



October 2008

Information on the Coordination Body's Activities (April – September 2008)

The Serbian Government's Coordination Body for the Municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa presents its second six month report for the public. The goal of sharing the information with local and international organizations and partners is to present the activities of the Coordination Body in an open and transparent manner, and to initiate the exchange of information and improve the cooperation leading to a more efficient use of resources.

If you would like to receive our reports on a regular basis, please do not hesitate to contact our office on office@kt.sr.gov.yu or by telephone on 011/21 20 906.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia appointed, on August 28th 2008, Milan Marković, the Minister of Public Administration and Local Self Government, as President of the Coordination Body. The new President is determined to continue the initiated reforms in the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, leading to their full integration in political, economic and social life of Serbia.

The former President of the Coordination Body, Rasim Ljajić, Minister of Labor and Social Policy, put in a great deal of effort in the reform of the Coordination Body, so that its focus is no longer only on infrastructure projects, but also on economic development and social integration.

The most notable activities of the Coordination Body in the period from April to October 2008 are as follows:

Improvement of communication between the Government of Serbia and local communities, and setting priorities for the forthcoming period:

- **President of the Coordination Body, Milan Marković, visited the municipality of Medveđa on October 6th**, where he spoke with the mayor of the municipality, Slobodan Drašković, about the current condition and issues which this municipality is faced with. President of the Coordination Body announced the opening of an external department of



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

the University of Belgrade's Business School in Medveđa in the shortest possible timeframe. „The opening of such an institution will help in the development of South Serbia, because Serbs from Medveđa and the surrounding places, as well as Albanians that will be given an opportunity to study in their language, will be able to attend it. The students who graduate from this school will be getting the University of Belgrade diplomas“, said Mr. Marković. Mr. Marković also emphasized that economic development is one of the priorities of the Government of Serbia and the Coordination Body. He talked with the mayor of Medveđa, Slobodan Drašković about the privatized mine „Lece“in Medveđa and announced the opening of about 200 new jobs in the mine by the end of the year. During the day, President of the Coordination Body held meetings with the mayors of Bujanovac and Preševo municipalities, Šaip Kamberi and Nader Sadiku, as well as with an MP Riza Halimi.

- **President of the Coordination Body, Minister of Public Administration and Local Self Government, Milan Marković, visited the municipality of Bujanovac on September 5th.** In Bujanovac, Minister Marković met with the mayors of Bujanovac, Šaip Kamberi, Preševo, Nader Sadiku and Medveđa, Slobodan Drašković. He also had a joint meeting with Head of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Serbia, Ambassador Hans Ola Urstad, and with MP Riza Halimi. During the meeting, Marković thanked the former Presidents of the Coordination Body, Nebojša Čović and Rasim Ljajić, emphasizing their great contribution to the overall situation in these three southern Serbian municipalities. Marković stressed that there were still problems which needed to be solved urgently. “The responsibility lays, first and foremost, on me, as President of the Coordination Body for South Serbia, as well as on the three mayors. Only by working together do we have a chance to achieve success that we all strive for, a better quality of life and creation of new jobs for the people who live here”, said President of the Coordination Body, Milan Marković, at a joint press conference organized by the Coordination Body and the OSCE, which was held at the Bujanovac Press Center following the meeting with the mayors. During the conference, the OSCE Ambassador to Serbia, Hans Ola Urstad, said that the visit which Minister Marković had paid to the South Serbia immediately after his appointment as the President of the Coordination Body was a very positive sign.

The mayors of the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa welcomed the appointment of Minister Milan Marković as President of the



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

Coordination Body and stated that they expected him to work hard on solving the problems of this region.

During the afternoon, Mr. Marković held separate meetings with representatives of the Serbian and Roma political options, and with leaders of the Albanian political parties.

- **Strategy of the Coordination Body from 2008 to 2010** – The expert team of the Coordination Body completed a draft of its Strategy for 2008 to 2010 and sent it to a number of addresses in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa, including all the relevant political parties, non-governmental organizations and the media, as well as the official local institutions. The Strategy was drafted based on the information and findings from the meetings with municipal officials, political parties, civil society representatives, private sector representatives, public discussions, which were organized in Bujanovac, and subsequent recommendations. The Coordination Body expects to receive comments from all the relevant stakeholders who received the draft Strategy. Based on these comments, the new version of the document will be prepared. The next step will be to organize a public hearing, and the document will be submitted to the Government of Serbia for adoption, once a consensus on the final wording of the Strategy is reached.
- At the proposal of the “Youth Initiative for Human Rights” NGO, **Nenad Đurđević, Director of the Coordination Body, met with 12 electronic and print media journalists from the municipalities of Preševo and Bujanovac**, including RTV Aldi (Preševo), RTV Preševo, RTV Spektri (Bujanovac), RTV Bujanovac and Perspektive (Bujanovac). Director of the Coordination Body informed the media representatives about the activities and work of the Coordination Body, while some of the topics discussed included revitalization of the Bujanovac Press Center and cooperation between the Coordination Body and media and NGOs. It was agreed that the cooperation needs to be strengthened and that it shouldn't necessarily go directly through the local government. The media representatives were encouraged to get in touch with the Coordination Body with suggestions and questions. Also, Director of the Coordination Body held expectations that the media representatives would get actively involved in the revitalization of the Press Center.
- **In cooperation with the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Serbia and the municipalities themselves, the Coordination Body submitted**



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

six projects to be implemented in Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa

with the support of the US Army. The projects are: reconstruction of outpatient hospital departments in the villages of Žbevac and Nesalce (Bujanovac); reconstruction and adaptation of the premises to be used as external departments of the city library in the villages of Klenike and Biljača (Bujanovac); installation of a heating system and construction of a septic shaft in the primary school “Radovan Kovačević” in Lece (Medveđa); reconstruction of the primary school “Zenelj Hajdini” in Tupale (Medveđa); construction of a kindergarten in the local community of “Železnička stanica” (Preševo); construction of a well and replacement of a boiler in the primary school “9. maj” in Reljane (Preševo). The total value of the proposed projects is 21,190,000 RSD (\$407,500).

Infrastructure and economic development:

- As part of the Municipal Improvement and Revival Program (MIR 2), which the UNDP implemented in cooperation with the Coordination Body, **a green market was opened in Bojnik**. The total value of the project is 9.6 million RSD, out of which 6 million was contributed by the MIR 2 program. The Government of Serbia, through the Coordination Body, financed 1.9 million RSD, while the remaining 1.7 million was secured directly from the municipal budget of Bojnik.
- In this period, the Coordination Body marked the official opening of **the water supply system in the village of Končulj, in the municipality of Bujanovac**. The total cost of the project was 21.4 million RSD. The Government of Serbia, through the Coordination Body, financed 45% of the construction of a water supply system, USAID 40%, while the villagers of Končulj funded the remaining 15%. Director of the Coordination Body, Nenad Đurđević, Director of USAID Mission to Serbia, Michael Harvey, and the former mayor of the Bujanovac municipality, Nagip Arifi, attended the opening ceremony.
- **A primary network of the Krševica-Klinovac regional water supply system was completed**, pursuant to a contract signed with the “Jaroslav Černi” Institute and approved by the Government of Serbia on December 27, 2007. In the following months, a secondary network will also be constructed, thus enabling the water supply system to reach citizens’ homes.



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

- **Civil servants of Bujanovac and Medveđa certified in foreign investments attraction at the local level** – Thanks to the Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA), the Coordination Body included civil servants of Bujanovac and Medveđa in a regional training program for promotion of investments, funded by the EU, through the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), and implemented by the FIAS – Foreign Investment Advisory Service of the World Bank - and the IFC for improvement of the investment climate. In this way, Serbia obtained its first generation of specialists and trainers in investment attraction at the local level. The main goal of the regional training program is to practically and concretely enhance the capacities of local self governments for attracting direct foreign investments. The training program was in particular focused on the understanding of their priorities and on the ways in which investments are reached, on the analysis of municipalities' position in relation to other potential investment sites in the country and abroad, on development of a municipal strategy and an action plan for attracting investments, as well as on major marketing techniques. The training program was successfully completed by 40 training course beneficiaries from 29 municipalities all over Serbia, three regional agencies and two non-profit organizations.
- Following the marketing and promotion training, which the World Bank /Foreign Investment Advisory Service (FIAS) conducted in cooperation with the Serbia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (SIEPA), the Coordination Body, in partnership with the Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA), financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), organized an **additional training for Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa to develop presentations on the economic potentials of their municipalities**, which could be presented to potential investors and relevant ministries and institutions of the Government of Serbia. During the training, representatives of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa had a chance to present their investment presentations to local economic development experts, as well as their colleagues from Kragujevac and Loznica. The goal of the training was to improve the municipal presentations of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa with the help of the people who established some of the best practices in investment

“This is the first time I had ever had a presentation! This is big and new experience for me”, said a representative of the Bujanovac municipality, Ismail Pajaziti following the presentation of economic potentials of Bujanovac, which was, at the Coordination Body's initiative, organized by USAID's MEGA Program.



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

- attraction. Based on the comments received at the training, the municipalities will update their presentations over the next weeks, when another meeting will be organized, during which the presentations will be finalized. This is one of the activities of the Government of Serbia's Coordination Body aimed at increasing the capacities of local governments, so that they could successfully compete with the rest of the municipalities in the region and attract investments.
- The Coordination Body organized a **meeting for the mayor of the Medveđa municipality, Slobodan Drašković, with Director of the National Alliance for Local Economic Development (NALED), Violeta Jovanović, and representatives of the Commercial Bank**, to discuss possible joint activities, which would lead to a faster economic development of the region. During the meeting, it was agreed that some of the most prominent business people from NALED, such as Predrag Mihajlović (Commercial Bank), Toplica Spasojević (ITM) and/or Dejan Cvetković (Microsoft) would visit South Serbia and meet with municipal officials and representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The goal of the visit would be integration of these underdeveloped municipalities in the economic life of Serbia.
 - In order to deal with the huge problem of unemployment of women in Medveđa, the Coordination Body organized **a visit of the Ethno Network** to this municipality and a meeting with the mayor of the municipality, the Tourist Organization of Medveđa, and the women who are engaged in the production of traditional handcraft products of the region. It was concluded that, for the social and economic strengthening of women in this area that would like to produce traditional handcraft objects for the market, additional education is needed – in production techniques, establishment of selection of products, fitting out of products, standardization and the use of traditional motives. Beneficiaries of the training course will establish the selection of products, primarily of souvenirs, which will be initially placed on the local market, in Sijarinska Spa and as part of the hunting-tourist offer of the municipality of Medveđa, while attention will, thereafter, be focused on capturing larger markets. The Coordination Body received the project proposal from the Ethno Network and is now working on finding a donor to finance the implementation of the project.

Cooperation with the international community:

Тел: 017 654 601; 011 21 20 906; 011 21 20 907

Факс: 017 654 604; 011 21 20 909

e-mail: office@kt.sr.gov.yu

www.kt.sr.gov.yu



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

- The Coordination Body would like to specifically note its excellent and continued cooperation with the CSS Project for Integrative Mediation (CSSP). **On August 29th, President of the Coordination Body, Minister Marković, met with Honorary President of the CSSP, Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling,** Dr. Juan Armando Diaz, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, and Dr. Dieter Wolkewitz, Head of Development. Minister Marković stated that “there is an increased awareness about dialogue as a conflict-resolving mechanism”. Minister Marković emphasized the importance of active participation of the Albanian community in the political life of Serbia. Dr. Christian Schwarz-Schilling, who was High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, expressed his satisfaction with meeting Minister Marković at the time of his very appointment as President of the Coordination Body. He commended the Coordination Body’s efforts to prepare a new strategy for its work and offered technical assistance based on the extensive practical experience of his organization. The Dr. Juan Armando Diaz, Chairperson of the Board of Directors, informed the Minister about the principles and work of the CSSP, and presented a joint project of the Coordination Body and CSSP, which will be implemented in 2008 and 2009. The overall goal of the project is to bring local leaders from the three municipalities together in order to empower them through tailored mediation processes. The cooperation between the Coordination Body and CSSP has been formalized through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), signed in September 2007. The Coordination Body highly appreciates the CSSP’s investments in South Serbia and has the highest regard for the cooperation with the CSSP.
- **On October 1st, 2008, the official opening of the kindergarten „Cvrčak“ in Leskovac and a visit to the primary school „Vuk Karadžić“ in Stublo, the municipality of Vladičin Han, marked a successful completion of the Municipal Improvement and Revival Program – MIR2.** The donors and partners who cooperated on the implementation of the Program over the past three years attended the event, including **Nenad Đurđević**, Director of the Coordination Body for the Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa Municipalities, **Ferenc Simon**, Head of the Operations of the European Commission in Serbia, **Krister Bringeus**, Swedish Ambassador to Serbia, **Ulrike Hartmann**, the First Secretary of the Austrian Embassy to Belgrade, **John White**, Spokesperson of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) in Belgrade, and **Lance Clark**, Permanent Coordinator of the UN and



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

- Coordinator of UNDP in Serbia. The goal of the MIR2 program was to contribute to the strengthening of 13 local governments in Jablanica and Pčinj Districts, as well as to socio-economic advancement of the entire region. The Program was implemented through four components which were focused on: inter-municipal cooperation in the region, initiation and monitoring of the Strategic Planning process, education of civil servants and establishment of Citizen Assistance Centers. The Municipal Improvement and Revival Program, MIR 2, was funded by the European Union, through the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Kingdom of Norway, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and the Government of Serbia.
- Due to excellent cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Coordination Body was engaged in **inclusion of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa in the Municipal Economic Growth Activity (MEGA)**. A Memorandum of Understanding between these municipalities and MEGA program was signed on September 9, 2008. The signing was attended by the US Ambassador to Serbia, Cameron Munter, Program Director, Peter Epstein, and the mayors. Representatives of the Coordination Body were also present at the event. The inclusion of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa in this USAID's program is extremely important for establishing the municipal Local Economic Development Offices, revision of the Strategic Plans and development of realistic and practical Action Plans with clearly identified projects, which would assist with the economic development in the long run, as well as implementation of a number of the identified projects. Also, a field that the Coordination Body identified as problematic, and which the MEGA Program could help with through professional assistance, is credit worthiness and debt management.
 - The Coordination Body managed to include the municipalities of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa in the **program "Transfer of Knowledge to Serbian Civil Servants in the Field of TQM (Total Quality Management), 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. This is a great success, because Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa are the only municipalities that are included in the training course, along with only six other Serbian cities, which include Beograd, Kragujevac, Niš, Novi Pazar, Novi Sad and Subotica. It's expected that the program will be officially



Република Србија

Координационо тело Србије за општине Прешево, Бујановац и Медвеђа

launched by the end of October 2008. The training will make it possible for the municipal officials of Preševo, Bujanovac and Medveđa to consider some new methods of providing services to their citizens, thereby improving the quality of their life.

- **The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma's scholarships for journalists** – Thanks to USAID's Media Support Program, which is implemented by IREX, the Coordination Body forwarded the information on scholarships for journalists to all media outlets in South Serbia. The goal of the Dart Center is to enable a group of journalists to responsibly and professionally report on violence and traumatic developments, including crime, domestic violence, natural disasters, war and genocide.
- **Meeting with a group of 11 students of the University of Bristol, Great Britain, members of the University of Bristol's International Affairs Society** – At the request of the University of Bristol's International Affairs Society, Director of the Coordination Body's Office met with a group of students who were on a study trip to Serbia. The topics discussed at the meeting included activities of the Coordination Body, the situation in South Serbia and multi-ethnic relations. The group mainly consisted of students of international affairs, international development, international law, history and the EU. The group made previous study trips to Moscow, New York, Washington D.C, Geneva, Paris and Brussels.

The goal of the Coordination Body is to contribute to a sustainable development of this region, in partnership with the 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 one-off assistance, which doesn't improve the situation over a long period of time, isn't sustainable and contributes to a lasting poverty of these municipalities.