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Newsletter on Serbia's EU Accession Negotiation

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8th March **EU Integration Committee provided a positive opinion on the proposed Negotiation Position for Chapter 5**

The EU Integration Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia considered and provided a positive opinion on the proposed Negotiation Position for Chapter 5 (Public Procurement). Before the actual adoption, a summary of the Negotiation Position was presented to the members of the Working Group of the National Convention on EU (NCEU), during a separate meeting. The meeting was held in accordance with the decision made by the EU Integration Committee in June 2014. This decision stipulates that the Committee representatives are obliged to take into consideration the comments provided by civil society organisations, i.e. the NCEU, prior to adopting negotiation positions for any of the negotiation chapters. [Read more...](#)

17th March **The Conference – “Vojvodina’s Initiative for EU – the Partnership between the Civil and the Public Sector”**

Civil society organisations of Vojvodina, gathered under the Vojvodina’s Initiative for EU, organised a conference entitled “Vojvodina’s Initiative for EU – the Partnership between the Civil and the Public Sector”. The conference was supported by the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina and the TACSO Office in Serbia. The aim of the conference was to elicit support for the cooperation between the public and the civil sector in the areas that are of key interest for the citizens of Vojvodina. One such priority is most certainly the Serbian accession into the

EU and the contribution that the institutions of the province, as well as the civil society organisations may make to the process. [Read more...](#)

18th March **EU Integration Committee provided a positive opinion on the proposed Negotiation Position for Chapter 23**

The EU Integration Committee of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia considered and provided a positive opinion on the proposed Negotiation Position for Chapter 23 (Judiciary and Fundamental Rights). [Read more ...](#)

18th March **Serbia and the European integration of the Western Balkans: Exchange of Views in the Run-Up to Paris Summit**

The international conference entitled “Serbia and the European integration of the Western Balkans: Exchange of Views in the Run-Up to Paris Summit” was organised with an aim of assessing the position of Serbia in the region, in the context of EU integration. Another aim of the conference was to voice the realistic expectations from the regional cooperation on EU integration matters and to share those expectations with the governments of the Western Balkans states in the run-up to the Paris Summit on the Western Balkans in June. The conference was organised by the Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe, in partnership with the European Fund for the Balkans, the European Movement Serbia and the French Institute for International Relations IFRI from Paris. [Read more...](#)

IMPRESUM

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LOCAL COMMUNITIES IN THE PROCESS OF EU ACCESSION NEGOTIATION IN SERBIA

One specific feature of the EU accession negotiation process is the fact that the content of the *acquis communautaire* is not negotiable and the candidate country is obliged to fully adopt and implement the EU *acquis*. The matter for negotiation is only the timeframe during which a country will adopt the EU *acquis* and start implementing it in practice. Even though the accession negotiation process is happening at the national level, numerous other actors need to be involved – such as the regional and local authorities, civil society organisations, etc. Thus, the partnership between the local communities and the central-level authorities throughout the negotiation process is seen as both logical and necessary. This partnership assists the local communities in understanding the goals of EU policies and EU *acquis*, so that they may be better prepared to implement them once they are an integral part of the national legislation. On the other hand, the participation of the local communities is of great assistance to the central-level authorities. It helps them to: a) assess the state of affairs regarding the implementation of the legal acts that have been adopted through the acceptance of the EU *acquis* in the EU integration process thus far; b) prepare the negotiation positions with special timelines for implementation, defined using objective criteria; c) reach the benchmarks set for individual chapters as conditions for the start of negotiations (especially in cases when an administrative and institutional framework for the realisation of a particular benchmark is to be established or upgraded).

Since the start of the negotiation process, several regional and local initiatives, as well as platforms for monitoring the EU negotiation process have been formed in Serbia: “The Eastern Serbia on the Road to EU”, “The Banat Platform” and the “Vojvodina’s Initiative for the EU”. The establishment of these regional platforms and initiatives for supporting the EU integration process will contribute to better visibility of the local-level issues, but also to the visibility of the local-level players that have sufficient capacity to assist in resolving the issues. Additionally, the local context and the local actors will be better positioned in the long-term relationship between Serbia and the EU. This will, in turn, result in creating the local policies that respond to the real needs, during the EU integration process.

In order to properly present the interests of the local communities in the process of adoption and implementation of the EU *acquis*, it is very important to establish a regular dialogue among the local self-governments, the business community, civil society and citizens. Setting up regional and local initiatives to this aim may contribute to:

- network the different actors and motivate the professionals, the economy and the media to actively participate in the adoption of EU norms and standards;
- inform the public on the rights and obligations stemming from the process of EU *acquis* adoption;
- follow-up and monitor the implementation of public policy at the local level during the negotiation process, as well as prepare the local communities for meeting the standards that the negotiation process imposes.

Bearing in mind the significance of the following phase in the accession negotiation process of the Republic of Serbia – opening of negotiations by specific chapters and meeting the set benchmarks for the continuance of the process, it must be noted that participation of different stakeholders in this phase of the process is of pivotal importance. Not only will the professional knowledge and experience of the civil sector in certain areas contribute to better defining the action plans needed for meeting the set benchmarks, but the information flow to the citizens in local communities will also be enhanced. As a consequence, the process itself will be better understood in the everyday life of the citizens, which will render the support to the process and to the reforms greater and more legitimate.

Within the initiative “Let’s Speak about the Negotiations”, the Belgrade Open School (BOS) has started with establishing local teams for supporting the EU integration process. Three local teams are now being established and BOS is planning a set of activities that will aim towards their future capacity building. Additionally, all regional and local initiatives following and monitoring the Serbian EU negotiation process are free to use the monthly Newsletter, the web portal “Let’s Speak about the Negotiations”, as well as other BOS resources and tools, so that they may promote their work.

THERE IS SPACE FOR PRESENTING AND ADVOCATING FOR THE INTERESTS OF THE REGION IN THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS WITH THE EU

Vladan Jeremić, the Director of the Regional Development Agency for Eastern Serbia (RARIS)

Within the topic of the month, we have spoken to representatives of regional initiatives for monitoring the Serbian EU accession negotiation process. We had interviews with: Vladan Jeremić, the Director of the Regional Development Agency for Eastern Serbia (RARIS); Dejan Maksimović, the President of the “Stanište” association and Aleksandar Popov, the Director of the Centre for Regionalism.

BOS: What is the major contribution of the initiative “Eastern Serbia on the Road to EU” in engaging the local communities from Eastern Serbia in the EU negotiation process? How successful have you been so far in reaching the defined goals of the initiative?

Vladan Jeremić: The process of Serbian accession into the EU is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and we did not want to miss being part of it. We have created for ourselves this possibility to participate in the process by establishing the Regional EU Platform of the Eastern Serbia. Our aim has been that the region receives abundant information on the process itself and on what awaits us during the negotiations, so that we could prepare the best we can for the changes that are bound to happen. The indicator of our success in reaching this goal is the sole fact that more than 300 people from the region have directly participated in our activities and that we have drafted five documents containing proposals for the Negotiating Team.

BOS: During the work of your initiative, have you faced any obstacles, especially regarding the mobilisation of regional actors and voicing their views in the EU accession negotiation process?

Vladan Jeremić: No, on the contrary. During the years, RARIS has positioned itself as an organisation that deals with important topics and real problems in a responsible manner. We are not simply “blowing smoke”, we do not gather the people from the region just to have them around and have coffee. This is a very significant topic and when you approach it in the right way, people will join in and participate actively. The number of people who take part in the work of the Working Groups and who attend meetings is almost double the number we have expected.

BOS: How would you assess the capacities of the local actors to participate in the negotiation process? What is it that they lack? What is the added value brought in by their participation?

Vladan Jeremić: The capacities are low and in reality many things are missing. We will try to enlarge the scope of our initiative, to involve as many people as we can and to achieve even better networking with similar initiatives and existing projects. A good example for that is the conference “Cross-Border Regions on the Road to EU”, organised by the Institute for Cross-Border Areas and supported by us. Also, the two joint sessions we have had with the two Working Groups of the National Convention for EU are good examples. We receive great support for our work by the Open Society Foundation in Serbia and we are sincerely grateful for that.

BOS: Based on your experience, do you think that we use the resources of the regional/local actors well enough? How to utilise them even better?

Vladan Jeremić: For decades, Serbia has been a highly centralised country where the resources available on the regional and the local level are generally not utilised. Maybe this is why the country is not progressing faster. It is a very complex issue and it requires much more space for a thorough answer. To start with, it may be sufficient that the central-level authorities simply ask the regional and local levels for their opinion.

BOS: Do you think that the interest of the region in the EU accession negotiations are adequately represented? If not, how could they be?

Vladan Jeremić: There is space for presenting and advocating for these interests and it is up to us to try to use it. The space for “interests” is not something you get, it is something you conquer. We do not complain about the lack of this space, we fight for our region and strive to do best.

Istočna Srbija
Na putu ka Evropskoj uniji



LEARN MORE:

- Harmonisation and implementation of legislation in relation to water management and environmental protection in Eastern Serbia;
- Eastern Serbia proposals for the wine sector and the sector of rakia (strong alcoholic beverages) production in the process of Serbian EU accession

EASTERN SERBIA ON THE ROAD TO THE EU

Regional Development Agency for Eastern Serbia (RARIS) launched the initiative entitled “Eastern Serbia on the Road to the EU” in April 2015. The goals of this initiative are: to enhance the understanding of the EU integration process and thus to indirectly prepare for the EU membership; to enable a wider mobilisation of regional stakeholders, voice their views and facilitate their participation in the negotiation process; to represent the key interests of the region in the negotiation process by presenting the formulated and agreed views and by defining additional regional opinions on priority issues. RARIS has established and expanded the Regional EU platform as a mechanism for the local actors to formulate opinions, present interests

and voice criticism in connection to the accession process and the regional interests. The Regional EU Platform is composed of over 40 representatives of CSOs, professional associations, local development bodies, regional development institutions, SME sector and SME associations, local authorities, media, as well as local educational institutions from Bor and Zaječar administrative districts. The Regional EU Platform has defined two key thematic areas for Eastern Serbia, selected based on the priorities set in the Regional Development Strategy for Eastern Serbia. These thematic areas are: 1.) Agriculture and Rural Development and 2.) Environment. A specialised Working Group has been established for each of the two thematic priorities and, with the assistance of external consultants, the Working Groups have defined the proposals of Eastern Serbia for the accession process.

THE LEVEL OF INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE ON EU NEGOTIATIONS IS VERY LOW

Dejan Maksimović, President of the “Stanište” Association

BOS: What is the major contribution of the initiative “The Banat Platform” in engaging the local communities from Banat in the EU negotiation process? How successful have you been so far in reaching the defined goals of the initiative?

Dejan Maksimović: Local self-governments and local communities are a very important player in the process of EU accession negotiation. During the negotiations, it is not negotiated on whether or not the future member state will adopt the full EU acquis, or under which conditions. The only issues that are to be agreed on are the timelines and the amounts of financial assistance the country in accession will receive from the EU for the support to this process. As a result of the process, the national legislation and its practical application will be fully harmonised with the EU. It is certain that this process will affect the local self-governments, which will be delegated new legal obligations and jurisdictions. This is why it is important that the local self-governments take active part in the process, that they provide information on the state of affairs in certain sectors and information on their capacities and problems faced. This allows the Negotiating Team to have solid arguments when requesting potential “transitional periods”

– during which it is possible to postpone the implementation of EU acquis. For the municipalities and towns to be able to actively participate, they need to be properly informed on the process itself. We find that we have contributed to this a great deal through the project “The Banat Platform”. We have organised three thematic workshops and nine roundtables in relation to the negotiation process, with the representatives of the local public and civil sector. More than 200 participants were involved in these events. Additionally, the Banat Platform was featured on over 10 internet sites.

BOS: During the work of your initiative, have you faced any obstacles, especially regarding the mobilisation of regional actors and voicing their views in the EU accession negotiation process?

Dejan Maksimović: There is a considerable level of interest for the topic of EU negotiations in local communities. However, the level of information and knowledge on EU negotiations is very low, which poses an obstacle for a more significant participation of the local actors in the process. The local actors, both from the public and the civil sector, possess very scarce infor-

mation of what is negotiated, who are the parties negotiating, what would be the implications on the local communities, how local communities may participate in the process and why this participation is important.

BOS: How would you assess the capacities of the local actors to participate in the negotiation process? What is it that they lack? What is the added value brought in by their participation?

Dejan Maksimović: Within the framework of the project, we have performed a research on the status of nature protection in AP Vojvodina, in the context of negotiations. All 45 municipalities and towns have been contacted. One of the questions in the questionnaire was: “Has your municipality/town cooperated with the national-level bodies and international actors in the process of EU integration in relation to nature protection? If so, how was this cooperation established?” Only eight municipalities/towns have provided an affirmative answer to this question. However, when asked about how this cooperation was established, seven out of those eight municipalities/towns have responded that this was done through participation in EU projects, which in essence is not linked to the negotiation process. The town of Novi Sad was the only one that responded that they have participated in the development of the post-screening document, which is actually a negotiations-related issue. As many as 35 municipalities/towns responded that they had not had any cooperation, while two respondents did not provide the answer at all. Based on the analysis of the responses provided, we may make two conclusions – firstly, the municipalities'/towns' representatives dealing with nature protection are not adequately informed about the negotiations and the activities within the negotiation process, and secondly, the local self-governments are almost not taking part in the negotiation process.

BOS: Based on your experience, do you think that we use the resources of the regional/local actors well enough? How to utilise them even better?

Dejan Maksimović: The resources of the local actors are not sufficiently utilised. Based on our experience, we find that this is due to the insufficient level of information on negotiations, their importance and the implications on the local self-governments. Only after this level of information is increased, we may expect and hope that the local resources will be used.

BOS: Do you think that the interest of the region in the EU accession negotiations are adequately represented? If not, how could they be?

Dejan Maksimović: Serbia is not a decentralised state, we lack the mid-level/regional level of authority and thus the “interests of the region” are officially not represented in any area, including the EU negotiation process. Still, there are informal ways of representing these interests, and one of them is the Banat Platform. There are two similar initiatives – one in Eastern Serbia and one in Sandžak (the area of Raška).

THE BANAT PLATFORM

“The Banat Platform” for participation of local communities in the negotiations between Serbia and the EU has been established as an informal network by civil society organisations (CSOs) seated in the Banat region (South Banat, Mid Banat and North Banat administrative districts). The CSOs use this mechanism to articulate their views and needs and share them with the central-level negotiating bodies. To start with, the network has selected to work on topics related to the negotiation Chapter 11 (Agriculture and Rural Development), Chapter 12 (Food Safety) and Chapter 27 (Environment), while there is still the possibility to include new chapters. The most significant operation of the network is the organisation of thematic gatherings (roundtables) for the local CSO representatives, local authorities and the business sector. The role of the coordinator of the Banat Platform is given to the Ecological Centre “Stanište” from Vršac. Any CSO seated in Banat may become a member of the Banat Platform, if they so wish. At this moment, the Platform networks 20 organisations.



LEARN MORE:

- A short animation: “Serbia – EU negotiations”
- Protected natural sites in AP Vojvodina: The status of protection and financing within the EU integration context

THE RESOURCES EXISTING AT THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL ARE NOT RECEIVING SUFFICIENT ATTENTION

Aleksandar Popov, Director of the Centre for Regionalism

BOS: How did the idea of launching the “Vojvodina’s Initiative for the EU” come about?

Aleksandar Popov: The Provincial Secretariat for Regional Cooperation approved our project proposal mid last year. The project was entitled “The regional angle on EU integration – AP Vojvodina in the process of Serbian EU accession”. At the opening conference of the project, we had representatives of the provincial authorities, the EU Delegation in Serbia, international experts and Ms Tanja Miščević, Head of the Serbian Negotiating Team. Ms Miščević emphasised how important it was that the civil society organisations at the level of the province should take part in the enhancement of the EU integration process. After this conference, we have organised seven roundtables during which discussions were held on almost half of the negotiation chapters – focusing on the specificities and particular interests of Vojvodina in the negotiation process. The civil society organisations dealing with specific thematic areas were also participating in these roundtable discussions, along with the members of the Negotiating Team, representatives of line ministries and provincial secretariats. During these roundtables, an idea was born that the civil society organisa-

tions from Vojvodina should get organised and involved not only in the negotiation process, but also in the creation of a positive climate among the Vojvodina public with regards to EU integration. Of course, one of the main goals of the initiative is to articulate the interests of the citizens of Vojvodina in the process of Serbian EU accession.

BOS: During the launch of your initiative, have you faced any obstacles, especially regarding the mobilisation of regional actors in the EU accession negotiation process?

Aleksandar Popov: I must say that this is one of the rare undertakings that the Centre for Regionalism has initiated and that everything has been running smoothly – starting with the readiness of the civil society organisations to participate in the work of the Vojvodina’s Initiative for the EU and to actively work on its profiling, and including the readiness of the Vojvodina Assembly to promote the idea of partnership between the civil and the public sector at the highest level. This resulted in a big conference held in the Assembly of the AP of Vojvodina, with the participation of Ištvan Pastor, Tanja Miščević, Ksenija Milenković and the representatives of the EU Delegation in Ser-



Photo: **Centre for Regionalism**

Conference “Vojvodina’s Initiative for the EU – the partnership between the civil and the public sector”

bia. A common statement of the conference participants was issued at the end. After this, the Committee for EU Integration and Inter-regional Cooperation adopted a conclusion on the partnership with Vojvodina's Initiative for the EU.

BOS: How would you assess the capacities of the local actors to participate in the negotiation process? What is it that they lack? What is the added value brought in by their participation?

Aleksandar Popov: The local actors have greater capacities than is known by the public, but also some of the national authorities that should be in the position to recognise these capacities are unaware of them. Many of the local communities have well-trained staff for applying for EU funds, while numerous EU-funded cross-border cooperation projects have been implemented in the cross-border municipalities of Vojvodina.

BOS: Based on your experience, do you think that we use the resources of the regional/local actors well enough? How to utilise them even better?

Aleksandar Popov: Unfortunately, what we are facing here is the continuance of the "Belgrade focus" and this is why the resources existing at the local and regional level are not receiving sufficient attention. It is exactly those resources that could contribute a great deal to the quality and the speed of the EU integration process.

BOS: Do you think that the interest of the region in the EU accession negotiations are adequately represented? If not, how could they be?

Aleksandar Popov: During the conference on the regional angle of EU integration, which I have mentioned at the start of the interview, it has been concluded that Vojvodina should have been officially represented in the Negotiating Team. In many aspects, Vojvodina possesses stronger capacities and more experience than some of the institutions at the national level. We hope that our initiative will contribute to the improved understanding that participation of Vojvodina may not only improve the negotiation process, but also positively affect the overall process of Serbian EU accession.

The interviews prepared by Danijela Božović

VOJVODINA'S INITIATIVE FOR THE EU

The Vojvodina's Initiative for the EU has been established by the Centre for Regionalism, the Novi Sad School of Journalism, the Green Network of Vojvodina, the Association of Consumers in Serbia (APOS), Local Democracy Agency, the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, the Civil Fund Panonia and the Vojvodina Environmental Movement. The initiative has been formed around a common aim of mobilising the civil society of Vojvodina, the professional and expert associations to get actively involved in the institutionalised processes related to the Serbian EU accession and to clearly represent the interests and the specificities of Vojvodina during negotiation of the chapters that the province is especially interested in. The aim of the initiative is also to give the civil society the role of an active participant in the dialogue with the institutions and the authorities of the APV, so that the existing public policies and their implementation would fully respond to the interests of the citizens of Vojvodina.

Thematic Working Groups have been formed within the framework of the initiative. The Working Group for the Negotiation Chapter 10 (ICT and Media) will be headed by the the Novi Sad School of Journalism; the WG for Chapter 11 (Agriculture) will be headed by the Green Network of Vojvodina, the WG for Chapters 12 and 18 (Consumer Protection, Health, Food Safety and Phytosanitary Policies) will be headed by APOS, while the Local Democracy Agency will be heading the Working Group dealing with Chapters 19, 20 and 22 (Social Policy and Employment, Entrepreneurship and Industrial Policy). The working Group for judiciary and fundamental rights, justice, freedom and security (i.e. Chapters 23 and 24) will be headed by the Independent Journalists' Association of Vojvodina, the Chapters 25 and 26 (Science, Research, Education and Culture) will be dealt with by the Civil Fund Panonia, while the Environmental Chapter WG will be led by the Vojvodina Environmental Movement

The Joint Statement "The Vojvodina's Initiative for the EU – Partnership between the Civil and the Public Sector"

COALITION 27: A PUBLIC STATEMENT REGARDING THE REPORT ISSUED BY THE HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT ALLIANCE ON THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS ON THE HEALTH OF CITIZENS IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Coalition 27 is hereby stating that it supports the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) in their endeavours to contribute to the visibility of the effects of air pollution in Serbia and the effects of the work of coal-fired power plants on public health. We wish to draw the attention of the public to the results published by this organisation in their report entitled "The Unpaid Health Bill – How the Coal-fired Power Plants in the Western Balkans Make Us Sick". The results point to the fact that one half of the overall health cost in the region originates from Serbia.

We hereby invite the Ministry of Mining and Energy and the Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia to thoroughly assess the HEAL report and to take into consideration the findings and recommendations thereof during the process of developing strategic documents in the energy and environment sector, i.e. to apply the stated recommendations when designing policies in the two sectors.

In the EC Progress Report on Serbia 2015, the Coalition 27 has already stated the unsatisfying level of progress regarding air quality protection. The findings issued by HEAL demonstrate that certain coal power plants in Serbia are among the ten largest emitters of particulate matter, sulphur-dioxide and nitrogen oxides in Europe.

We find that the report issued by HEAL provides basis for initiating a wide and serious public discussion on the consequences of the energy-production policy on the public health in Serbia. We also remind you that the leading health experts in Serbia signed a [statement](#) in July 2014, demanding the reduction and limitation of the use of coal, so that the level of increase in the number of chronic diseases would be lowered.

Additionally, we need to note that the Coalition 27 is concerned about the fact that the general public in Serbia is not acquainted with the process of development of the National Emission Reduction Plan and about the fact that there has been no public participation, even though this document carries enormous significance for the environmental protection and public health.

It is in the best interest of the Serbian citizens that the findings of the report "The Unpaid Health Bill" are seriously considered in the decision-making process and that they become the cornerstone for launching the update and amendments of the existing national plans on energy production, so that the reliance on coal is decreased and the energy sector is decarbonized. This is a significant opportunity for developing an efficient health protection programme, with the involvement of the Ministry of Health.

You can read the full text of the statement issued by the Coalition 27 [here](#).

Štete po zdravlje uzrokovane emisijama iz termoelektrana na ugalj Kako udisanje suspendovanih čestica može uticati na naše zdravlje

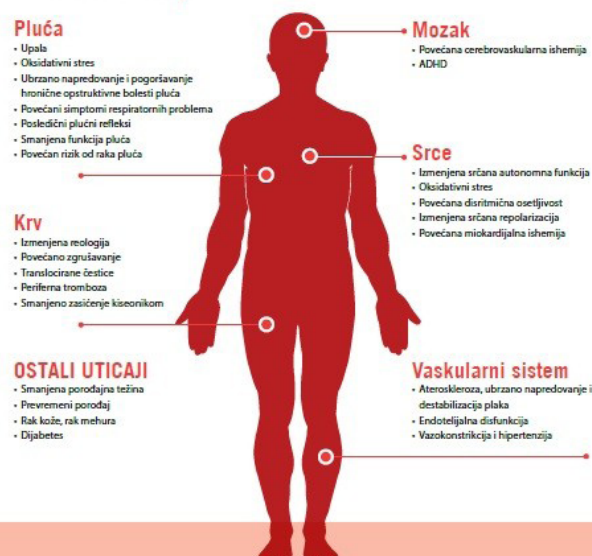


Photo: HEAL

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL), seated in Brussels, is the leading European non-for-profit organisation dealing with the effects of the environment on public health in the European Union (EU). Assisted by more than 70 member organisations, HEAL provides independent expertise and findings of medical research so as to support different decision-making processes. The Alliance gathers health professionals, non-profit health insurance companies, doctors, health workers, patients' associations (cancer patients, asthma patients, etc.), citizens, women's associations, youth groups, environmental NGOs, scientists, as well as a network of public health institutions all over Europe. The membership also includes the international and European organisations, as well as national and local groups.

THE NEW WEBSITE “LET’S SPEAK ABOUT THE NEGOTIATIONS”

In order to perform activities directed towards informing the public about the Serbian EU accession negotiation process, the Belgrade Open School has upgraded the web portal “Let’s Speak about the Negotiations” and added new categories for monitoring the status and progress of the negotiation process. These categories also offer questions-and-answers options and enable the civil society and other interested stakeholders to monitor the negotiations.

In order to monitor the accession negotiation process, it is necessary to understand the institutional and management framework for negotiations, the manner in which the negotiations are held, the content of the process and the tools available to the civil society and other actors so that they could influence the process. In this context, the web portal provides information that will enable the interested actors to adequately monitor the EU negotiation process and to give their contribution to the process in particular stages of negotiations.

The web portal additionally offers an overview of all documents relevant for monitoring the accession negotiation process, not only the documents of the Republic of Serbia, but also of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Montenegro. A specific segment of the portal deals with presenting and analysing the structure of the documents that are produced during the negotiation process, in

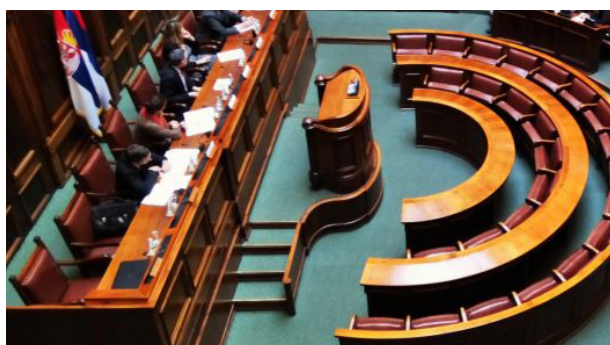
each individual stage of negotiations. Through each of the defined steps and each of the individual documents produced as a result of the negotiation process, the interested stakeholders will be given the opportunity to monitor the process more clearly – by being able to see and properly understand the documents. Knowledge of the structure and content of the relevant documents enables the interested actors, as well as those players that perform regular supervision over the negotiation process, but are not directly involved, to more efficiently monitor the fulfilment of obligations set by the process for both sides. The manners, timelines and financial conditions for their fulfilment may also be monitored more easily.

The portal now also provides an overview of the initiatives/networks/coalitions/civil society platforms established to monitor the Serbian EU accession negotiation process. The public can use the web portal to access publications, research and reports regarding the negotiation process.

All actors interested to actively use the web portal and the Newsletter “Let’s Speak about the Negotiations” as the channel of information for their activities in the framework of Serbian EU accession negotiations may contact us through the e-mail address: eupregovori@bos.rs



HOW TO IMPROVE MANAGEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE?



The conference “**How to Improve Management of International Development Assistance?**” was held in Belgrade on 11 March 2016. It was organized by SECO for Human Resources and Social Development, the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia (SIPRU) and the Serbian European Integration Office. The conference was dedicated to the issue of improving the system of management of international development assistance, primarily European Union (EU) funds from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), as well as increasing the quality of cooperation in this area among the public institutions, the international donor community and the civil society.

The conference was open by: Ksenija Milenković, Acting Director of the Serbian European Integration Office; Aleksandra Miletić, the Head of Group for EU-funded Project Preparation in the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy; and Milorad Bjeletić, the Executive Director of the Belgrade Open School. The opening speakers agreed that, towards reaching the aim of an efficient use of funds and coordination of international development assistance, the improvement of cooperation between the public and the civil sector was of great significance, not only in the programming stage, but also in the stage of project implementation. According to some estimates, Serbia will have at its disposal more than one billion Euro upon entering the EU. That is why the country needs to develop high-quality coordination systems in the area of development assistance, so that after becoming a member state it is able to adequately absorb the Cohesion and Structural funds at hand. The special significance should be placed on preparing all actors for the use of the European Social Fund, which is the key instrument for the sectors of human resource development and social development.

The panel discussion “**Sector Cooperation as a Precondition for Effective Use of International Development Assistance**” was the opportunity for the representatives

of the state institutions, donor community and the civil society to talk about establishing better cooperation as a precondition for more effective use of international development assistance. The key conclusions of the panel discussion were related to enhancement of the system for public policy planning. The conclusions point to the need for this system to take into account cooperation with all interested stakeholders and to treat the international development assistance only as one possible source of funding for reaching the goals set in public policies. The civil society needs to play an important role in the programming and implementation of the international development assistance, but it should also play a much stronger role in monitoring of the assistance, so that possible misuse is prevented. It is important to understand that different donors have different systems for providing assistance, so the potential beneficiary needs to understand what may be required from specific donors. On the other hand, better cooperation and exchange of information within the donor community itself is necessary. SECO mechanism should insist that the assistance is implemented through domestic resources/organisations that employ the local people so that the funds become part of the national budget, instead of being implemented through technical assistance and foreign consortia.

During the working panel session “**SECO Mechanism and Inter-sectoral Cooperation – the Challenges and Opportunities**”, the conference participants discussed the current challenges, recommendations and next steps regarding the improvement of inter-sectoral cooperation. The need for improving the relationship with line ministries and other important players was emphasised, reaching beyond the cooperation on programming of assistance. Namely, the development and improvement of cooperation with the representatives of public authorities at a sector level should be seen as an advantage for the process of programming of development assistance, since participating in the creation of public policies and in drafting legal acts renders programming of priorities easier, also in the financial sense. It was stated several times that during the process of programming development assistance, a larger number of grant schemes should be planned, so that the capacities of the civil society organisations are developed and the country is better prepared for efficient absorption of EU funds after becoming a member state. The SECO mechanism should be used for gathering more information by the civil society organisations operating in the field, accompanied by regular training of organisations on the programming, implementation and monitoring of international development assistance.

SERBIA ENTERED THE EUROPEAN HEALTH PROGRAMME III (2014–2020)

At the beginning of March 2016, Serbia signed a Memorandum of Understanding for entering the main EU programme for implementation of the health strategy – the European Health Programme III. This programme is directed towards improving health in Europe, through supporting cooperation among member states in order to enhance the health-related policies. The overall objective of the programme is to improve the health of EU citizens and to reduce the inequalities related to health, to induce health-related innovation and improve the sustainability of the health systems, tackle the current health issues faced by the EU member states and to support and enable the cooperation among EU member states. The EU has allocated 449.4 million Euro for the Health Programme. The funds are intended for: cooperation projects at the level of EU, the common activities of the health regulators of member states, the functioning of non-governmental bodies and cooperation with international organisations.

The specific objectives of the programme are: to promote health, prevent diseases and foster supportive environments for healthy lifestyles, **protect the citizens from serious cross-border health threats, contribute to innovative, efficient and sustainable health systems and to facilitate access to better and safer healthcare for Union citizens.**

By entering the European Health Programme 2014–2020, Serbia is becoming an equal partner of the EU member states and is eligible to receive support for the development of its health sector and for the process of harmonisation with the EU health standards. The participation in the programme will enable Serbia to have larger investments in the innovative and more sustainable health systems, to improve the quality of health services and the level of cooperation with the colleagues from the region and on the EU level, as well as to undertake more effective prevention measures, for instance in fighting HIV/AIDS.



THE THIRD HEALTH PROGRAMME 2014-2020 FUNDING HEALTH INITIATIVES



Programme: EU Health Programme
Budget: 449.39 million Euro
Duration: 1 January 2014 – 31 December 2020

The institutions implementing the programme in the EU:

The European Commission

Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency – CHAFEA

National contact points

The Contact Point of the Programme in Serbia:
Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia

RECOMMENDED

The second, adapted edition of “The Guidelines for Monitoring the EU Accession Negotiation Process”, prepared by the Belgrade Open School.

A Collection of articles published by the Foundation Centre for Democracy “Local Self-governments and Accession Negotiations” developed in the framework of the project “Contribution of local self-government units to the Serbian EU accession negotiations”.

NEGOTIATION CHAPTER 4 – FREE MOVEMENT OF CAPITAL

The free movement of capital is one of the four freedoms that the Single Market of the European Union is based on. This chapter primarily concerns harmonisation of regulations in the area of movement of capital and payments, as well as fight against money-laundering and against financing of terrorism.

In the area of free movement of capital, the member states must remove, with some exceptions, all restrictions on movement of capital both within the EU and between Member States and third countries. Capital movements are classified according to the economic nature of assets and liabilities they concern. They may be: foreign direct investment; real-estate investment (purchases of buildings and land, as well as construction of building by private entities for personal financial gain or personal use; this category also entails the right to profit-sharing, subsidies and the right to construction); securities transactions usually dealt with in the money market; transactions of shares in shareholdings; transactions by current and deposit accounts with financial institutions; credits related to commercial transactions or provision of services in which a resident is participating; financial loans and credits; sureties, other guarantees and the right of pledge; transfers in performance of insurance contracts; personal capital movements (for example loans, endowments, inheritance); physical import and export of financial assets (for example securities, means of payment of every kind); other capital movements (for example authors' royalties, refunds in the cases when they may be considered as capital).

The EU acquis also includes rules concerning payments in the internal market, which establishes the basis for creation of a wider EU payment market. Rules are defined in relation to all services of national and cross-border payments in the EU. The aim is to render the cross-border payments as easy, efficient and secure as the national payments within the member states, and at the same time improve the rights of users to using payment services. Another intention is to increase the competition by opening the payment market for new participants, so as to support the enhancement of efficiency and the reduction of costs and so that the necessary platform for the single zone for payment in Euro is created. Additionally, the differences in commission for national and cross-border payments for certain amounts in Euro currency are eliminated. By applying these rules, the customer performing a cross-border transaction in Euro currency is paying the same amount of commission as if he/she were performing this transaction in his/her member state. At the same time, the EU acquis regu-

lates the issues of establishing, functioning and supervision of the electronic money institutions.

The directive on the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing requires banks and other economic operators, particularly when dealing in high-value items and with large cash transactions, to identify customers and report certain transactions.

WHAT IS THE BENEFIT FOR SERBIA?

- Liberalised capital market
- Liberalised real-estate market
- Cross-border payments within EU equal with payments in Serbia
- Prevention of money laundering and of financing of terrorism

A complete liberalisation of the capital market enables the citizens the right to open accounts abroad, enables approving credits to non-residents, bringing in and taking out limitless amounts of cash. At the same time, the citizens of EU member states have the same treatment as national citizens in terms of acquiring rights of property over real-estate.

The EU membership will affect all participants of financial markets, as well as citizens, entrepreneurs, investors, i.e. the users of financial services. Due to the abolishment of restrictions regarding movement of capital, the citizens of Serbia will be granted greater possibilities to choose the financial institutions they wish to work with.

In the area of fighting against money laundering and financing of terrorism, the harmonisation with the EU acquis will bring about the establishment of an efficient system that will be based on participation and partnership of a larger number of institutions.

(Brochure "Negotiation Chapters – 35 Steps towards the EU", EU Info Centre and the Negotiating Team for Accession of the Republic of Serbia to the European Union)



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