

Aid Matters

Newsletter on Development Assistance in Serbia



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Candidate Status for Serbia



Milica Delević,
Director of the European
Integration Office

In March 2012, the European Council has decided to grant Serbia the candidate status for membership in the EU. This will be followed by preparations for the next phase in the EU accession process – setting out a date for the launch of membership negotiations.

The candidate status is an important step and confirmation that the country is on the right path, but also a motivation and commitment to further progress in reforms and harmonizing with the EU. Nevertheless, this is just the beginning of hard work for Serbia.

At the moment, it is crucial to focus on resolving the tasks ahead and make significant steps forward, particularly in the justice and security sectors, fight against corruption, implementation of the adopted laws, etc. The results that will be achieved in the upcoming period will determine the subsequent direction of the EU integration process. After the country has achieved significant progress and fulfilled all conditions, the EC will propose to Member States to open the negotiations. Final decision is to be taken unanimously by all Member States. The EC will present the opinion regarding the progress made by Serbia and fulfillment of conditions in its Annual Progress Report, expected to be published in October 2012.

As of July 2008, when the National Programme for Integration was adopted, Serbia has fulfilled 80% of commitments - 774 out of 973 laws expected to be aligned with the European standards were adopted. In the upcoming period, it will be a challenge to ensure the implementation of these laws and focus on priority areas estimated as requiring significant efforts to be in line with the EU standards, namely justice and human rights, security, financial control, agriculture and environment. It will be also necessary to strengthen the administrative and institutional capacities and structures that will represent the future negotiation teams.

Candidate status opened the possibility for Serbia to use the funds from the EU Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA) through other components, upon conferral of management powers by the EC to national authorities. Although this does not mean that additional funding will be ensured within IPA, financing of additional measures such as active labour measures and direct support to agriculture producers will be ensured. In addition, conferral of management powers by the EC would demonstrate that national systems and capacities to manage EU funds are in place. Also, practical work and experience in managing these funds will help prepare for management of structural and cohesion funds that will be available to Serbia once it becomes an EU member, in a volume much bigger than pre-accession funds.

Great results that Serbia has achieved in absorption of IPA 2007-2013 are excellent recommendation for future IPA allocations in the new EU budget for period 2014-2020.

Did you know?

The year 2012 marks the 10th anniversary of euro banknotes and coins. Windows and gateways on the front of all € banknotes symbolise the European spirit of openness and cooperation. The 12 stars of the EU represent the dynamism and harmony of contemporary Europe. The bridges on the back symbolise communication between the people of Europe and between Europe and the rest of the world.

More information on the euro can be found at www.ecb.int/euro/banknotes/html/index.en.html

ИНСТРУМЕНТ ЗА
ПРЕПРИСТУПНУ
ПОМОЋ - ИПА



INSTRUMENT FOR
PRE-ACCESSION
ASSISTANCE - IPA

Japanese Development Cooperation with Serbia

The Government of Japan has been actively providing support to the Republic of Serbia since 1990s. After humanitarian assistance, Japan has been providing official development assistance (ODA), in: infrastructure, environment, energy, agriculture, entrepreneurship, health, science, education and tourism, migration management, sport and culture.

The total amount of Japanese assistance to Serbia has reached 460 million EUR. Among development partners in Serbia Japan has one of the most versatile assistance portfolios, in terms of structure of support, types of projects and categories of beneficiaries. The priorities for support are defined among Serbian institutions, coordinated by SEIO, Embassy of Japan and JICA. Between 2000 - 2005 the Government of Japan has granted 110 million EUR for macro-



economic stabilisation and urgent needs in emergency situations in the Republic of Serbia. In 2011 the first project from the concessional credit (yen credit) for attaining international quality of air standards (Desulphurisation in Thermal Power Plant Nikola Tesla in Obrenovac) was approved. The value of this loan is around 250 million EUR.

Technical training courses in Japan are organized annually for members of Serbian administration in various sectors and this scheme also represents the part of official development cooperation.

The film featuring examples of Japanese assistance to Serbia can be viewed on the SEIO Youtube channel

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTuQvFTz-Lw>

Public Hearing on the Use of IPA Funds

On 6th March, the European Integrations Committee of the National Assembly organised a public hearing on "The Use of European Union Pre-accession Funds" (IPA).

From 2007 to 2013, 1.4 billion EUR from the EU pre-accession funds have been earmarked for Serbia while the funds are expected to be increased in the EU 2014-2020 budget. So far the funds received from the IPA have been used for the implemen-

Programming of IPA 2013 has started. All eight sector working group meetings to discuss the priorities are scheduled for mid April.

tation of 129 projects through Component I, as well as for the support of cross-border cooperation projects.

The areas covered by these projects include education, agriculture, infrastructure, environmental protection, local development, etc.

As an EU candidate, Serbia will be able to use the remaining components of the IPA – for regional development, human resources development and rural development, primarily the development of agriculture as a strategically significant field.

More information on IPA is available at ISDACON - EU Funds section, www.evropa.gov.rs

Support to Sjenički Cheese Production

Through this project, the Czech Republic supports a more balanced socio-economic development in Serbia by facilitating rural development in the Pešter highlands. This region has a big potential for agri-food production, as well as village tourism, but it lacks adequate infrastructure

The specific objective of this 2011-2013 development project is to increase competitiveness of local cheese producers and build up their capacity to meet the food safety requirements. The project activities were defined by the local community, cheese producers, farmers, representatives of the municipality and Ministry for Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management. They include: provision of lacto freeze tanks to commercially oriented dairy farmers, organising train-



ings for farmers on food safety regulations and on HACCP and other standardisation for cheese producers, provision of storage, packaging services and testing with a laboratory accredited by the end of the project to commercially oriented dairy producers, creation of a food cluster of agri-food producers with special focus on the Sjenički white cheese, initiating protection of the geographical indications of the Sjenički white cheese, marketing strategy targeting the markets in Serbia, former Yugoslavia and, eventually the EU.

The Czech development intervention is complementary to the activities of the PROGRESS (European Partnership with Municipalities Programme).

Piloting Sector Wide Approach in the Environment Sector



Nebojša Pokimica,
Assistant Minister at Ministry
of Environment, Mining and
Spatial Planning

In order to make the most effective use of international assistance the Serbian European Integration Office has introduced a new mechanism for aid coordination. The Environmental Sector is the first to implement this mechanism in line with its sector wide approach (SWAP). In that regard, a set of specific trainings related to SWAP in the environmental sector is envisaged by SEIO during April/May 2012.

The Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning

organized the first Environmental aid coordination meeting on December 14th, 2011. The main objective of the meeting was to coordinate international assistance with the Serbian Government's priorities in the field of environmental protection.

The Ministry of Environment, Mining and Spatial Planning presented the National Environmental Approximation Strategy as well as the new Law on Communal Services. Also discussed was the development of the environmental project pipeline in cooperation with local actors, relevant institutions and donors, as well as a model for the financing of future environmental projects under EU DIS. The participants were invited to contribute and comment on the draft Terms of Reference for this coordi-

nation forum that cover its intended scope, objectives and activities.

The 2nd aid coordination meeting will be held on April 19th, and will be dedicated to the Waste Management sub-group. The Terms of Reference has been drafted and sent to participants in order to promote cooperation within this sub-group. The following are the main points on the draft agenda:

- Presentation of the draft Directive Specific Implementation Plan for the EU Landfill Directive.
- Information on the waste project pipeline and on the Regional Waste Management Center Zrenjanin
- Presentation of the 'Guidance on Inter-municipal Cooperation in the Waste Management Sector'
- Current activities and co-financing possibilities of the Serbian Environmental Protection Fund.

The 3rd aid coordination meeting will be held on May 30th, 2012, and it will be a main group meeting covering the Environmental Sector.

SWAP is a means to better coordinate development assistance in a specific sector, involving the host country (in a leadership role), the EU and other donors, and sector stakeholders in a unified process and framework of policy design, implementation and monitoring.

Gender equality Aid Coordination Meeting

The Gender Equality Directorate (GED) in cooperation with the Sida, organised 15th Gender Equality Synergy Meeting on 14th March 2012, gathering representatives of the GED, SEIO, development partners and international organizations providing support to gender equality issues. The existing ToR for the Serbian Gender Equality Synergy Group (an informal forum that will enable permanent policy dialogue, discussions and sharing of best practices among donors, international organisations and government stakeholders in gender equality area) was discussed and the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National

Strategy for Improving the Position of Women and Promoting Gender Equality (2010 – 2015) presented.

The redefined overall objective of the Gender Equality Synergy Group is to facilitate Serbia's gender equality reform process and strengthen the sector's performance by providing a forum for programme- and results-based policy dialogue between the key stakeholders.

Documents from the meeting are available at ISDACON - Aid Coordination section, www.evropa.gov.rs

SECO Mechanism in the Rule of Law Sector

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society organised a meeting dedicated to presenting the Government's priorities in the process of IPA programming within the Rule of Law sector on 7th March 2012. The meeting was initiated by the SECO for Rule of Law, comprising 37 organisations throughout Serbia. The representatives of state institutions presented

Two trainings for representatives of CSOs on EU funds available to Serbia held in February and March were attended by 83 participants gathered around SECOs.

reform priorities in the sector, relevant policies, as well as progress and results achieved through previously approved IPA projects to representatives of over 30 SECO network members. The meeting represents a step forward in the establishment of partner dialogue between CSOs and state institutions in the process of European integration.

Hungary – Serbia Call for Proposals

The 3rd open Call for Proposals in the framework of the Hungary-Serbia IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme was launched on 1st March 2012.

Within the framework of the present Call for Proposals EUR 15,101,376 EU funding (IPA) will be available. In Hungary, the projects will be co-financed by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) and state co-financing of Hungary while in Serbia, by the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) in addition to the own contribution of Project Partners. Information Days for applicants were organized in Kecskemét, Szeged, Kikinda, Sombor, and Novi Sad. The deadline for the submission of Applications is 30 May 2012. More information is available at ISDACON - CBC section.

Events

- 19 April 2012 Aid Coordination Meeting on Waste Management
- 24 April 2012 Donors Conference on the Regional Cooperation towards Durable Solutions for the Remaining Refugees Displaced from 1991-1995
- 26-27 April 2012 Multi-beneficiary IPA Coordination meeting
- 30 May 2012 Aid Coordination Meeting in the Environmental Sector

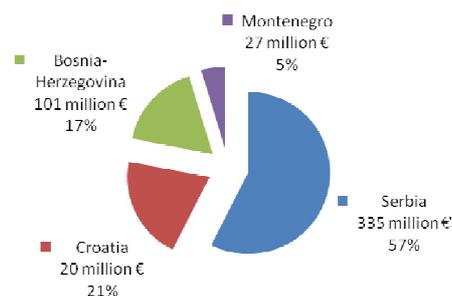
Check out the upcoming events at ISDACON—News and events section, www.evropa.gov.rs

Durable Solutions for Refugees and Displaced Persons

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia adopted the Belgrade Declaration on ending displacement and ensuring durable solutions for vulnerable refugee families and internally displaced persons in November 2011. In line with the Joint Declaration, pre-Donors Conference on the Regional Cooperation towards Durable Solutions for the remaining refugees displaced from 1991-1995 took place in Geneva in January 2012.

Donor Conference, hosted by the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, will be organized on 24th April 2012 with the aim of raising necessary funds from the International Donor Community for financing durable solutions in four Partner Countries. Total estimated needs for the four countries account for 583,662,000 EUR and target approximately 74,000 beneficiaries, as outlined in the Joint Regional Program for the durable solution to the problem of refugees annexed to the Belgrade Declaration. Of the whole sum, Serbia should get €335 million, Croatia €120 million, Bosnia-Herzegovina about €101 million and

Montenegro €27 million. These countries will allocate a total of €82 million for the project, of which Serbia will provide €34 million. The construction of ten thousand apartments, the purchase of rural households and provision of construction materials in the next few years should permanently solve the problem of housing for approximately 17,000 families in Serbia, or about 45,000 refugees.



A multi donor Trust Fund will be established and function under the auspices of the Council of Europe Development Bank.

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 around 100 words.

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Sector for Planning, Programming, Monitoring and Reporting on EU Funds and Development Assistance

Serbian European Integration Office

Nemanjina 34, Belgrade, Serbia

011/3061-100

www.seio.gov.rs

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