



Republic of Serbia  
Coordination Body of Serbia for Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja Municipalities

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April 10, 2008

**Briefing on Milestones and Accomplishments (September 2007 – March 2008)**

Following its reorganization in August 2007, the Coordination Body for Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja initiated a number of activities aimed at sustainable development of the three south Serbian municipalities. As cooperation with international partners is of utmost importance for the Coordination Body, as well as for the municipalities themselves, this briefing serves to inform international organizations, donors and Embassies of the on-going and completed activities. This briefing should foster the information exchange and greater degree of cooperation to maximize the use of resources.

The main activities of the Coordination Body in the period September 2007 – March 2008 were as follows:

Enhancing communication between the Government and local communities:
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- The Coordination Body conducted **open and transparent recruitment of two additional staffers for its offices in Bujanovac and Presevo** to strengthen the communication with the Albanian community. The vacancy announcements were published in all local media and over 60 applications from Presevo and Bujanovac were received, while approximately 15 candidates were interviewed.
- Following the extensive recruitment and selection procedure, two new staffers, **Driton Redzeqi** and **Seljami Bektashi** were employed by the Coordination Body.
- The Coordination Body, with the support of its President Rasim Ljajic, increased its presence in South Serbia. The Coordination Body Director and his staff have **visited these municipalities on regular basis**.
- The Coordination Body held meetings with the following Ministries: Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Telecommunications, as well as National Investment Plan (NIP), Republic Broadcasting Agency (RRA), and Republic Telecommunications Agency (RATEL), in an effort to **improve communication between local governments of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja and the central Government**.
- Subsequent meetings between Ministries and municipalities were organized by the Coordination Body resulting in a number of **successfully solved issues**, e.g. Ministry of Agriculture supported Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja to participate at the international Novi Sad Fair, Bujanovac successfully applied for projects from NIP, Medvedja established regular communication with the Ministry of Health, the privatization of multiethnic media was delayed, etc.

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- The Coordination Body encourages and assists Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja to get involved in relevant organizations and institutions, such as the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities. The Standing Conference agreed in principle that, following the local elections, **Bujanovac joins the new Committee for Regional Development** and host the first session of this committee.
- To secure regular updates of its activities and situation in South Serbia, the Coordination Body revived its **website** ([www.kt.sr.gov.yu](http://www.kt.sr.gov.yu)) and initiated daily publication of news.

#### Infrastructure and other activities:

- The Government of Serbia allocated **310 million dinars** (approximately 3.8 million Euros, i.e. \$6 million) to co-finance infrastructure projects in these three municipalities in 2008. Important infrastructural projects were initiated in the past few months to ensure that citizens in these municipalities have good roads, drinking water, modern schools, and similar.
- The Coordination Body ensured support for **out-of-hospital maternity ward in Presevo**. Following years of negotiations between the Ministry of Health and senior municipal officials, the Coordination Body successfully mediated on the future steps to be taken in order to successfully complete this project which has been one of the key concerns of the Albanian community in Presevo.
- The Coordination Body initiated the drafting of the '**Coordination Body Strategy for 2008-2010**'. The strategy is based on all the previous analyses and policy papers from 2001 onwards, numerous meetings with all the key counterparts in the three municipalities, as well as roundtable meetings with political party and civil society representatives of Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. The Coordination Body placed special importance on including the local politicians and civil society representatives in this process in order to get input for the Strategy which will ensure the buy-in from all sides, thus ensuring sustainable development. The strategy consists of five key parts: political background; social and cultural circumstances (including media and civil society organizations), economy; coordination with international organizations; and specific activity plans. The draft strategy will be available in Serbian, English and Albanian by the end of April 2008.

#### Cooperation with international community:

- In its effort to work more with the civil society organizations, the Coordination Body, through the World Bank, secured **three second-hand PCs for the following NGOs**: Green World (Presevo), Neighbors for Peace (Bujanovac), and Cultural Center (Medvedja).
- In cooperation with the Municipal Improvement and Revival Program (MIR II), implemented by UNDP, the Coordination Body organized a **competition for primary schools from Pcinjski and Jablanicki Districts** to provide pictures for the calendar for

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2008. Over 1,600 pictures from pupils of 49 primary schools from all 13 south Serbian municipalities were received. Director of the Coordination Body, Nenad Djurdjevic, and Director of MIR II Program, Tom Thorogood, handed the awards to 13 pupils.

- The Coordination Body, for the first time in its history, formed the consortium with the Government of Serbia Office for Human and Minority Rights, Presevo and Bujanovac Development Agency (PBDA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and NGO Initiatives (Prokuplje) and applied for funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) to work on the **readmission project**. Considering that close to 4,500 Serbian citizens who found refuge in Switzerland during and after wars are estimated to return in 2008, it is expected that the readmission process will cause serious burden to already economically challenged municipalities.
- In cooperation with the World Bank / FIAS and Serbian Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA), the Coordination Body included Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in **Municipal Marketing and Promotion Training** which will provide basic tools to promote municipalities to Ministries, international organizations, and potential investors.
- The Coordination Body will, with the support of USAID-funded Municipal Economic Growth Activity program, pair Presevo, Bujanovac and Medvedja with some of the more advanced municipalities of Vranje, Kragujevac and Loznica in order for them to assist in preparation of **municipal presentations** for Jasna Matic, State Secretary for International Economic Relations in the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and SIEPA.

*The goal of the Coordination Body is to contribute to a sustainable development of this region in partnership with other ministries of the Government of Serbia, international organizations and foreign governments. The Coordination Body strives to strengthen the capacities of local governments and the civil society, so that they would be able to take care of their development themselves, without relying on the one-off assistance, which does not improve the situation over a long period of time, is not sustainable, and contributes to a lasting poverty of these municipalities.*