

Aid Matters

Newsletter on Development Assistance in Serbia



Issue no. 6 November 2012

Inside the issue:

Development Cooperation with Sweden	2
Norwegian Embassy Info Session - Strengthening Civil Society in Serbia	2
UNOPS - a True Partner of the Government of Serbia	2
International Assistance in Health Sector	3
Ambassador Opens USAID-Supported Court	3
Italian Credit Line Facility	3
81 Million € of German Assistance	4
WB EDIF Policy Discussion	4
10th Anniversary of the Large Taxpayer Office	4

In Brief

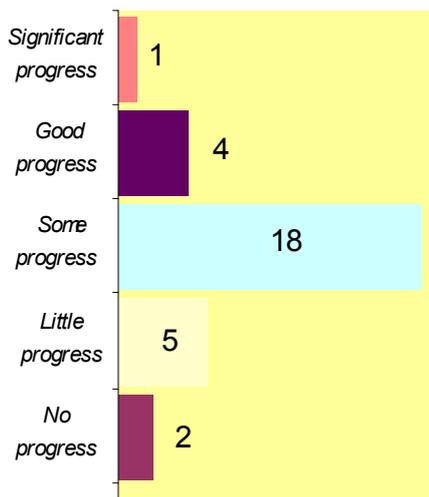
Ognjen Mirić, Deputy Director of Serbian EU Integration Office, was appointed the National Coordinator for the Danube Strategy.

Progress Report 2012

Since March 2002, the European Commission has reported regularly to the Council and Parliament on progress made by the Western Balkans countries through Annual Progress Reports (except for 2011 when the progress of Serbia was assessed through EC Opinion on Serbia's application for membership of the EU).

This progress report covers mid-September 2011 to early October 2012 period, and following the standard structure, it:

- briefly describes the EU-Serbia relations;
- analyses the situation in Serbia in terms of political and economic criteria for membership;
- reviews Serbia's capacity to implement European standards, i.e. to gradually approximate its legislation and policies with those of the acquis, in line with the SAA and European Partnership priorities.



Significant progress was made within Chapter Common foreign and security policy. Good progress was reported in four Chapters: Company law, Intellectual property law, Statistics and Customs. There has been some progress within 18 Chapters, and little progress in 5 Chapters.

No progress was made in the Chapters Economic

and monetary policy (with a significant step back regarding the National Bank of Serbia) and Financial and budgetary provisions. There has been progress in three areas where long term progress is analysed: Agriculture, Enterprise and industrial policy and Regional policy and coordination of structural instruments.

Serbia 2012 Progress Report is available at www.seio.gov.rs - section Documents/EU Documents.

IPA Cross-Border Cooperation

SEIO, as the National Authority and the Operating Structure for the CBC Programmes in the Republic of Serbia organised 3rd National Cross - Border Cooperation Conference on the 26th September. During the Conference, best practices within this financial perspective were presented, and new possibilities discussed.

Under Romania-Serbia Programme 2nd Call for Proposals with available funding of 30.7 million €, contracting procedure for 45 projects has started. On 28th September, a list of 61 projects was proposed for financing (out of 262 received) within Hungary-Serbia Programme 3rd Call, with available 16.5 million €. Under Bulgaria-Serbia

Programme 2nd Call, which has 20.4 million € at its disposal, 70 projects were proposed for financing on 14th September. Financing Agreements for 2012-2013 for the above mentioned Programmes are expected to be signed by the end of this year.

Financing Agreement 2010-2013 for Southeast Europe Programme was signed in September. The implementation of 10 projects from 3rd Strategic Call and 18 projects with Serbian partners from 4th Call has started.

For more information, visit ISDACON - CBC section, www.evropa.gov.rs

Development Cooperation with Sweden

Sweden has been providing development assistance to Serbia since 2001. The total amount of support granted by 2011 is around 133 million €.

Based on the Strategy for development cooperation with Serbia 2009-2012, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has supported projects in accordance with sectoral priorities defined in the document Needs of the Republic of Serbia for International Assistance. Priority sectors are defined in line with priorities of the Government of Serbia (based on National Plan for Integration with the EU and National Sustainable Development Strategy), and include: rule of law, security sector reform, human rights and gender equality and environment.

Swedish development assistance is implemented in line with the

principles of Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, while using Serbia's own structures when planning, implementing and monitoring development initiatives as much as possible. Activities are directed at providing support to public administration at central and local level, civil society development and implementation of programme-based approach which entails coordinating efforts of multiple donors to jointly support an institution or programme.

Sweden has supported the establishment of development assistance coordination mechanisms, particularly ISDACON information system as the comprehensive database of development assistance to Serbia, as well as the introduction of Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) in Serbia.

A consistent effort to strengthen Serbian ownership has improved the results of Swedish development cooperation. Sweden will continue to support projects in Serbia with 12-13 million € on the annual basis, focusing on strengthened democracy and sustainable development.

New Contact Entry

New Head of Swedish Development Cooperation in Serbia is

Mr Torgny Svenungsson.

Ambassador Opens USAID-Supported Court

Source: USAID

U.S. Ambassador Michael Kirby recently inaugurated the Zrenjanin Misdemeanor Court, jointly renovated by the U.S. Agency for International Development's Judicial Reform and Government Accountability (JRGA) project and Serbia's Ministry of Justice.

As part of its five-year, \$21.8-million JRGA program, USAID redesigned the court creating a "one-stop shop" providing easy public access to information and court services. Zrenjanin also became the first Misdemeanor Court in Serbia to feature a one-to-



U.S. Ambassador Michael Kirby speaking in Zrenjanin (Photo: Hal Lipper/USAID)

one ratio of courtrooms to judges with private offices for judges and staff. This will reduce case backlogs and improve the court's efficiency and its transparency. Serbia's Ministry of Justice replaced the building's roof. Ambassador Kirby used the improvements to the Zrenjanin court to highlight the U.S. government's commitment to strengthening Serbia's courts. During its first year, USAID JRGA has renovated four Misdemeanor Courts as part of a larger program to improve court efficiency and accountability and public access to the judiciary.

UNOPS — a True Partner of the Government of Serbia

Source: UNOPS

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), organisation providing world-class project management services, is implementing the largest EU and Swiss Government area-based Programme in Serbia — the European Partnership with Municipalities EU PROGRES (www.euprogres.org). It also realises Sustainable Waste Management Initiative for a Healthier Tomorrow — SWIFT 2 and 3, the EU Hospital Information Systems project, partners in a UN Human Security Trust Fund project. Recently it has been appointed to implement the Belville Roma Housing



project. UNOPS is in the process of establishing a Project Centre in Belgrade thus proving genuine commitment in supporting the Government to better socio-economic conditions in Serbia.

UNOPS development approach is designed to make sustainability a priority and it supports all partners to expand capacities. In

Serbia, UNOPS has engaged high-quality local experts, actively promoting local and national ownership of projects while keeping advisory and monitoring role. All its activities are shaped in close cooperation with the Government and support enactment of national strategies and legislation.

International Assistance in Health Sector



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and International Projects, Ministry of
Health*

Health Sector was faced with serious challenges during last decade. Many interventions, such as creation of strategic documents, establishing institutions of national importance (Agency for Accreditation of Health Care Institutions, Agency for Medicines and Medical Devices) were assisted through the EU CARDS and IPA funds. The EU recognized our needs for support in the field of health management, implementation of national health development plans, national strategies and laws related to health care and continuous improvement of health care services.

In accordance with the Agreement between the Governments of China and Serbia, Ministry of Health got ten grants of digital X-ray devices. Diagnostic procedures and the quality of health services will be put on a higher level with new technologies and sophisticated methods of examination. In cooperation with the Embassy of the Czech Republic reconstruction of surgical

block of Pirot General Hospital was agreed in July. Czech Development Agency will provide up to 400,000 € for the reconstruction.

Last spring project started - Integrated Health Information System (EU-IHIS), financed by the EU Delegation in Serbia and implemented by the World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe, with administrative support of UNOPS. Beneficiaries are 19 hospitals throughout Serbia, selected by Ministry of Health. The overall objective is to improve efficiency and quality of health care delivery. It will contribute to further development and implementation of a standardized, comprehensive, accessible and sustainable Electronic Health Record (EHR) IHIS at all levels of health services and to its customization and integration with the two already developed hospital information systems.

Ministry of Health is committed to prepare new laws next year related to medical documentation, mental health, patient rights etc. In the light of this strategic approach, international assistance will be welcome. EU member states contribution will be of invaluable importance in order to achieve EU standards in the field of health and consumer protection.

Norwegian Embassy Info Session - Strengthening Civil Society in Serbia

Source:



On October 18th, the Norwegian Embassy organized an info session for representatives of more than 180 CSOs and many journalists at Media Center Belgrade.

Ambassador Nils Ragnar Kamsvåg was honored to host as guest speakers: Prime Minister of Serbia, Ivica Dacic, H.E. Vincent Degert, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the Re-

public of Serbia and Milica Delevic, President of the Committee for European Integration of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia. Ambassador announced the new Call for proposals saying that this launch is just another demonstration of lasting commitment of Norway to the development of Serbia who has, since 2000, received more than

240 mil € in assistance from Norway, which makes Norway one of the major bilateral donors to Serbia.

More information is available at www.norveska.org.rs

Italian Credit Line Facility

Source: *Italian Development Cooperation Office*

Italian Embassy Development Cooperation has supported Serbia by implementing two credit lines, one of 33.25 million € and another of 30 million €. Credit Facility supports Small and Medium Enterprises through Local Banking System and sustains local development through Local Public Utilities. The Programme aims to contribute to the economic growth of Serbia through the development of national SME sector, as well as to upgrade local basic services offered by the LPUs by allowing them easier access to and more favourable conditions for credit

funds available through nine local banks, selected by means of a public competition.

At present, 155 credits have been delivered, amounting to over 52 million €. The investments have contributed to the creation of 722 new jobs. The largest number of investments has been in the manufacturing sector, followed by agriculture, construction, transport and others. Partners of this Programme are the National Bank of Serbia, Ministry of Finance and Economy, Ministry of Regional Development and Local Self-Government and SEIO.

For further information, visit <http://italiancreditlineserbia.org/>

81 Million € of German Assistance

Germany approved 81 million € for projects in the fields of energy, infrastructure, development of democracy and improvement of public administration to Serbia. The Protocol on development cooperation in 2012 between Germany and Serbia was signed on 18th October 2012.

With €1.2 billion of development assistance since 2000, Germany is the largest development partner of Serbia, while Serbia is among top 10 receivers of this type of assistance.

In Brief - Programming of IPA 2013 is under way.

Events

- 13-16 November First round of Sector Monitoring Sub-Committee Meetings, Belgrade
- 21 November Regional Housing Programme 4th Progress meeting, Sarajevo
- 27-28 November First Annual Forum on EU Strategy for Danube Region, Regensburg
- 17 December UNDAF and MDG F National Steering Committee Meeting, Belgrade

Check out the upcoming events at ISDACon—News and Events section, www.evropa.gov.rs

WB EDIF Policy Discussion

The Innovation Fund, in cooperation with Serbian European Integration Office, hosted a round table in preparation for the launching of Western Balkan Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility (WB EDIF). The workshop was dedicated to identification of priority policy reforms focused on improving the conditions for the development of innovative and high growth SMEs and stimulating the emergence of venture capital markets.

WB EDIF is a joint initiative of the European Commission, European Investment Bank, the European Investment Fund, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Republic of Serbia on behalf of beneficiaries, set up through the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) designed to improve access to finance for SMEs in the region.

For more information, please visit www.innovationfund.rs

10th Anniversary of the Large Taxpayer Office

Source: GIZ

10th anniversary celebration of the Large Taxpayer Office (LTO) took place in late October. Starting from scratch, only ten years ago, LTO has evolved into a highly efficient unit whose, over 400 clients, contribute to approximately 44 % of the overall Serbian tax revenue.



Since 2002, GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) on behalf of German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

has been able to accompany the LTO in its evolutionary process. At early stages, collaboration focused on introducing the VAT law and developing capacities related to implementing the new tax. Over time, further topics have moved into the sphere of interest, e.g. the approximation of Serbian tax system towards EU standards, setting-up of a chamber of certified tax advisors, fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance, and the issue of transfer-pricing.

About Aid Matters Newsletter



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The newsletter aims at improving communication between stakeholders and exchange of information relevant to development assistance activities in the Republic of Serbia.

If you would like to contribute, please send your text to majamilenkovic@seio.gov.rs An ideal word count is 150 words.

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