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Commissioner Figel Opens Sarajevo Winter Festival

On 7 February 2007 Mr. Jan Figel - Member of the European Commission for Education, Training, Culture & Youth - arrived in Sarajevo for a 2-day visit.

Commissioner Figel first met with the BiH Presidency: Mr Nebojsa Radmanovic, Mr Zeljko Komsic and Mr Haris Silajdzic, and discussed cooperation in the field of education and culture. During the meeting the Commissioner encouraged the Presidency to pursue the reform agenda needed for BiH to sign the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and to take full advantage of important student exchange programmes offered by the EU, most notably Erasmus Mundus.

Commissioner Figel subsequently watched a street performance by the French theatrical-acrobatic group "Malibar", whose members include stage and visual artists from across Europe. Their performance preceded the official opening ceremony of the 23rd Sarajevo Winter Festival and created an appropriate festive atmosphere.

Before declaring the 23rd Sarajevo Winter Festival to be officially open, Commissioner Figel congratulated the organisers on the programme and the slogan "Sarajevo - Some Other City" which speaks of the renewal of the city. It is a multi-ethnic, vibrant symbol of the cultural diversity of the Balkans, and cultural diversity is also a hallmark of Europe. He stated that the challenges facing the Balkans are also

Europe's challenges and stressed that there will be continued political and economic support from Europe, as the European Integration Process cannot be complete without the Balkans.

On 8 February 2007, at a formal meeting, the new Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Mr. Nikola Spiric, stated that EU Integration is among his priorities and that he is committed to addressing the issue of education. Commissioner Figel is the first Member of the Commission to visit BiH since the elections held in October 2006 and he confirmed that BiH has a European perspective and that 2007 can be a decisive year in its evolution.

He subsequently met with the BiH Minister of Civil Affairs, Dr. Safet Halilovic, the Ministers of Education from the Entities, Canton and District, as well as representatives of the OHR, OSCE and Council of Europe. They discussed the fragmented structure of the education system in BiH and the outstanding law on higher education, which should address the need for a state-level agency as a roof to complete the structure. Such an agency would not mean centralisation; it would facilitate country-to-country co-operation, smooth the way for recognition of foreign diplomas and promote student mobility, among others.

The University of Sarajevo was the venue for his next meeting, hosted by the rector, Faruk Caklovica. Commissioner Figel addressed a



Profile - Jan Figel

Jan Figel was born in 1960 in Slovakia, where he trained as an electronics engineer. He subsequently attended courses on International Relations in Georgetown University, Washington, USA, and on European Economic Integration at UFSIA in Antwerp, Belgium.

He worked as a research and development engineer from 1983 to 1992 and became politically active in the Christian Democratic Movement in 1990. Since 1992, he has held a wide array of posts linking the Slovak Republic and European institutions.

From 1992 to 1998 he was a Member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. During these years he was also a Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and some of its Committees.

From 1998 to 2003 he was Chief Negotiator of the Slovak Republic for negotiations on the accession of Slovakia to the European Union.

He joined the Commission on 1 May 2004, when the Slovak Republic became a Member State of the EU. Originally co-responsible for the Enterprise and Information Society portfolio, on 22 January 2004 he assumed the portfolio of Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism. Since 1 January 2007, when two new posts of Commissioner came into being with the most recent enlargement, his portfolio has been Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

Commissioner Figel is also the author of numerous publications on Slovakia's road to EU Membership.

His full professional biography is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/profile/profile_en.htm



Erasmus - the world's largest university exchange programme - is celebrating its 20th year. Over a million students have taken part in this rewarding and challenging experience since 1987.

Involving 2,000 institutions in 31 countries, the Erasmus scheme now covers 90% of European higher education establishments. It is symbolic of what Europe does best: above and beyond the direct learning experience, it creates a space for openness and tolerance and brings people together in a natural way. It promotes inter-cultural dialogue and encourages young people to think "European" - and to be mobile not just when studying, but also when entering the job market. Studies confirm that the Erasmus experience is considered valuable by employers, leading to better-paid, more stable jobs.

From 2007 to 2013, Erasmus will run under the new Lifelong Learning Programme. The target is to involve 3 million students by 2012, giving each the chance to experience life abroad.

Erasmus covers more than student mobility; it encourages teachers in Europe to be mobile too, with some 21,000 also taking part in Erasmus exchanges last year. Based on cooperation agreements between higher education institutes, the network includes the 27 EU countries, 3 associated countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Turkey, a Candidate country.

Erasmus Mundus is the programme covers countries outside the Union.

gathering of students and professors and then engaged in a direct discussion on issues which they raised. He spoke about the importance of a lively education system for economic, political and social development, stressing that European economies rely on brainpower. It is important for the system to develop researchers, for it is up to academic circles to critique and improve cultural and social values. He highlighted the common roots and history of all the countries in Europe, despite the artificial division created by the cold war, and expressed his hope that all will eventually come together to build a common future. Himself coming from a country that was once behind the iron curtain, he stated that, personally, he prefers to think in terms of European "reunification", rather than "enlargement". The Commissioner urged the relevant actors in BiH to press forward with the necessary reform process, including the necessary law on higher education which has twice failed to pass, so as to speed BiH on its European path.

He also urged students and academics to take advantage of the new benefits offered by European exchange programmes, notably Erasmus Mundus, which will offer 100 scholarships for students from the Western Balkans to study Masters' Degrees in EU universities in the academic year 2007-2008.

The EC Delegation then hosted a roundtable discussion with members of Non-Governmental Organisations. These representatives of civil society were pleased to hear that Brussels is thinking of BiH and that the country's image abroad is improving. They learned about the opportunities for new funding through Cultural programmes, which can only be made available once the government signs the pending Memorandum of Understanding. Commissioner Figel stressed that civil society can play a very important role in BiH by helping to unify the country in its diversity.

Finally, Commissioner Figel briefed members of the press on his activities and impressions during his visit, noting the European spirit he had observed and his belief that there is the momentum to reach the SAA and a visa facilitation agreement in 2007. He repeated the message that the EU will support BiH towards European integration, and his belief that Education, Culture, Youth and Civil Society are areas which can play a special role in bringing them together.

The Commissioner's website is:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/figel/index_en.htm





Ambassador Kourkoulas Visits the Public Broadcasting System

On 29 January 2007, Ambassador Dimitris Kourkoulas paid his first official visit to the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) facilities.

Mr. Mehmed Agovic, the new General Director of BHRT - Bosnia and Herzegovina Radio and Television - welcomed the Ambassador and presented an overview of PBS development over the recent years. BH Radio One was launched five years ago, while two and a half years ago television BHTV1 began broadcasting through the Entities network, as BHT did not yet have its own channel. Today it broadcasts 19 hours of programming a day over its own channel, reaches over 90% of the country's population and is among the five most viewed channels. Mr. Agovic attributed this success largely to the support given by the EC.

Mr. Nebojsa Hasanbasic presented an overview of the technical equipment donated by the EC which has been purchased through four tenders between 2001 and 2006. This has included repairing existing or installing new transmitters and repeaters, including antennas; purchase of spare parts and vehicles for field repairs; a digital satellite link and digital platform which allow the BHT signal to be seen throughout Europe; FM receivers for radio transmission; state-of-the-art digital studio equipment, etc. The new and up-graded transmission infrastructure also benefits Entity Radio and Televisions.

EC support has also enabled BHT to implement programming projects,

including a series called "Press Club Dayton", which consisted of twelve episodes in which journalists and politicians discussed their views on how to move from Dayton to the era of Brussels. Another special programme entitled "War Epilogue" was broadcast following the BBC series "The Death of Yugoslavia" and documented what had become of the leaders since then. "In Transition" was a special competition which allowed young screen-writers and directors to present their ideas. Three completed films and ten screenplays were selected, giving young talents a unique opportunity to air their points of view and work. Ambassador Kourkoulas viewed segments of these programmes on a DVD presentation.

Following the review of past activities, Ambassador Kourkoulas thanked all the PBS teams for the excellent co-operation over the past five years and wished the new Director the best in his mandate. He stressed that EC support to the PBS indicates the importance it holds in the country's European perspective. The EC plan to continue its support - the priority for 2007 will be production while for the period 2007-2009 it is foreseen to support the development of overall production capacities.

He added that BiH is now in a new phase of its relations with the EU, but PBS reform is a precondition for signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

Tri-partite Agreement: European Central Bank, Central Bank of BiH and EC Delegation



Tripartite Protocol: Central Bank of BiH, the European Central Bank and the EC Delegation to BiH

On 16 February 2007, Mrs. Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell, Member of the Executive Board and of the Governing Council of the European Central Bank (ECB), Mr. Andre Lys, Head of Operations in the EC Delegation to BiH and Mr. Kemal Kozaric, Governor of the Central Bank of BiH (CBBH), signed a tri-partite protocol which officially marks the start of the

Eurosystems Needs Assessment Programme.

The EU has provided 300,000 euro to the ECB and Member State National Banks (Deutsche Bundesbank, Eesti Pank, Bank of Greece, Banco de Espana, Banque de France, Banca d'Italia, Banka Slovenije and Osterreichische Nationalbank) to support the CBBH in moving towards the standards of Eurosystems Banks. Their analysis will cover: co-ordination of the activities of agencies responsible for bank licensing and supervision; economic analysis and research; financial stability; internal audit; monetary policy under a currency board arrangement; payment systems; and statistics.

Mrs. Tumpel-Gugerell noted that the ECB and CBBH are among the youngest Central Banks in the world and have had good contacts since 1998. Today marks the start of a closer relationship between them.

Mr. Lys highlighted that the CBBH is one of the first and most successful State institutions in BiH: its monetary policies have achieved macroeconomic stability and inflation has been relatively low. He urged the CBBH to undertake the necessary reforms to adapt its policies and procedures to those of the Eurosystem Central Banks. These reforms are for the benefit and the prosperity of the country.

Mr. Kozaric welcomed the project and expressed his appreciation that the ECB and EC recognised the willingness on the part of CBBH to implement European standards.

Message from Mr. Barroso to Mr. Spiric

On 12 February 2007, Mr. Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, sent the following message to H.E. Mr. Nikola Spiric, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"On behalf of the European Commission, I have the pleasure to convey to you our most sincere congratulations for your nomination as Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I trust that your active involvement throughout your mandate will help

Bosnia and Herzegovina to significantly accelerate towards fulfilling its European perspective.

In this context, it is of great importance that the overall reform agenda is relaunched as soon as possible, with particular focus on the outstanding key European Partnership priorities. You can count on the European Commission's full support for your reform efforts.

I look forward to developing our contacts and wish you and your government every success."

Waste Sorting Station Launched in Sarajevo

Recycling Equipment donated by the EU

On 25 January 2007, the new Waste Sorting Station located at the Sarajevo Smiljevici Landfill was officially opened by Mr. Zlatko Petrovic, Minister of Urban Planning and Environmental Protection of Sarajevo Canton, and Mr. Kjartan Bjornsson, Head of Section for Economic Development and Natural Resources of the Delegation of the European Commission to BiH.

The European Union donated equipment for recycling worth 560,000 Euro, while the Public Utility Company RAD invested 60,000 Euro to build the Waste Sorting Station. The recycling equipment for the Waste Sorting Station includes a grab crane, which loads waste into a special machine which opens plastic bags. The waste then travels on a conveyor track with sorting stations, where staff manually separate paper and carton, plastic containers such as bottles, and plastic bags. Separate chutes help collect these different types of waste, while a magnetic separator removes tins. The separated waste is then compressed and is ready to be transported to companies who can recycle the material, e.g. paper factories.

Additional equipment will introduce source separation, where citizens can deposit their sorted waste into special containers for paper, plastic and metal. There are 150 Drop-off Stations, mostly in Novo Sarajevo Municipality.

In addition to the equipment, EU support includes a public awareness campaign on recycling, so as to educate and motivate the citizens of Sarajevo to participate in recycling activities in their city.

Mr. Selim Babic, Director of RAD, stated that the new Waste Sorting Station is a first in BiH and in the Region, and is a great step forward for Sarajevo Canton. He stressed that proper waste sorting and recycling can reduce the volume of waste for landfills by between 20 and 30%.

Minister Petrovic urged citizens to become actively engaged in the process of waste sorting and recycling, so as to achieve a better quality of life.

Mr. Bjornsson, of the European Commission Delegation to BiH, thanked all the partners for their excellent co-operation over the past two years and noted that this initiative is one of four pilot projects supported by the EU throughout the country. He stressed that the goal is financially sustainable recycling operations, though this is not yet feasible in BiH due to the lack of economic instruments, and urged for advances in the necessary legal framework. Investing in waste sorting and recycling protects the environment, which benefits citizens and tourists alike.

For further information, please visit:

www.geocities.com/recyclingbih



Employment

Background – Employment Policy in the EU

The Treaty of Amsterdam, (signed in 1997; in force since 1999) was the first economic treaty ever to include a specific and full Title on employment, as opposed to a mere Chapter. European Union (EU) Member States maintained the sole competence for employment policy, but entrusted European Institutions with a much stronger role, new tasks and more forceful tools. Key elements of the Amsterdam Treaty include:

- The commitment to achieve a high level of employment as one of the key objectives of the EU, declaring it to be equally important as the macroeconomic objectives of growth and stability.
- Emphasis that employment is an issue of common concern and commitment to co-ordinate employment policies, as labour market measures implemented in one country change the parameters of labour market policies in other Member States.
- The obligation to work towards a co-ordinated strategy for employment and to promote a skilled, trained and adaptable workforce and labour markets responsive to economic change.

The Luxembourg Jobs Summit of November 1997 launched the European Employment Strategy (EES), also known as 'the Luxembourg process', on the basis of the Amsterdam Treaty. Heads of State and Government agreed on a framework to establish a set of common objectives and targets for employment policy. This co-ordination of national employment policies at EU level was built around an annual process of guidelines, national action plans and a joint report by the European Commission (EC).

An evaluation carried out in 2002 emphasised the need to update the EES so as to align it more closely to the goal set out at the Lisbon European Council of 2000, which aimed to achieve the following by 2010: *to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.*

A further revision was launched in 2005, with new guidelines adopted the same year, hence a renewed EES is now in place. It refocuses efforts on two goals: delivering a stronger, lasting growth and more and better jobs.

The 'open method of co-ordination' is a new working method at EU level initiated through the EES. It is based on five key principles:

Subsidiarity – It establishes equilibrium between EU co-ordination in the definition of common objectives and outcomes, and Member States' responsibilities in deciding their actions.

Convergence – The strategy strives to achieve commonly agreed employment outcomes through concerted action, where each Member State contributes towards raising the European average performance.

Mutual learning – By exchanging good practice and experience, Member States can learn from the experiences of other countries, which may have already found answers to similar challenges in the labour market.

Integrated approach – The Employment Guidelines are not restricted to active labour market policies. They extend to social, educational, tax, enterprise and regional policies. Structural reforms cannot be obtained through isolated measures, but require consistent and concerted action over a wide range of policies and measures. These measures need to be tailor made to address diverse needs and conditions.

Management by objectives and review – Success relies on the use of quantified measurements, targets and benchmarks, to allow for a proper monitoring and evaluation of progress. These objectives are based on shared values among the Member States and cover issues which are felt to be of common concern. Progress is defined in terms of quantitative or qualitative indicators.

The innovative methodology of the 'open method of co-ordination' has since been used in many other areas and is one of the examples for the current EC Delegation activities on improving employment and labour market performance in BiH.

Working Towards an employment and labour market strategy for BiH

BiH has an abundant resource with great potential: its people – a skilled work force with recognised work ethics. However, current obstacles to labour market dynamics do not permit the flexibility that the labour market requires to adapt to changing needs in supply and demand. A labour market that is alert to opportunities for jobs, and one which is adaptable and responsive to changing demands by constantly improving the employability of individuals, is absolutely essential if the economy, society and individuals are to reap the full benefits of the available potential.

To help address this need, the EC Delegation to BiH recently established a dedicated Labour & Employment team within the Democratic Stabilisation and Social Development Sector. Hitherto, EC-funded projects have targeted the reform of the institutions, whereas now there is the intention of bringing together the relevant actors to develop the necessary overall policy and promote active measures that improve the operations of the market as a whole. This is a substantive requirement for BiH regardless of the developments in Europe and it is this understanding of the need for progress that seems to have galvanised support by all concerned.

The key actors also recognise the urgency for action. Unemployment is running at 20-35%, depending on how it is counted, activity rates for 19-24 year-olds are only 47.5 %. The youth unemployment rate is 34.8%, and the share of secondary school graduates who are inactive constitutes nearly 31 %. All of these represent massive economic waste. In addition, around 18% of the population are below the poverty line and a further third run the risk of falling into poverty. Employment growth, responsive labour markets and concerted efforts to reactivate the labour market and ensure employability are the key to the future.

Developing an Employment Strategy for BiH is a cross-sectorial task which necessitates consensus-building: a cross-ministerial approach which brings

Open Call for Proposals - EIDHR *

The Call for Proposals for micro-projects announced in November 2006 is open until 4 April 2007. The EU provided € 615,000 for this Call, to support the development of the NGO sector in BiH. The micro-project facility complements other efforts designed to promote human rights and democratisation in the region.

The general objective of the EIDHR programme is to respond rapidly to requests for financial support for initiatives designed to promote and protect human rights, promote democratisation as well as efforts aimed at conflict prevention and resolution. It is divided into four campaigns:

Campaign	Indicative amount available in this Call
1- "Promoting justice and the rule of law"	-
2 - "Fostering a culture of human rights"	€ 380,000
3 - "Promoting the democratic process"	-
4 - "Advancing equality, tolerance and peace"	€ 235,000

Proposals should address one of the thematic campaigns and a proposal may not address priorities from more than one campaign. Individual grants will range from € 25,000 to € 65,000, with between 10 % and 50% co-financing from sources other than the EC budget. Actions must take place in BiH and last between 8 and 18 months.

Only non-profit-making, non-governmental organisations or institutions of higher education, with headquarters in BiH, are eligible to apply. They can work with partners, associates or sub-contractors, in accordance with the project's requirements.

Campaign 2: "Fostering a culture of human rights"

Thematic Priorities

- Strengthening civil society organisations in advocacy for the rights of vulnerable groups and furthering related international instruments.
- Reducing the occurrence of torture, effectively implementing international instruments against torture and providing support for the rehabilitation of victims of torture.

* As of 2007, EIDHR will stand for European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights.



The EC Delegation (ECD) and Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA) team

Left to right: **Slavica Vucic** - Head of Section, MoCA; **Michael Docherty** - Head of Section - Democracy and Social Development, ECD; **Jadranka Mihic**, Task Manager - Health and Education, ECD; **John Pyres**, Task Manager - Labour and Employment, ECD; **Edbera Bikovic**, Assistant, ECD; **Milijana Lale**, Senior Associate, MoCA; **Hajrija Dautovic**, Senior Associate, MoCA.

together the Ministries responsible for Finance, Labour and Education and requires concerted, creative thinking. For a successful Employment Strategy cannot simply be copied from a model implemented elsewhere. Certainly, lessons can and should be learned from experiences in other countries, but Civil Servants must be able to analyse the specific context, identify viable options and assess the costs, benefits and impact of each, so as to present practical policy options for the government to choose from. Helping to develop the necessary skills for such "Options building" requires a particular, active approach to capacity building. The success of future proposals for accessing the European Social Funds will be determined on evidence based policy-making, the foundations of which are being laid through the current EC Delegation approaches to employment.

Because of the intrinsic need for the active participation of a wide array of actors from the government, the civil service, the private sector and social partners, both the BiH authorities and the EC Delegation itself will need an approach which regroups and responds to a variety of agendas. For example, it is necessary to study the Social Protection Agenda and ensure that the most vulnerable are fully protected whilst targeting any obstacles to labour market dynamics. "Flexicurity" is a term currently used to ensure flexibility with security, thus ensuring that labour market policy will not lead to the creation and perpetuation of social and/or labour-market exclusion of certain groups. Appropriate education, training and addressing the lifetime work cycle can be the bridges that link these two concerns of security and flexibility.

In working towards an employment strategy, the needs for legislative change must be carefully weighed. The aim is to eliminate or reform legislation which constrains labour market development - for example that which unnecessarily delays or hinders entrepreneurs from starting new businesses and creating new jobs - but, at the same time, to avoid unnecessary legislation which will restrict the dynamism of the labour market, for example, by creating subsidies which artificially sustain a specific industry.

Although the cross-sectorial approach must target the country as a whole, it cannot lose sight of the fact that it will not create a homogeneous single labour market: typically, even in developed countries 75% of labour is born, develops a professional career and retires within the same local area. It is therefore important to keep in mind the mosaic of territorial labour markets within the wider context and link up with local and regional economic development structures. Thus, regional economic development will focus on the demand side to increase the attractiveness to investors and improve the quality of jobs, while Employment and active labour market policies will address the activation measures to ensure that the right people are in the right place at the right time. An efficient and adaptable labour market is the key to inward investment to BiH as well as the catalyst for internal job growth.

The overall aim in BiH is to generate jobs, to structure the substantial informal labour market and to enable a dynamic and flexible labour market which will stop long-term or permanent detachment (unemployment). For this to work, the efforts invested by all parties must result in a targetable and realistic employment strategy which all involved actively support, jointly review and constantly improve. This is critical not only to the country's future but also to the planned decentralisation of EU aid to BiH, through which assistance will, in the future, be managed by the government of BiH.

The new team is working intensively with all players to engage in the "open method", and "peer review" approach, which must also include the social partners and the private sector. The team is expecting to launch a project in late 2007, to assist in developing and improving the social dialogue which, to be successful, must include constructive engagement of all social partners in the roll-out of the employment and labour market strategies of the future.

Finally, the results of the first Review of the Employment Sector, which was completed in 2006, will be launched at a conference during March. A full attendance of all interested parties at all levels will provide an opportunity for full and open discussions, which is indeed a working example of the "open method".

- Enhancing education, training, monitoring and awareness-raising on human rights and democratisation issues.

Types of action

- Promote advocacy, awareness-raising and training in the field of children's rights, the rights of women and trafficking in children.
- Promote the rights of human rights defenders.
- Activities in support of torture prevention.
- Support for rehabilitation activities for torture victims.

Campaign 4: "Advancing equality, tolerance and peace"

Thematic Priorities

- Securing equal rights and treatment of people belonging to minorities irrespective of racial, ethnic or caste origin, or of language or religion.
- Inter-cultural and interethnic understanding.
- Reinforcing the engagement of civil society in conflict prevention and resolution.

Types of action

- Support awareness-raising and advocacy to realise the rights of persons and minorities facing discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity or caste.

- Raising public awareness on the situation and living conditions of minority peoples, and promoting knowledge and understanding of their rights.
- Support to capacity building of minority peoples' organisations.

The standard forms and annexes can be downloaded from:

www.delbih.ec.europa.eu/en/tandv/tandv.htm

Applicants must submit the complete Application Form for the relevant campaign, along with the Budget breakdown and Logical Framework. Applicants who are provisionally selected during the evaluation process will then be asked to supply the relevant supporting documents.

Three clarification meetings have already been held in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Banja Luka, to review the guidelines and application forms with relevant organisations interested in applying. Further questions may be sent by e-mail to dzemal.hodzic@ec.europa.eu or by fax to (033) 666-037 no later than 21 days before the deadline for receiving proposals, indicating the reference of the call for proposals - EC/BIH/CFP/06/007. Replies will be posted on the website no later than 11 days before the above-mentioned deadline.

The evaluation of proposals will proceed in 4 steps: opening session and administrative check; evaluation of the concept note; evaluation of the application form; eligibility of the applicant and partners. The indicative timeframe for finalising the process and informing on the results is early June 2007.

New Twinning Project for Communications Regulatory Agency

it is an ongoing challenge for regulators. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge and know-how is vital for BiH to be able to fulfil its obligation not only under the future Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) but also, more importantly, in the context of its preparation for EU membership.

H.E. Alessandro Fallavollita highlighted the importance of this sector for the future of BiH and said the aim of the project is to enable CRA to provide the best possible monitoring service of this sector and thus contribute to the harmonisation of local standards with those of the EU.

Mr Kemal Huseinovic, Director General of the CRA, stated that mid-term priorities are the full reform of the Public Broadcast System (PBS) and independence of CRA. He said the new project would help CRA to better prepare for the successful implementation of the law on PBS, introduction of new technologies in the telecommunications sector and digital television in BiH.

Mr Vincenzo Lobianco of AGCOM noted that they plan to provide expertise and logistic support for 30 CRA experts who will be trained in Italy, divided into six groups.

The EU has provided 250,000 euro for this project.

On 13 February 2007, a new twinning project to support the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) was presented by Mr. Andre Lys, Head of Operations in the EC Delegation to BiH, H.E. Alessandro Fallavollita, Ambassador of Italy, and the Director General of BiH's Communications Regulatory Agency, Mr. Kemal Huseinovic, along with his Italian counterparts Senator Roberto Napoli and Vincenzo Lobianco of Italy's regulator AGCOM.

The new twinning project is the follow-on of one that started in June 2005 and was completed after fourteen months of successful cooperation. It is designed to help CRA to become an independent regulator that consistently applies European Union directives in communication sector regulation.

Mr. Lys said that telecommunications and broadcasting are areas where Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress in the past years but stressed that some issues in these sectors remain to be solved. He said that electronic media are in constant evolution and keeping up with



2007 - European Year of Equal Opportunities

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All seeks to make people in the European Union more aware of their rights to equal treatment and to a life free of discrimination. These are two of the basic principles underpinning the EU.

European Union anti-discrimination legislation is one of the most extensive in the world. In 2000, the EU adopted wide-ranging laws to prohibit discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation in the workplace and, as far as racial and ethnic origin is concerned, in other aspects of daily life. These texts build on the extensive provisions at EU level to promote gender equality.

However, calling for equal rights and adopting laws to try and guarantee them is not enough to ensure that everyone enjoys equal opportunities in practice. Incentives have to be given to bring about a change in behaviour and mentality.

The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All is an initiative leading towards a bolder strategy, seeking to give momentum to the fight against discrimination. The Year aims to:

- Make people more aware of their rights to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination - irrespective of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.
- Promote equal opportunities for all.
- Launch a major debate on the benefits of diversity both for European societies and individuals.

For further information, visit: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm

Activities during the Year will be organised around four key objectives:

- **Rights** - raising awareness on the right to equality and non-discrimination and on the problem of multiple discrimination.
- **Representation** - stimulating debate on ways to increase the participation of groups which are victims of discrimination and a balanced participation of men and women.
- **Recognition** - facilitating and celebrating diversity and equality.
- **Respect** - Promoting a more cohesive society.

One of the key principles of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All is decentralisation. It takes into account the varying levels of progress made at national level with regard to equality legislation and the various socio-economic, cultural contexts and sensitivities in participating countries (the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway). Therefore, most of the activities will take place at national, regional and local level.

Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities has stated that: "Europeans have a right to enjoy equal treatment and a life free of discrimination. The 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All aims to ensure they all know this. For a whole year, we will be putting the spotlight on equal opportunities and the benefits for Europe of a diverse society. Europe has a rich array of talents. We cannot afford to waste them."