



Republic of Serbia
Coordination Body of Serbia for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja

March 3, 2009

Info on the Coordination Body's Activities (September 2008 – March 2009)

Upon establishment of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and appointment of Milan Marković, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, as President of the Coordination Body, the following priorities were set:

a) In the sphere of politics

- Inclusion of representatives of the Albanian political parties in the work of the Coordination Body, reconstruction of the Coordination Body and improvement of the Coordination Body's performance,
- Reconstruction of local self-governments in Preševo and Bujanovac, including equal representation of all ethnic communities,

b) In the sphere of economy

- Attraction of investments,
- Inclusion of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in various national and international business projects,

c) In the sphere of integrations

- The opening of institutions of higher learning in Medvedja, Bujanovac and Preševo, where classes are to be conducted in both Serbian and Albanian,
- Solving the issue of representation of Albanians and Roma in the local republican bodies (healthcare, education, judiciary etc),
- Working on protection of human and minority rights (the opening of the Ombudsman's office),
- Investment in the youth and youth projects,

d) In the sphere of international relations

- Promotion of the Coordination Body's activities and improved coordination with international partners,

e) In the sphere of communication with the public

- Transparency of the Coordination Body's work,
- Achievement of direct communication with the public: a) citizens, b) the media, c) political representatives, d) international factors.

The Coordination Body's major activities in the period from September 2008 to March 2009:

In the sphere of politics:

- In August 2008, the Government of the Republic of Serbia appointed Milan Marković, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self-Government, as President of the Coordination Body. The newly appointed President of the Coordination Body announced the strategic priorities, primarily those in the fields of economy, education and work with the young. Also appointed were Vice Presidents of the Coordination Body (Dušan Spasojević, Ministry of Defense; Dejan Jovanović, Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and Sima Gazikalović).



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- From the appointment of Milan Marković as President of the Coordination Body, representatives of the Coordination Body, apart from their daily communication with the Coordination Body's offices in Preševo and Bujanovac, visited the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja at least twice per month. In addition, they met with the mayors of these municipalities, as well as with representatives of the Serbian and Roma political parties in these municipalities.
- The Coordination Body's Office, in cooperation with the local self-governments, is preparing reorganization of the Coordination Body, which will make it possible for all ethnic communities to be represented in the Coordination Body.
- The Strategy of the Coordination Body's work in the 2009-2011 period – The Coordination Body's expert team completed a draft Strategy of its work and thereupon sent it to the appropriate addresses in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja. Upon collection of comments and suggestions, the expert team will prepare an improved draft Strategy, which will be submitted for public discussion. It was agreed that attention should be focused on concrete action plans, which should be adopted in cooperation with all the relevant representatives of the three municipalities.
- Negotiations on inclusion of Serbs and Roma in the local government. On the occasion of his second visit to Bujanovac and Preševo, President of the Coordination Body emphasized the importance of honoring the principle of multi-ethnic government. One of the major requests is that participation in the government should reflect the ethnic make-up of the municipalities.
- The Coordination Body's Office drew up the 2009 budget, whereby the possibility of providing direct financial assistance to the municipalities is planned, as well as the funds for working with the young, non-governmental organizations, social welfare contributions and economic development.

In the sphere of economy:

- The „Lece“mine was successfully privatized. The Šabac-based „Farmakom“company is interested in starting production in the mine. Also, the above-mentioned company, which is the owner of the Šabac dairy plant, is interested in investing in cattle-breeding. Recognizing the importance of the mine for the municipality of Medvedja and the entire region, the Coordination Body intercedes in communicating with the competent governmental bodies and the Development Fund. It is anticipated that 500 jobs will be created for the citizens of Medvedja.
- The Coordination Body included representatives of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in a training course in marketing and promotion of municipalities, which was conducted by the World Bank and the Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA). Upon completion of the training course, the Coordination Body, in cooperation with the USAID's Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA) Program, organized a further training course, so that representatives of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja could develop presentations of their economic potentials for investors and the relevant ministries and



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institutions of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. During the training course, representatives of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja cooperated with experts in local economic development from Kragujevac and Loznica.

- In November 2008, a Memorandum of Understanding on the local economic development was signed by and between the Coordination Body, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, owing to which the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja were included in the Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA) Program.
- The municipal offices for local economic development were opened in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja (under the MOU signed by and between the municipalities, the Coordination Body and the USAID) and Economic Councils, which include representatives of the local self-governments and the private sector, were set up.
- In October 2009, President of the Coordination Body Milan Marković, along with Minister of Agriculture Saša Dragin, paid a visit to the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo and delivered them the Ministry of Agriculture's aid consisting of wheat seeds (Bujanovac: 120 households; Preševo: 80 households; Medveđa: 40 households); vegetable seedlings (Bujanovac: 250 packages; Preševo: 180 packages; Medvedja: 70 packages) and barley seeds (Bujanovac: 10 households; Preševo: 6 households; Medvedja: 4 households).
- On the occasion of visiting Bujanovac and Preševo in November 2008, as a member of a delegation that included State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development Dejan Jovanović (who is also Vice President of the Coordination Body), President of the Coordination Body raised the issue of providing support to small and medium-sized companies in South Serbia. It was announced then that a meeting of businessmen, which is to be organized by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, should take place in April 2009, as well as the opening of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce's Office.
- In cooperation with the Development Fund, the Coordination Body is working with the „Biomelem“ company on finding the most adequate way of opening the Biomelem's manufacturing unit in the municipality of Bujanovac. It is anticipated that the implementation of this project could create around 50 jobs for the citizens of Bujanovac.

In the sphere of integrations:

- One of the major problems that have been recognized is a balanced representation of members of the Albanian community in the republican bodies in the territory of the three municipalities, mainly in the fields of judiciary, land registry, tax authorities, electric power distribution, the customs etc. It was noted that the police and healthcare had made a considerable progress in this respect.
- In view of the above requirements, the Coordination Body organized visits of representatives of the relevant Belgrade-based institutions to South Serbia. As a member of a delegation headed by State Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Slobodan Homen, President of the Coordination Body raised the issue of integration of Albanians in the



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- judiciary. The delegation consisting of members of the Ministry of Justice and the Coordination Body thereupon revisited the municipalities of Preševo and Bujanovac and reached an agreement on the possibility of passing BAR exams in Bujanovac, so that a larger number of lawyers could qualify for applying for specific posts, which is in accordance with the adopted Law on Judicial Reform. In the course of January 2009, the Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with the Coordination Body, employed one Albanian as a magistrate in Bujanovac, while the process of employing another Albanian as an expert associate in the Bujanovac court of law is underway. The Ministry of Justice and the Coordination Body will continuously work on resolving the remaining issues.
- In cooperation with the Ombudsman's Office, which is headed by Saša Janković, an agreement was reached to open the Ombudsman's Branch Office in Bujanovac in the first half of 2009, where representatives of all South Serbia's ethnic communities will be employed.
 - The Coordination Body, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, is working on improving the working conditions in the Presevo health center, so that adequate conditions could be provided for the opening of an out-patient maternity hospital, for which the municipality meets legal requirements.
 - In October 2009, on the recommendation of the Coordination Body, the Government of the Republic of Serbia reached a conclusion on recognizing Priština University diplomas with the UNMIK seal.
 - In October 2008, the Coordination Body, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, launched the project of opening extended departments of the Niš University's Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economics in the municipality of Medvedja. Faculties will be opened in the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo as well. The Coordination Body is having talks with the USAID about the project and about concrete assistance with having all the textbooks translated into Albanian. The opening of faculties in Preševo and Bujanovac, following those in Medvedja, is an important strategic move, which was taken in a way that won't cause segregation of any ethnic community and which will simultaneously make quality education in Serbian and Albanian possible. The opening of faculties is important for the economic, as well as for all other types of strengthening all ethnic communities in these three municipalities.
 - The Coordination Body, together with its partners from the non-governmental sector, is working on preparation of a feasibility study for the opening of faculties in Preševo and Bujanovac.
 - In November 2008, on the initiative of the Coordination Body, representatives of 11 local PC manufacturers, along with the Microsoft Office in Serbia, donated 30 PCs, 4 printers and one scanner to the "Branko Radičević" elementary school in Bujanovac, which is attended by over 1,450 students.
 - For the first time so far, the funds amounting to 21.5 million dinars were envisaged in the Coordination Body's 2009 budget for working with the youth and on youth projects. The said funds will be spent on youth projects and civil society.



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- Agreement on cooperation with the Ministry of Culture was reached. The Ministry, along with the Coordination Body, will be engaged in developing the contents of cultural events for the citizens of the three municipalities, which is an extremely important measure of integration.
- Agreement on cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy was reached. The said agreement is on providing assistance to the elderly and persons with special needs.

In the sphere of international relations:

- Having recognized the importance of working in partnership with the international community, the Coordination Body established good and regular communication with representatives of the international community, including the following:
 - (a) On Thursday, February 19, 2009, Director of the Coordination Body's Office, Nenad Djurdjević, met with OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek. Also attending the meeting was Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad. Topics discussed at the meeting include the current situation in Bujanovac and Preševo, the establishment of multi-ethnic governments in these municipalities, improvement of the conditions for education of members of ethnic minority communities and preparation of an analysis, which will make it possible for all aspects of opening the institutions of higher learning in Presevo and Bujanovac considered.
 - (b) Continued communication with Head of OSCE Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad.
 - (c) Communication with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and a meeting with the US Ambassador to Serbia, Cameron Munter, for the purpose of exchanging information on the situation in South Serbia and discussing joint plans for opening the institutions of higher learning in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja.
 - (d) Communication with representatives of the embassy of the Russian Federation in Serbia and the initial visit of the Russian Federation's Ambassador to Serbia, Aleksandar Konuzin, to the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo. Ambassador Konuzin was accompanied by members of the Coordination Body's delegation.
 - (e) Communication with the embassies of Great Britain, Italy, Austria, France and Romania.
- The Coordination Body actively participates in preparation of a new UNDP project, the implementation of which is to begin in the municipalities of Pčinj and Jablanica districts in the course of 2009, so that the project could meet the needs of the local population in the best possible way.
- The Coordination Body cooperates with the CSSP Project for Integrative Mediation from Berlin, as well as with the Conrad Adenauer Foundation, regarding the launching of a mediation project as a means of resolving conflicts in the multiethnic municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja.
- The Coordination Body included the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja in the program entitled "Transfer of Knowledge to Serbian Civil Servants in the Field of



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TQM (Total Quality Management), which is financed by the Hungarian Embassy in Belgrade. The system is being introduced in municipal administrations in the European Union, and it is now introduced in Serbia for the first time. The training will make it possible for the municipal officials of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja to consider some new methods of providing services to their citizens, thereby improving the quality of their life.

In the sphere of communication with the public:

- The Coordination Body is now publishing its third six-month report for the public (which it launched on its own initiative, with the aim of better informing the citizens of South Serbia on its work and establishing better communication with the Serbian government's ministries and institutions and international partners). The report is e-mailed to over 300 national and international partners, while one may also be gain access to it by visiting the Coordination Body's website www.kt.gov.rs.
- Immediately upon his appointment, President of the Coordination Body, Milan Marković, sent a letter to the citizens of the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medvedja, in which he informed them of the Coordination Body's goals and plans for the future.
- Since his appointment, President of the Coordination Body, on two occasions, addressed members of the Municipal Assemblies of Preševo and Bujanovac, so that the Municipal Assemblies would include the Coordination Body's plans in their work, as well as the previously agreed multiethnic principles relating to the work of the local self-governments of Preševo and Bujanovac.
- At the beginning of 2009, the Coordination Body's Office posted its new website with the aim of making it easier for the citizens to get informed about the Coordination Body's work and to communicate with it.

The goal of the Coordination Body is to contribute to a sustainable development of the region in partnership with other Ministries of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, international organizations and foreign countries' governments. The Coordination Body strives to strengthen the capacities of local self-governments and civil society, so that they could take care of their development themselves, without relying on one-off assistance, which doesn't improve the situation over a longer period of time, which isn't sustainable and which doesn't contribute to reduction of poverty in these municipalities.