP Office in 2007, the ensuring of permanent budget resources for the projects envisaged by the plan and the establishment of a ministry which directly manages the development, implementation and monitoring of NIP; the Government of Serbia has unambiguously indicated the construction of a modern, pro-European Serbia as one of its priority objectives.

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Third National Conference on Poverty Reduction in Serbia

Third National Conference on Poverty Reduction in Serbia was held on November 29, 2007 in Belgrade. The Conference, organized by the Government of Serbia and the Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) Implementation Focal Point, was opened by Deputy Prime Minister Božidar Đelić and Pierre Mirel, Director of the Directorate C of the European Commission DG Enlargement.

The aim of the conference was to assess the achieved progress in the PRS implementation process, present the latest poverty data in 2007 and consider new plans in line with the recommendations of the Second Progress Report on the PRS Implementation in Serbia, adopted by the Government in August 2007. The Conference tackled local level PRS implementation, support for education of poor children and youth, micro-loan support advancement, statistical system and impact analysis of measures thus far, as well as the concept of corporate social responsibility.

The Conference gathered representatives of all relevant institutions and organizations taking part in the PRS implementation: line ministries and other state bodies, local authorities, National Assembly, civil society, labor unions, international donors, etc.

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DRAGAN VUKMIROVIĆ, DIRECTOR OF THE REPUBLIC STATISTICAL OFFICE

The Number of Poor Population in Serbia Reduced by Half in 2002-2007

There was 6.6% of poor population in Serbia in 2007. The absolute poverty line for 2007 amounts to RSD 8,883 per consumption unit/month. The poverty line includes both food expenditures and other types of expenditures (shoes, clothes, hygienic products, household products, health and education expenditures). Poor is considered a

person with monthly consumption per consumer unit below RSD 8,883, wherefore the minimum of monthly consumption for a three-member family would amount to RSD 19,543. The consumption of 6.6% of Serbian citizens is below the said minimum, i.e. some 490,000 Serbian citizens are poor.

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CONSUMPTION UNITS (equivalence scale or OECD scale) represent a measure for establishing the consumption of household members. The calculation of poverty parameters relies on the equivalence scale recommended by EUROSTAT. The household head is given ponder 1 according to the scale, adult household members ponder 0.7 and children 0.5. The scale reflects the fact that common household costs are shared among its members, taking into account that children spend less than adults. For example, a three-member household with three adult members have ponder 2.4 (1+0.7+0.7), and a three-member household with a child have ponder 2.2 (1+0.7+0.5).



DRAGAN VUKMIROVIĆ, DIRECTOR OF THE
REPUBLIC STATISTICAL OFFICE

The Number of Poor Population in Serbia Reduced by Half in 2002-2007

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Poverty in Serbia in 2007 was analyzed based on the preliminary findings of the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) conducted by the Republic Statistical Office in 2007, at a representative sample of 5,558 households. The survey was conducted in line with international standards and World Bank recommendations, which provided for an international comparability of data. Poverty in Serbia was analyzed by using the household consumption as a basis aggregate for poverty measurement, and the poverty profile was calculated based on the absolute poverty line.

Pursuant to the methodology, 13.4% population in Serbia was classified as poor, considering that their consumption per consumption unit on average was lower than the poverty line, which amounted to RSD 5,234 per consumer unit/month.

Serbian population living in areas other than urban is substantially poorer in comparison to urban population. Poverty index of such population is almost two and a half times higher than the poverty index of urban population (4.3% to 9.7% respectively) and/or 50% higher in comparison to the national average. Central Serbia is a region with the highest share of poor population. Some 8.4% of persons living in Central Serbia fall within the category of poor population. Significant discrepancy between urban and other population may be seen in this region.

Most commonly represented categories of the population among the poor population in 2007 were: under-educated population (without or only with primary education); children aged under 13; households with 6 or more members; elderly households; households living outside urban regions.

According to age, children aged below 13 and the elderly aged over 65 are most prominently represented. 8.9% children aged below 13 are poor and/or 9.5% elderly population. However, children under 13 years of age make up the largest age group among the poor (21.4%) although their share in the overall population is considerably lower (12.7%).

The main cause of poverty is unemployment, largely resulting from low education structure of labor active members of a household. Poverty reduction may be influenced most in the forthcoming period by an increase in employment rate and the education attainment of the household head.

Third National Conference on Poverty Reduction in Serbia

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Experiences of countries in the region relating to poverty reduction were presented by guests-participants from Slovenia, Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants were given a speech by Stephen Wordsworth, H.E. Ambassador of Great Britain in Serbia, Simon Gray, Head of the World Bank Office for Serbia, Lance Clark, UN Resident Coordinator and Fintan Farrell, Director of the European Anti Poverty Network.

Preliminary data on poverty in Serbia were presented at the Conference, based on the results obtained through the Living Standards Measurement Survey conducted by the Republic Statistical Office in May 2007.

Conference conclusions may be downloaded at www.prsp.sr.gov.yu.

DRAGAN ĐILAS, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO
IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

National Investment Plan, the Plan for a Faster Development of Serbia

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As of this year there are distinctly established criteria for the approval of projects which are to be financed by NIP resources, namely: development of infrastructure which is a basis for the balanced development of all parts of Serbia, stimulation of investments and special benefits for the investors opening new jobs, investment into human resources and/or education of young generations which should be capable of responding to new standards of doing business. The importance of this derives from the fact that the young people make up the largest number of unemployed persons at the labor market, not having been given a chance to obtain a first job.

NIP projects do not favor urban development to the detriment of the population living in rural and underdeveloped parts of Serbia. To the contrary, the development of these areas and the approval of projects to be implemented in the following year represent one of our top priorities.

The new projects which are to be selected soon, and everyone is eligible to submit one, shall be projects conducive to faster development of Serbia in 2008, poverty reduction, increase of wellbeing, improvement of labor conditions and modernization which is vital following the decades of lagging behind our neighbors, Europe and developed regions of the world.

We have eliminated all the projects considered to be a waste of money and brought to the fore the development projects which shall represent a growth engine in Serbia.

NIP has obtained full support of international financial organizations and European institutions, which are expected to approve of additional funds for the selected projects.

Pursuant to the agreement between the Government of Serbia and EU towards the end November 2007, the EU shall provide 1 billion worth of grant through the pre-accession funds in the following 5 years, if we stay on such an ambitious course and compete with high quality projects.

MEMORANDUM ON BUDGET AND ECONOMIC AND FISCAL POLICY Government Plans in 2008-2010

The Government adopted the Memorandum on Budget and Economic and Fiscal Policy for 2008 with Projections for 2009 and 2010 in mid-October 2007.

The Memorandum contains a framework of economic and fiscal policies and structural reforms in the forthcoming three-year period. The main objectives of economic policy are maintaining macroeconomic stability and continued economic growth and employment rate, whereas the numeric objectives are the average annual GDP growth rate of 6.3%, decrease of inflation to 4% in 2010 and the reduction of a currently high current account deficit from 14.7% GDP this year to 11% GDP in 2010. In order to achieve the said objectives in the following year, the share of overall public spending is expected to decrease by 1.2%, with the GDP budget share decrease of 1%. The key measures for

decreasing the share of public spending are maintaining the real level of salary fund of budget beneficiaries in 2008 at the level to be attained by end 2007, the 5% decrease of budget subsidies and close to 10% decrease of investments with regard to 2007. At the same time, the GDP share of public spending shall be decreased additionally for some 0.8% in 2009 and 2010.

The Memorandum also contains the program of structural economic reforms, whose realization shall provide for the harmonization of Serbia's and EU economies.

The vital tasks of the Government between 2008 and 2010 are to finalize privatization of social enterprises, banks and insurance companies, the beginning of privatization of public companies, as well as the advancement of public finances and public administration.

PROJECT INITIATED BY CISCO, THE UNITED NATIONS AND GOOGLE Website for Monitoring Poverty Reduction at the Global Level

Cisco, the United Nations and Google have opened a website at www.mdgmonitor.org which monitors progress of global poverty reduction, the campaign known as Millennium Development Goals. Upon initiating the program, Ban Ki-moon, UN General Secretary, emphasized that it is necessary to urgently establish global cooperation towards poverty reduction. The task requires cooperation of governments, international organizations, private companies and civil society. MDG Monitor is an innovative means of registering progress and simultaneous awareness raising on poverty issues.

MDG Monitor also enables the Internet beneficiaries to visit virtually any place on the planet via Google Earth and access

assessments and data on a certain country which have been gathered by the UN worldwide. The website presents the latest data from multiple sources in the areas of health, education and women's rights.

MDG Monitor tends to focus the global community to millennium goals and ensure crucial information for policy creators and development workers worldwide.

MDGs call for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger through universal primary education, promotion of gender equality and rights of women, reduction of child mortality, improvement of maternal health, fight against HIV, malaria and other diseases, environmental sustainability and development of global development partnership.



DRAFT BUDGET 2008 ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

RSD 14.8 Billion State Deficit

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted in mid-November the Draft Law on Budget 2008, envisaging that state revenues account for RSD 639.6 billion, expenditures amount to RSD 654.4 billion and deficit amounting to RSD 14.8 billion.

Speaking at the press conference following the extraordinary Government session, Minister of Finance Mirko Cvetković stated that budget revenues and expenditures for the following year are nominally 9.9% higher than in 2007, whereas the planned deficit is almost 8.5% higher. The main macroeconomic policy parameters of the Government of Serbia in 2008 shall be up to 6% inflation, 6% growth of GDP and decrease in foreign trade deficit from 20.2 to 18.9% GDP.

The Government shall lead a restrictive salary policy in the course of 2008, so that the salaries of the employed in the public sector may grow up to 6%, as much as the envisaged inflation rate. The lowest salary growth is envisaged in the military sector, and the highest in the judiciary. The planned salary growth of the employed shall amount to 16% by end next year and/or the growth of salaries by end this year shall be reiterated in 2008.

Highest budget expenditures shall be allocated for local government and AP Vojvodina budgets, as well as the PIO Fund of the Employed.

The first ten months of Serbia's budget mark a surplus of up to RSD 39.2 billion, with over RSD 24 billion accounting for the revenues of selling the license to the third mobile operator, whereas

almost 9 billion account for the paid pension arrears.

The main Government economy policy objectives in 2008 shall be maintaining macroeconomic stability, dynamic economic growth, employment and living standards growth and more dynamic EU stabilization and association process.

National Investment Plan for the following year envisages the amount of some RSD 46.6 billion, with RSD 34.6 billion allocated from the budget and 12 billion loan funds.

When it comes to foreign loans, loans are to be taken from international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the EBRD, namely for the purposes of in-country infrastructure building.

Since Serbia lost the embassy in Brussels in the succession of former Yugoslav republics, Serbia is planning to provide funds for constructing a new building. Envisaged loans shall amount to RSD 12.5 million, which are to be distributed to diplomatic representative offices of Serbia worldwide.

Some RSD 48.4 billion is planned for paying public debt, with 39.2 billion to be paid to national creditors, 6.4 billion to foreign creditors and RSD 2.8 billion on account of activated guarantees.

The budget of the Republic is planned in such a way as to cover the planned expenditures in spite of the lack of privatization funds, since privatization funds in 2008 shall not be presented as budget revenues.

PUBLIC WORKS IN 2007

139 Projects Implemented

139 projects worth RSD 21 million were implemented in the field of public works in Serbia in 2007, employing 2,234 persons in their respective implementation.

93 projects worth some RSD 143.6 million were implemented at the territory of Central Serbia, while 41 projects worth RSD 63 million were implemented in Vojvodina. Five projects were implemented at the territory of Belgrade amounting to RSD 6.6 million, employing 41 persons.

Most budget funds were allocated for salaries, social insurance and transport of public work participants. Gross salary amount was between RSD 17,000 (some 11,000 net) and 26,000 (some 19,000).

298 public works were registered in six Serbian counties in 2006, while more than 850 works in 24 counties were registered in 2007, of overall value close to RSD 2.2 billion. Since funds have been provided amounting to some RSD 250 million, it is possible to implement more than 10 percent of registered works.

Public works were initiated in 2006, with the purpose of implementing activities beneficial to society and employing vulnerable categories of population who have difficulties in finding jobs and being registered as unemployed for over two years.

More than RSD 400 million shall be allocated from budget funds for public works in 2008.

UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the pertaining Optional Protocol was signed in New York on behalf of the Republic of Serbia by Assistant Minister of Labor and Social Policy Vladimir Pešić.

Serbia has thus demonstrated readiness to take over the obligations set by the first document on human rights adopted by the United Nations in the new millennium. The signing ceremony was attended by Damjan Tatić Msc, national expert who took part in the work of the Ad Hoc UN Committee for the Development of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities operational between 2003 and 2006.

The Convention promotes, protects and guarantees full and efficient exercise of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities and respect for their dignity. The Convention establishes specific measures to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy all civic, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Special attention was dedicated to ensuring accessible physical environment, infrastructure, public transportation, public information, communication and services, awareness raising, collection of information and statistical data on persons with disabilities, international cooperation, development of universal design, independent living in the community, as well as the regulation of the status of women and children with disabilities.

The Convention envisages the establishment of national mechanisms for monitoring its implementation, as well as the international Committee for Rights of Persons with Disabilities gathering independent experts. Signatory countries are to submit periodical reports to the Committee and the Optional Protocol provides for submitting individual petitions to the Committee in case of breach of the rights set out in the Convention.

UN General Assembly adopted unanimously the Convention on December 13, 2006, which is to be ratified by 20 countries in order to become effective. So far the Convention has been signed by 119 countries and ratified by 12. The Optional Protocol has been signed by 68 countries.

Activities of the Gender Equality Council

The Gender Equality Council shall in 2008, in cooperation with the Gender Equality Department, develop a plan for implementing the binding recommendations of the UN Committee for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination over Women, as well as the implementation plan of the National Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women and Advancement of Gender Equality.

Special attention is to be dedicated to building of necessary capacities through trainings and seminars, as well as the awareness raising campaigns on the significance of gender equality for the democratization and the development of society. Furthermore, the Council envisages

work on projects analyzing current legislation, economic empowerment of women, fight against violence over women, as well as further establishment and advancement of appropriate databases, equipment and resources. The National Conference on Fight against Violence over Women was held towards end October 2007 in Belgrade, at the initiative of the Gender Equality Department, within the campaign of the Council of Europe for fighting against violence over women.

The Report on the Work of the Gender Equality Council in the convocation period 2004-2007 may be downloaded at the website of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu.

UNDP PROJECT PROPOSAL COMPETITION

Elimination of Discrimination over Women

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for Serbia/Poverty Reduction and Economic Development Department has opened the competition for submitting project proposals on advocating and promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination over Women (CEDAW) and the closing comments which the CEDAW Committee has submitted to Serbia. Special attention shall be given to project proposals tackling the advancement of the status of Roma women in Serbia.

The competition shall be open by January 15, 2008 and tender documentation may be downloaded at the UNDP website: www.undp.org.yu/tenders.

Project proposals are to be submitted to the following address: UNDP Office, Internacionalnih brigada 69, 11000 Beograd, Serbia; Ref.No. RFP 87/07 - "NOT TO BE OPENED BY REGISTRY".

Information may be obtained by sending queries to fax. 011/3444 300. or e-mail address procurement.yu@undp.org.



FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

Balkan Economy Transformation

The Fifth International Conference on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises was held on November 23, 2007 in Belgrade.

The Conference tackled the role of entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) in the future economic development of the Balkans as a European economic region. The Conference also dealt with cross-country cooperation and integration of SME policies. In addition to international cooperation, two aspects are important for the stimulation of SME development - better cooperation and removal of the remainder of barriers linked to international trade and investment.

It was concluded that countries in the region are to cooperate more efficiently, in particular in the area conducive to progress, which is corroborated by the data that SME in Serbia generate 60,000 new jobs annually.

The Conference gathered representatives of the European Commission and Balkan coun-

tries, which are to focus on issues linked to practical means for better cooperation in the region.

Topics included support for entrepreneurship in the Balkans, access to capital, improvement of cross-country cooperation, direct foreign investments, subcontract SME opportunities, cooperation in the field of innovation and research, as well as the improvement of the quality assurance system.

The European Charter on Small Enterprises is an example of cooperation of the European Commission and Western Balkan countries, which has contributed to an improved business SME environment.

The Central European Initiative was the main sponsor of the Conference, and was organized by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, with support of the Entranse programme of the Kingdom of Norway and International Labor Organization.

NES: Severance to a Job

The National Employment Service (NES) has opened, due to large interest, a new competition for granting funds within the Severance to a Job project. The competition was opened in the Jobs bulletin published by NES and at www.rztr.co.yu.

The subsidy amounts to RSD 210,000 and may be used by the registered unemployed persons, if they are ready to invest their own money into self-employment. It is expected that the action may help open at least 200 new jobs.

The project was developed by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development in cooperation with UNDP. Resources have been provided by the Austrian Development Agency, and the Government of Serbia has allocated RSD 80 million of budget funds for the action.

Serbia has Joined the EU Employment Progress Programme

The two-day regional conference entitled Building Capacities for Improving Social Dialogue in Western Balkans Countries was held in October 2006 in Belgrade. The Conference was organized by the European Commission and it gathered more than 100 representatives of state agencies, labor unions and employer associations from countries in the region.

It was announced on this occasion that Serbia has joined the EU employment and social solidarity programme entitled Progress, entitling it for the first time to compete for programme resources amounting to EUR 743 million. The funds are intended for EU countries, candidate countries and countries that have embraced the Progress programme.

Experts, labor unions, NGOs, state and scientific institutions of Serbia are eligible for programme funds if they submit quality programmes.

ABC CENTER PROJECT: Together against Poverty

The project entitled Together against Poverty has been implemented by ABC Center for Peace, Safety and Tolerance of Vranje since February 2007. The aim of the project is to build capacities of formal and informal partners. An informal network of organizations which may influence poverty reduction in the region has been established, gathering representatives of local NGOs, fund organizations and state institutions. A lot has been achieved in the previous period with the visibility of policies and

recommendations of the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the municipal development strategy. ABC Center has organized a set of seminars on project proposals (more than 50) that have been submitted by the Vranje Municipal Assembly to the NIP competition. Abridged PRS documents have been distributed and successful PRS projects have been promoted.

ABC Center is planning to work on the exchange of experiences between successful municipalities of Serbia and Vranje.

SMART KOLEKTIV: Study on Business and NGO Partnership

Smart Kolektiv has published the Study on Opportunities for Cross-Sector Partnership in Serbia. The study and the analyzed and promoted partnership model is directly linked to the Corporate Social Responsibility concept which has been developed over the last years by Smart Kolektiv and its partners from all three sectors.

The study represents a part of a wider program of stimulation and introduction of corporate social responsibility as a practice in Serbia and targets representatives of all three sectors. The aim of the study is to improve cross-sector

cooperation, since the sectors may not individually deal with the key social, economic and environmental challenges.

The study preparation was supported by the Pontis Foundation, Balkan Fund for Local Initiatives, Strategic Marketing, International Business Leaders Forum UK, the Deputy Prime Minister's PRS Implementation Focal Point and others.

More information may be obtained via e-mail office@smartkolektiv.org or at 011/3087 096 and 3087 097.

www.smartkolektiv.org

SME START-UP IN UNDERDEVELOPED MUNICIPALITIES

New 2,300 Jobs

The Development Fund of the Republic of Serbia has approved of approximately RSD 1.45 billion for opening SMEs in 51 underdeveloped municipalities, which is to facilitate the creation of more than 2,300 new jobs.

State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development Verica Kalanović says that the Development Fund currently provides most favorable credit lines with an annual rate between 1 and 2%, with repayment period of up to 7 years and grace period of a year.

58 underdeveloped municipalities applied in June 2007, in the first project stage. 153 projects have been approved in 31 most underdeveloped municipalities and 73 projects in 20 underdeveloped municipalities. Projects deal with SMEs employing up to 10 workers, in the field of food, wood processing, chemical and textile industry. Most applications for the credits came from the Leskovac, Loznica, Novi Pazar, Knjaževac, Prijepolje and Svrlijig municipalities.

NIP 2006 envisaged opening of 49 industrial zones in Serbia, with state funds in case of underdeveloped municipalities and budget and municipal funds in case of developed municipalities. 9 industrial zones which have been fully built already have factories employing workers.

Infrastructural equipment is planned to be finalized by end 2008 in 17 industrial zones. The Ministry of Economy and Regional Development is to find optimum solutions in case of 23 zones for further investments and deal with ownership issues with local governments.

DEVELOPMENT FUND: RSD 3 Billion for 8,000 Jobs

Within two programs for issuing start-up loans without mortgage and employment micro-loans, The Development Fund has approved of funds amounting to RSD 3 billion, which is to facilitate opening of nearly 8,000 new jobs in Serbia.

A bid for start-up loans was open in July which received 2,507 requests and approved of 1,507 amounting to RSD 2 billion. The bid, which approved of 5-year loans with the 1-year grace period and 1% annual interest rate, was open for persons who have not entered private entrepreneurship so far, regardless of age.

The initial budget for start-up entrepreneurs was RSD 1 billion, but it was decided that all positively assessed requests be given a chance, wherefore the approved funds amounted to RSD 2 billion.

Advantage with payment was given to start-up entrepreneurs below 40 years of age, and the rest shall be paid not later than January 2008. The submitted requests mainly tackle food industry, food processing and services, and all regions in Serbia applied equally.

When it comes to self-employment micro-loans, 683 requests were approved amounting to RSD 1 billion, and all the recipients are obliged to employ at least three workers registered with the National Employment Service. Two types of loans were approved - up to EUR 15,000 without mortgage and between EUR 15,000 and 30,000 with mortgage, with 1-year grace period and 1% annual interest rate.

The Development Fund also approved of loans for innovators - the geneticist Miodrag Stojković was given RSD 22 million for a Leskovac-based clinic, and he will be allocated RSD 10 million grant from NIP funds.



SCTM: Support for Small and Underdeveloped Municipalities

At the beginning of December, the Memorandum of Understanding was signed with 8 pilot municipalities involved in the second stage of the project Support to Local Development of Small and Underdeveloped Municipalities. The project is being implemented by the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) worth EUR 800,000. Each of the 8 new municipalities (Batočina, Bojnik, Žitište, Lebane, Medveđa, Nova Crnja, Rača and Sečanj) taking part in the project have been allocated EUR 10,000.

These municipalities are characterized by a high unemployment rate, negative birth rate, low national income per capita, high share of the elderly population.

The goal of the project is to provide support to small and underdeveloped municipalities through training in strategic planning, technical assistance and implementation of poverty reduction activities and financing the development of priority social welfare services in the local community.

The implementation of the project was initiated by the SCTM in 2006 in cooperation with the Deputy Prime Minister's PRS Implementation Focal Point, International Management Group and Center for Liberal-Democratic Studies. The first stage involved ten pilot municipalities: Alibunar, Babušnica, Bela Palanka, Gadžin Han, Golubac, Dimitrovgrad, Knić, Lapovo, Mali Zvornik and Sremski Karlovci.

Social Welfare Strategy Development at the Local Level

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs allocated RSD 26 million from the budget of the Republic as support to municipal budget funds distributed for providing new social services in the community. The funds were allocated through the Social Innovations Fund to 16 municipalities which have successfully finalized the strategic planning process. The funds shall be used for co-financing local level social welfare services set out in local strategic social welfare development plans. 16 out of 40 municipalities are involved in the project Planning Local Social Welfare Services - PLUS, representing a joint project of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, European Agency for Reconstruction and United National Development Programme.

The municipalities of Kučevo, Kovačica, Čoka, Priboj, Pančevo, Crna Trava, Aleksinac, Koceljeva, Topola, Vlasotince, Velika Plana, Gornji Milanovac, Osečina, Kula, Kosjerić and Vranje are developing the following services by means of co-financing: in-house assistance and care for the elderly and persons with disabilities, independent living with support - small communities for persons with disabilities, clubs and daily centers for the elderly and persons with disabilities, youth center, etc.

At the beginning of December, the PLUS project involved 40 municipalities more, which are to work with establishing local social welfare councils and the development of social welfare strategic plans in the first half of 2008, with mentor support. At the end of the process, these municipalities shall be given an opportunity to compete for funds from the budget of the Republic for establishing new services in line with priorities set out in strategic plans.

TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES Towns in Dialogue

Towns in Dialogue is the title of a set of conferences to be held between December 2007 and March 2008, with the aim of developing a dialogue between towns and municipalities which have cooperated with UN-HABITAT. Conferences are organized by UN-HABITAT and the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM) and the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government and the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, and are financed by the Italian Government. The first conference titled Integrated Local Development was held on December 17 and 18, 2007 in Belgrade.

Specific objectives of the conference are the exchange of experiences from Serbia and the region, as well as the promotion of dialogue between key local and national actors. Case studies, the most significant dialogue aspects and conclusions shall be covered systematically by the program of all conferences and shall be presented to a wider public through publications.

The main topics of two parallel sessions at the conferences shall be the development of integral development strategies and/or the process and work program and implementation of territorial development strategies, including tools, institutions and partnerships.

UN-HABITAT Office of Belgrade
Tel: 011/344 92 00, Fax: 011/344 9201,
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www.unhabitat.org.yu

Competition for 1,000 Apartments

A competition for 1,000 apartments is soon to be open, which are to be sold pursuant to the Decision on Conditions for Selling Socially Non-profit Apartments. The Housing Issue Committee of the Mayor of Belgrade published a list of required documents at the site www.beograd.org.yu: a copy of personal documents of all family members and/or IDs, birth and marriage certificates, certificates of competent bodies on education, employment and length of service. The required documents include the type of residential status and certificate on specific categories of population, such as persons with disabilities, independent artists, meritorious citizens etc.

SCTM AND EAR ROUND TABLE

Transformation of Public Utilities

The development of the Strategy for Transformation of Public Utilities (JKP) shall be finalized in September 2008. This was announced at the round table titled Transformation of Public Utilities - towards Sustainable Structure for Development and Work of Local Infrastructure, held in mid-November 2007, by State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development Luka Andrić.

The Strategy shall cover all public utilities and define the approach to their transformation. Local governments and JKP shall build capacities

for using pre-accession EU funds, which calls for a reorganization of JKP.

The transformation of utilities shall rely on experiences of other countries in the region, in order to avoid mistakes of neighboring countries.

The European Union shall, through EAR, support financially the local government projects and JKP by grants, loans and co-financing.

The round table, representing a final activity of the Working Group for Transformation of JKP, was organized by Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in cooperation with EAR.

COMPETITION OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND WATER MANAGEMENT AND PRS IFP: Fair of Rural Development Good Practices

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management (MAFWG) and the Deputy Prime Minister's Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Focal Point (PRS IFP) have announced that the deadline for submitting applications for the initiative has expired.

The Fair of Rural Development Good Practices is a one day gathering of practitioners who deal with rural development at the local and/or national level in Serbia. The aim of the initiative is to identify and promote good practices in the field of rural

development at the local and national level. The goal of rural development is to develop non-agricultural activities in rural regions.

One of the aspects of support for rural development and households is to promote cooperation and coordination of line ministries, local government, NGO and businesses, as well as the involvement of rural population into the decision-making process.

Many analyses indicate that rural poverty is more striking in comparison to urban poverty in Serbia. 8.8% of Serbian popula-

tion lived below the poverty line in 2006 (RSD 6,221 monthly per consumer unit), while the poverty index of non-urban population was almost two and a half times higher (13.3% to 5.3% respectively), including 50% higher in comparison to the national average. Households whose main source of income is agriculture were exposed to a significantly higher poverty risk.

MAFWG shall notify the successful candidates via e-mail with instructions for preparing the presentation, as well as the date and venue of the fair.

ZRENJANIN:

Rural Development Education Center

The Rural Development Education Center has opened in Zrenjanin, based on a joint project and investment of the Foundation for Local Economic Development and United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The aim of the Center is to stimulate economic development of the municipality. The Center is located in refurbished facilities of the Association of Entrepreneurs.

The Zrenjanin municipality invested USD 110,000 into equipment, while USAID invested USD 46,000 through the Program for Stimulating Economic Development.



PUBLIC INVITATION OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS Training Programs for Social Service Providers

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs has announced the Public Invitation within the project Establishment and Realization of the Accreditation System for Training Programs for Social Service Providers in the Republic of Serbia, stimulating the creators of training programs for service providers in the field of social protection to submit their programs for accreditation. The application deadline was November 15, 2007, and the project envisages accreditation of all training programs which meet the prescribed conditions. All accredited training programs shall be published in the Register (catalogue) of Accredited Training Programs.

The second program stage shall finance the training of trainers for 20 selected accredited programs.

Information on the program may be obtained in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Department for Family Care and Social Protection, Nemanjina 22-26, Belgrade or at www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu.

CSR ADVANCEMENT UN INITIATIVE Global Agreement in Serbia

The UN initiative for advancement of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) titled Global Agreement was promoted in December 2007 in Belgrade. The Global Agreement is the largest voluntary global association dealing with CSR, comprising some 4,000 companies from more than 100 countries. Its primary goal is to present and build social legitimacy of companies and market.

Global Agreement represents a practical framework for the exchange of know-how and advancement of corporate practice of companies - members, dedicated to the integration of fundamental and universally accepted tenets in the field of human and labor rights protection, environmental protection and fight against corruption.

Lance Clark, UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia, has expressed expectations that Serbian companies shall join the members in the initiative which integrate corporate responsibility principles in their business models and strategies.

Radovan Jelašić, Governor of the National Bank of Serbia, which already integrates social responsibility principles in its work, emphasized that foreign investors are expected to introduce both investments and CSR standards implemented in their own countries.

Practical operational aspects of the initiative were presented by Ben Slay, Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union countries) within the United Nations Development Programme. He said that Global Agreement is not a regulatory instrument. The association does not control, impose or monitor behavior and actions of individual companies. It rather relies on responsibility, transparency and established corporate interest of companies, NGOs, associations and academic institutions.

A first group of members from Serbia has already joined the Global Agreement, namely companies (BFC Lafarge, Holcim, Deloitte and Cisco Systems), banks (EFG, Pireaus, Societe General and Credite Agricole - Meridian Bank) and the SMart Kolektiv NGO.

More details on Global Agreement and the joining procedures: www.unglobalcompact.org.

Effective Implementation of Social Policy Requires Involvement of All Society Segments

Minister of Labor and Social Policy Rasim Ljajić said that effective implementation of social policy in Serbia requires involvement of all segments of society, from companies to the NGO sector.

"Results may be achieved only with our joint efforts", said Ljajić, adding that the country bears the largest responsibility. However, significant effects may not be achieved without participation of all segments of society. Minister of Labor and Social Policy shall come

out with a set of projects which are primarily to assist children without social care and children with developmental problems, said Ljajić at the Charity Christmas Fair.

The Charity Christmas Fair was organized by the International Women's Club, and all revenues shall be forwarded to humanitarian organizations working with persons with disabilities, elderly and displaced persons, victims of violence and institutions for education and integration of minorities.

Payment of Last Public Debt Installment for Pensioners

The payment of the last, i.e. fifth installment of public debt to pensioners shall begin as of December 18 by the Republic Fund for Pension Disability Insurance, as decided by the Government of Serbia at the proposal of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. Instead of February 2008, when the last installment of the "large debt" incurred in 1990s was due, the

Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs suggested to the Government that the liability be settled earlier.

Therefore, 1,260,000 pensioners shall receive approximately RSD 3,400 from the PIO Fund of the Employed. The Fund shall be allocated RSD 3.9 billion budget funds on account of principal and RSD 671.4 million on account of interest.

Data on Pensions and Social Allowances

Average pension and lowest pension - farmers - November 2007. Average pension in the Republic PIO Fund of Farmers in November 2007 was RSD 5,985. The lowest pension was RSD 6,183.85.

Average pension and lowest pension - the self-employed - November 2007. Average pension in the Republic PIO Fund of the Self-Employed was RSD 15,522. The lowest pension was RSD 8,177.92.

Average pension and lowest pension - the employed. Average pension of the Republic PIO Fund of the Employed in November 2007 was RSD 16,015. The lowest pension was RSD 8,177.92.

Child allowance for first, second, third and fourth child in November 2007 was RSD 1,601 of regular amount and 2,082 of increased amount.

Material allowances for families without income in December 2007 for one family member was RSD 4,615, for two family members RSD 6,341, for three family members RSD 8,071, for four family members 8,644, for five family members RSD 9,234.

Humanitarian Tennis Day

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy provided 100 tickets for the humanitarian tennis day NAJJ SRBIJE held on December 7, 2007. Tickets were distributed to the pupils of "Branko Pešić" School and Institute for Children without Parental Care from Zvečanska Street. The Ministry thus supported the action and enabled poorer pupils to take part.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POWER CAMPAIGN

How Much Do You Know of Your Economic and Social Rights?

The aim of the Social Responsibility Power campaign implemented by the Center for Democracy is to promote the importance of respect and protection of economic and social rights, in particular in the field of employment, labor and employment.

The campaign lasts March 2007 through September 2008 and envisages a set of activities covering the corporate sector, Government, civil society and general public.

A part of the campaign targeting the employed and the general public with a slogan "How much do you know of your economic and social rights" aims at informing citizens of their rights and respective protective mechanisms, as well as the rights to safe and healthy working conditions. A publication is to be printed at the beginning of 2008 with examples of breaching civic rights in the field of labor and employment in Serbia, collected in

October and November 2007. The part of the campaign targeting increased responsibility of the corporate sector included the survey among Serbian companies in order to obtain information on their attitude towards protection of the said rights.

With the aim of promoting these rights at the local level, local conferences and public debates are to be organized, as well as a final national conference when a company meeting highest standards in respecting economic and social rights in Serbia shall publicly be awarded a prize.

The implementation of the campaign is financed by EU through the program European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights and by the Institute for Sustainable Communities through the USAID-supported program Initiative for Advancement of Civil Society.



UNECE Ministerial Conference on Ageing

The Ministerial Conference on Ageing was held between November 6-8, 2007 in the Spanish town of Leon, commemorating the fifth year of the Global Assembly on Ageing and the adoption of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. The conference was organized by the Government of the Kingdom of Spain and UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe). It was attended by more than 200 representatives from Europe and North America of the UNECE region. Only 9 countries did not have their official delegations.

The Serbian delegation was headed by State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy Zoran Martinović.

The ministerial UNECE conference adopted the Summary Report on Ageing in UNECE Countries and the Leon Political Declaration on progress in achieving longevity, as well as the challenges arising with further ageing process. Participants

were acquainted with the adopted NGO Declaration, as well as the Recommendations of the Scientific UNECE Forum, emphasizing the significance of social inclusion of all generations and activities of poverty reduction, as well as international East-West cooperation and scientific research in further implementation of the International Plan of Action on Ageing.

The conference panels supported actions and the results achieved in Serbia over the previous five years: the adoption of the National Strategy on Ageing by the Government of Serbia, establishment of the Government Council on the Elderly Age and Ageing, activities and measures of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and others, as well as the results of civil society in the field, NGOs and humanitarian organizations, international cooperation and, in particular, cooperation between the country and civil society in the field.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SERBIA AND DIVAC HOD: Solving Housing Issue of Refugees

Minister of Labor and Social Policy Rasim Ljajić, the representative of the humanitarian organization Divac HOD Vlade Divac and State Secretary of the Ministry of Finance Janko Guzijan have signed the Agreement on Providing Resources for Solving Housing Issues of Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons living in collective centers.

The agreement envisages that the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy allocates RSD 40 million for buying deserted rural households, which are to be given to refugees and internally displaced persons living in collective centers for use.

Ljajić said that there were 700 collective centers in 1996 in Serbia. Today there are 82 centers, housing 7,022 refugees and internally displaced persons.

Vlade Divac thanked the Government and Serbian citizens for their support and said that the Divac HOD organization shall state the amount of funds collected during the action and announce information on future projects.

CONFERENCE ON THE ACCESSIBILITY OF DOCUMENTS OF PUBLIC IMPORTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES "Everyone is Entitled to the Digital Age"

The three-day International Conference "Everyone is Entitled to the Digital Age" was held in December in Belgrade, sponsored by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

The Government of Serbia adopted a conclusion towards end November obliging all ministries and state bodies to adapt their websites and electronic content to the needs of persons with disabilities. The conference emphasized significance of the implementation of the EU Declaration, adopted in 2006, on the accessibility of electronic information for persons with disabilities, in particular in the field of education, employment and culture.

The conference, organized by the Linuks center, was attended by international experts, representatives of the ministries of labor and social policy, telecommunication and information society, as well as public administration and local government.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT: Ministerial Website Accessible for Persons with Disabilities

The website of the Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government has become accessible for persons with disabilities as of mid-November. Persons with visual impairments shall be able to follow the contents of the site by means of the screen reader device. Furthermore, persons with disabilities shall be able to access the contents by means of several keys: tab - guide through the site content, enter - the required content is opened, space bar - jumps to the end of content if longer than a page, while the up and down arrows enable gradual overview of the

contents outside the immediate window.

The Ministry of Public Administration and Local Government, as a first ministry to enable access for persons with disabilities, is willing to provide information on technical standards of their site to other ministries and local government units.

The project was developed within the Riga Declaration implementation, adopted in Riga in June 2006, inviting all the EU member states to provide access to electronic contents for the elderly and elderly employees, as well as persons with disabilities.

BID FOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

Advancement of the Status of Persons with Disabilities

The Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, Department for Protection of Persons with Disabilities, has opened a bid for interested socio-humanitarian organizations to submit their project proposals for funds allocated pursuant to the Law on Games of Chance, from the Budget Fund for Programs of Socio-Humanitarian Organizations and the Budget Fund for Protection and Advancement of the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The aim of the project is to advance the status of persons with disabilities in the Republic of Serbia, by providing support for the following project activities: services of daily activities in the local community; implementation of assistive technologies for better social integration of persons with disabilities; prevention of institutionalization and deinstitutionalization of persons with disabilities; promotion of rights of persons with disabilities and the principle of equal opportunities and improvement of accessibility to physical environment.

Associations and organizations of persons with disabilities are eligible to take part, as well as other associations and organizations whose programs tackle solving the specific problems.

The deadline was December 3, 2007. For more information contact the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, at 011/361 49 60 or 011/61 34 90, and at www.minrzs.sr.gov.yu.

ROUND TABLE: Draft Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities

A round table was organized in the National Assembly in December relating to the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, when the Draft Law on Employment of Persons with Disabilities was presented.

The law shall oblige employers to employ persons with disabilities, depending on the total number of employees. Companies of 20 to 49 employees shall be liable to employ one person with disability, while larger companies shall employ one for every 50 employees.

State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development Vladimir Ilić said that companies who fail to conform to the law shall be sanctioned - companies are to pay penalties of three minimum monthly salaries in case of a person with disability not employed.

Funds collected in such a manner shall be allocated to the Center for

Professional Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities which is to function within the National Employment Service (NES), until conditions are met for establishing a similar independent institution.

Tax Administration shall be in charge of the control and collection of funds from unconscientious employers.

According to NES, there are 24,250 persons with disabilities capable of working. The Belgrade registry registers nearly 7,000 such members. A number of the persons, such as war invalids who register with NEW only for the right to allowances, is not always willing to work, while other categories refuse to work for fear of losing social allowances.

According to the round table announcements, an official public debate on the Draft Law is to take place in near future.

CONFERENCE OF MOLSP AND COUNCIL FOR CHILD RIGHTS

Childhood without Violence

The international conference Childhood without Violence was held in October, organized by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MOLSP) and the Council for Child Rights of the Government of Serbia, within the presidency of our country over the Council of Europe. Upon opening of the conference, State Secretary of MOLSP Ljiljana Lučić said that more than 73% of children aged between 2-14 suffer some form of mental or corporal punishment within the family, 51% of which are exposed to mild and 7% to more severe forms of corporal punishment.

In addition to the ratification of the Convention on Child Rights in 1990, several new laws regulating the issue have been adopted in the past two years within the process of establishing the system of protection of children against violence. Better cooperation among social work centers, police, health institutes and NGOs has been established tackling identification and taking care of molested children.

Parents have no right to corporal punishment of children. Violence represents severe breach of child rights and threatens their development.

ROMA EDUCATION FUND

Selected Project Proposals

Fifty project proposals were submitted to the competition of the Roma Education Fund for supporting access to preschool education for Roma children aged 5.5 to 7 in the 2007/2008 school year. The competition was opened in November 2007. Project proposals were developed jointly by Roma NGOs, preschool institutions, primary schools and municipal authorities.

Project activities shall provide: access to integrated preschool education with no more than 25% Roma children per group as of January 2008; work with Roma parents in the Roma community; material support to Roma children to enable unhindered participation in group activities; sustainable cooperation mechanisms between institutions, organizations and families; precise local database on children involved in the preparatory preschool program, children due for the following year and children excluded from the education system.

Roma Education Fund envisages that projects be implemented as of January 2008.

Intercultural/ Multicultural Education

As a part of the initiative Inclusive Education - from Practice to Policy, the Fund for Open Society (FOS) and the Bridge group are implementing the project Intercultural/Multicultural Education, aiming at advancing multicultural cohabitation through education and policies.

FOS advocate for accessibility to education for all, in particular children and the youth who are marginalized due to their background, mental capabilities, disability or disease.

The Baby is Coming Project

The national project Baby is Coming provided reliable health information and training on motherhood to future mothers in 2007, via text messages and e-mails in more than 50 cities, towns and villages. Sending a query to 3377, mothers are notified on what happens to them and their babies during pregnancy.

The project was initiated at the beginning of the year with support of the Ministry of Health, European Agency for Reconstruction, National Office of the President of the Republic and Red Cross of Serbia, as well as a large number of companies. The project was initially supported by the Wiener Stadtische insurance company which donated tetra diapers for four Belgrade nurseries worth RSD 1 million. Also, all the mothers who delivered in 2007 received EUR 300 as the first education annual insurance premium for the child.

COMPETITION RESULTS

Youth Policy Action Plan of Vojvodina

134 projects were submitted to the competition within the implementation of the Youth Policy Action Plan of Vojvodina, with 66 projects positively assessed.

State Secretary of Youth and Sports Modest Dulić and representatives of all 66 youth and non-government organizations signed contracts in Novi Sad on the implementation of the Action Plan. RSD 10.5 million shall be allocated from the province budget for the purpose.

This has been the third successive year of the plan realization, covering areas vital for the advancement of the status of youth in Vojvodina - from education and employment, to culture and active use of leisure time.

BASIC IT FUND:

IT as Foundation

Certus Ltd. Company established the BASIC Fund in November 2007 - a first fund to invest into future IT experts. The company shall gather all partners in the field and shall establish a team to take part in the development and financing of programs in the mandate of the BASIC Fund.

The aim of the fund is to provide active support, stimulate and promote sustainable development of talents in realizing their education and professional achievements. The main directions of the BASIC Fund are scholarships and assistance, support and development of infrastructure necessary for achieving top results in the domain of information technologies.

Financial assistance is allocated through scholarships, as financial support for youth taking part in relevant competitions, seminars, summer schools or IT knowledge fairs, as well as the equipment of computer centers and information classes and the procurement of equipment for training, work and learning. BASIC Fund covers up to 50% of the required budget.

Certus company and BASIC IT Fund have opened a competition for providing IT is Future grants, which shall provide financial support for two students of Mathematical Gymnasium of Belgrade in 2007/2008, as well as two students of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of Belgrade. Scholarships shall amount to EUR 2,400 per annum for pupils (EUR 100 per month) and EUR 4,800 per annum for students (EUR 200 per month). Eligible participants are all the students of the third, fourth and fifth year of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and all students of third and fourth grade of the Mathematical Gymnasium. The condition is top grades in previous years for the students of the Gymnasium and/or average grade 8 for the Faculty students.

Applications may be submitted via www.certus.co.yu and basicitfond@certus.co.yu, not later than January 18, 2008.

MINGL, Information Web Service for High School Students

CePIT Belgrade Open School has initiated the MINGL information web service for high school students, www.mingl.org. The aim of the site is to inform every student, as a service for processing and distributing high school-relating information on available opportunities and institutions and organizations working with students and provided programs. MINGL contains information on competitions, extra-curricular and sports activities, exchange of students, volunteer programs, travel, informal education programs, competitions, workshops, professional advisory services, online education counseling in the country and abroad (with an analysis of offer) and online Psychological Counseling.

In addition to other interesting contents, MINGL announces the opening of High School Journalist Correspondent Offices from 13 Serbian towns on local (pop)culture and modern events with readers' comments.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS:

Coca-Cola Talents

The Coca-Cola HBS Serbia Company, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has continued implementing the Coca-Cola Talents program, initiated in 2006. The aim is to broaden perspectives for professional development of youth labor force by providing scholarships to successful students.

Identifying future managers at the second year of studies, Coca-Cola aims at motivating potential business leaders to work on their development and future in Serbia, since business

growth increases the needs of a company for good local staff.

Eligible participants are students having passed exams for enrolling the third year of studies at a state faculty, with at least 8.5 average mark, speaking good English and being computer literate.

Scholarships amounting to EUR 2,000 per academic year towards the end of studies shall be granted to seven new students.

For additional information: www.cchbc-talents.com

Free Translation of Documents for Children

The project Integration of Children of Returnee Families in Education System is implemented by the Association for Stimulating Child Development "Big Small World", in cooperation with the Human and Minority Rights Service. The project funded by UNDP provides resources for the translation of certificates and diplomas of returnee children from Western Europe.

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